

A NEW APPROACH TO PROGRAMMING

LEXART'S BROADER OUTREACH, RENOVATED GALLERY

Founded in 1935, Lexington Arts and Crafts (LexArt) continues to service the community and expand in resources and innovation throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Over the last 86 years, the educational non-profit collaborative has undergone many intentional and inevitable changes, but the ones enacted in the past year are completely reshaping LexArt to even further "encourage and inspire artisans at all stages of their journeys" and "enrich lives through the power of art and craft," quoted from their vision and mission statements.

In November 2020, Matthew Siegal, former Chair of the Department of Conservatism and Collections Management at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, was officially appointed as Executive Director and President of LexArt. Prior to Siegal, the organization was entirely volunteer run until March 2019 when the organization overhauled its internal structure and government, temporarily electing Wayne Davis, board member and chair, as interim president until they hired someone for a permanent position. And in addition to hiring an executive director, LexArt had been working on their big plans to redo their gallery space.

And then, the tired phrase – the pandemic hit. From that point on, LexArt went through hiring Siegal; ahead with the renovation; and now has been working on gradually reopening in 2021 with new broader outreach, exhibitions and programs with continuous help of dedicated volunteers who are still an extremely crucial part of the organization.

At the forefront is the new Molly Harding Nye Gallery, which opened at the end of 2020. The Molly Harding Nye Gallery is more than a small update in show-space, the renovation is a driving force in helping the discourse and dialogue of LexArt modernize. The 1,000-square-foot room is bright and sleek with all white floors and lighting; trendy but timeless. The clean, airy feeling is comforting going into 2021.

"It was a very strategic move and it's very much our intent to open up to the public more. It's not just a new space but a new approach to programming and we hope that'll make a big difference," said Davis.

Currently on view through March 7 at the gallery is the 25th Annual Regional High School Show. The modernized gallery being the perfect place for young, local emerging artists to display, and be recognized for, their work in a professional setting. In correspondence with Siegal, he emphasized the importance of continuing to work with the community's teens to expand LexArt beyond the membership and directly into the community, as well as working with those who are underserved and at risk. In addition to the show, the Teen Initiative at LexArt holds classes like Skateboard Making and other engaging and fun classes for students who are the future of the art's community in Massachusetts.



Opening on March 14, and running through April 4 at the Molly Harding Nye Gallery, "The Chemistry of FiberLab" is finally ready to launch after three postponements due to COVID-19 restrictions. Founded in 2015 by Jodi Colella, The FiberLab is a close and connected group of artists who work in mixed media, painting, printmaking, needle arts, surface design, dyeing and more, constantly experimenting and discovering their art beyond just creating. With well-thought out and detailed changes, 20 or so artists will be featuring their work.

This past summer, Colella had a solo exhibition at Boston Sculptors Gallery which familiarized her with a touchless environment, giving her an understanding of how to approach the exhibition safely and successfully.

"The Chemistry of FiberLab" will have both virtual and in-person components, each catered specifically to work well with the formatting and to be inclusive to everyone who desires to see the show. This will include an online reservation system, videos of the works, a virtual reception and a prerecorded tour.

Colella explains, "An in-person model can't be superimposed online, the tools are different." This is most definitely true, and the FiberLab's "no wrong answers" approach to their craft reflects the approach to bring the exhibition into fruition and success despite the COVID-19-related challenges.

"The State of Clay" will be exhibiting their 11th biennial juried show at LexArt, opening May 15 with a virtual

COMMUNITY

LEXINGTON ARTS & CRAFTS SOCIETY

130 WALTHAM STREET

LEXINGTON,
MASSACHUSETTS

LEXART.ORG

THE CHEMISTRY OF FIBERLAB

MARCH 14 THROUGH
APRIL 4

STATE OF CLAY

MAY 15 THROUGH JUNE 13
STATEOFCLAY.COM

LEFT: Holly Curcio, *Flock*, 2018, terracotta, 12" x 12" x 12", "The State of Clay."

RIGHT: Dayna Talbot, *Contained Energy*, 2020, Abaca pulp, thread, scrim, pigment and poultry wire, 24" x 15" (variable), "The Chemistry of FiberLab."



I wondered what I could possibly add to this issue in a meaningful way, and how I could relate to the people I've worked closely with over the last three years, since I joined the Artscope team.

Talking individually to Matthew Siegal, Wayne Davis, Jodi Colella and Joan Carcia about their own personal connections to LexArt, their community and their exhibitions; hearing the histories of their endeavors and just connecting to my arts community sparked my answer. We are all voices in the longevity, continued success and dedication to the local arts community.

Classes at LexArt.

artist's reception on May 23 at 5:30-6:30 p.m. (any changes can be found on lexart.org or stateofclay.com). Juried by Montana-based, Massachusetts-raised ceramic artist Julia Galloway, the show features works of clay by artists with a connection to Massachusetts.

Galloway, who was initially set to travel from Montana to Massachusetts, will be selecting awards virtually. Joan Carcia, co-founder of State of Clay, hopes to have every piece in the gallery but also plans to include videos from the artists. All dimensions and information will be online as well.

"Everybody involved has been super nice and understands that the show has to change," said Carcia.

The close-knit community behind State of Clay is still strong and Carcia still anticipates on meeting new people this year, although less than in the past. "State of Clay's" new approach, and more online involvement, will certainly fit in perfectly at the Molly Harding Nye Gallery.

Eighty-six years of LexArt, 25 years of State of Clay, six years of FiberLab and 15 years of Artscope Magazine: the arts community in Massachusetts and New England flourishes into 2021, growing and expanding in our community, together, despite closures, quarantining and distance.

As this is Artscope's 15th anniversary issue, I've been thinking a lot about what 15 years actually means and feels like as I read the reflections of my colleagues about their time writing for Artscope, some since the very beginning in 2006. (I was eight! This makes me 23, which I realize might be alarming but it's scary to me as well.)

Isabel Barbi

