

# from the editor

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I attended the 2017 Sculptural Objects, Functional Art (SOFA) Expo in Chicago in November 2017 to talk to gallerists and artists, spend time feasting my eyes on ceramics, and discover potential article topics. Although I make pieces that could be described as quiet and contemplative, I engage with and even gravitate toward pots and sculptures by other ceramic artists that decidedly do not fit that description. I admire the technical skill and concepts these artists have chosen to focus on, and enjoy having the privilege of looking at the world from another creative person's perspective. At SOFA, among other artists, I was struck by the work of Gina Etra Stick and Mariko Paterson. They each make vessels with complex, layered surface decoration and draw on wide-ranging sources, though they express their ideas using techniques and conceptual strategies that are very different from one another.

I had the chance to speak to both Gina and Mariko at the Studio 21 booth during the expo. Gina has a meditative approach to her studio practice and the context of her work, which she describes as, "building a secular culture based on the vision and ethics of Buddhism." Mariko processes and filters personal experience and a wide range of the cultural references that many of us are bombarded with on a daily basis in the collaged, often narrative, and always humorous (whether biting or sweetly nostalgic) images on her vessel forms.

After speaking with Gina and Mariko, as well as Studio 21's owner, Deborah Carver, I kept thinking about how both artists conveyed such different, but equally important perspectives on contemporary life. When I returned to the office, I shared my thoughts on these two artists, and the possibility of covering them in the magazine. The Quick Tip by Mariko Paterson in this issue (page 10) (plus several tips she's contributed to previous issues) and the feature article on Gina's career, written by Heidi McKenzie (page 30), stemmed from attending SOFA.

The gallery's participation in the expo, their dedication to promoting the artists, and their genuine enthusiasm for their art gave me the opportunity to learn about these artists, and the experience was the catalyst for being able to share their ideas and studio tips with you in the magazine.

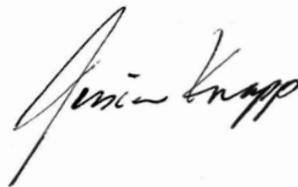
In my daily routine, I use social media and the Internet to do ceramic research regularly. The benefits of physically visiting a gallery include exposure to artists and ideas that are outside of my own social-media bubble and new connections that expand on my understanding of the field's breadth. I encourage you to look through the Gallery Guide listings starting on page 52, and find a venue near you where you can break out of your own social-media bubble and find new inspiration.

For more ideas on finding new inspiration and a new outlook on taste, visit the Clay Culture section of the issue. Kyla Toomey shares her

experience traveling to different exhibitions and pottery sales with a group of friends, and then exchanging pots they've purchased in what has to be the world's best Yankee swap.

When you're finished reading the issue, visit the websites and social-media accounts for both National Clay Week ([www.nationalclayweek.org](http://www.nationalclayweek.org)) and Global Day of Clay ([www.92y.org/globaldayofclay](http://www.92y.org/globaldayofclay)), which are happening during the week of October 8–14 for more ways to widen your perspective and find new opportunities to engage with clay in your local and virtual communities, then see the November issue of CM for more coverage of these events.

I would also like to introduce you to the newest member of the editorial staff, Katie Sleyman, who joined us two weeks prior to sending this issue to the printer, and jumped right in to help us get it ready. We're looking forward to having her share her perspective on the field with us, and with all of you.



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1 Gina Etra Stick's *Luminosity Vase*, Jingdezhen porcelain, celadon, gucai overglaze, 24k Roman and German gold, 2017. 2 Vases by Mariko Paterson, to approximately 16 in. (40 cm) in height, cone-6 porcelain, glaze, china paint, luster. Both pieces shown while on view at Studio 21's booth at the 2017 SOFA Chicago Expo.