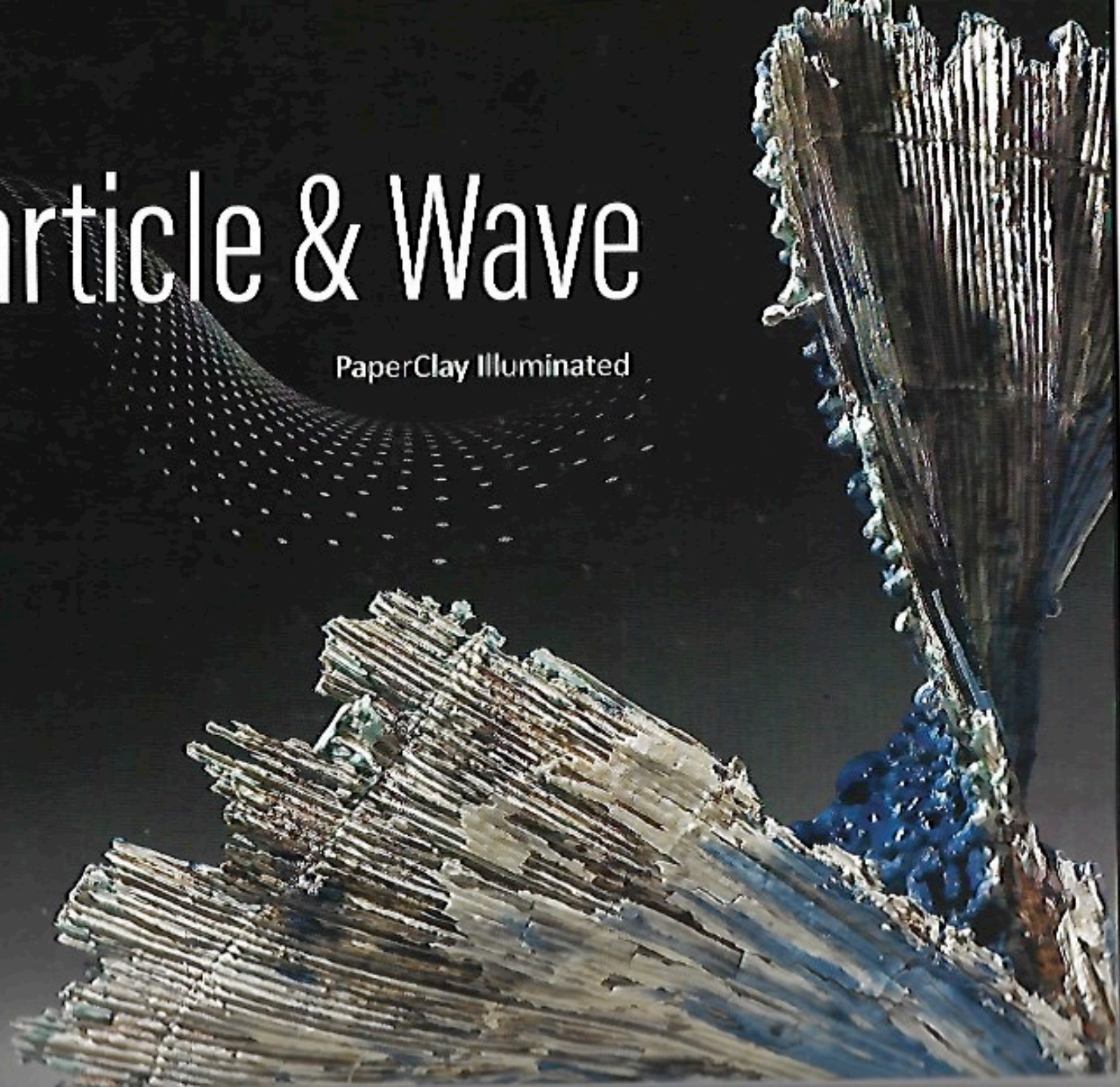


# Particle & Wave

PaperClay Illuminated



# 4

## INTRODUCTION

### Curators' Statement By Peter Held

I had limited knowledge of artists who incorporated paperclay or other types of fibers into their creative practice, when I was first approached to guest curate *Particulate Matter: Paperclay Illuminated*. I remembered watching the renowned artist Marilyn Levine at a workshop in the 1970s, chopping fiberglass, mixing it into her clay, allowing her to produce her iconic trompe l'oeil works fashioned to look like leather. It was a groundbreaking technique, one that allowed the artist to expand her expectations. In reviewing over 200 potential artists, my final selections were based not only upon my training as a studio ceramic artist and former curator of ceramics at the Arizona State University Art Museum, but on intuitive and emotional responses balanced by consideration of formal qualities of form, scale, and sustained visual engagement.

A persistent joy of the curatorial process is discovering talented artists previously unknown to me. While acquainted with several of the submitting artists, I have

always striven to champion emerging artists previously unfamiliar to me, artists from diverse cultures, with equal representation based on gender. I'm pleased with the combination of recognized and underserved artists for this show.

Exhibitions focused on a specific technique or material inherently have limitations, but the breadth of technique, concept, and form found in this exhibition runs counter to theory. My primary objective was to survey international works being created in the medium of paperclay. I found committed artists, who purposefully chose this material for its adaptability, tensile strength, translucency, and ecological and sustainable concerns. Many are investigating the potential of paperclay by adding an additional vocabulary to their process.

Several themes arose in the course of constructing the exhibition. Figural sculpture was portrayed using various approaches including realism, abstraction,

and the incorporation of universal spiritual beliefs. Several artists constructed matrix, grid, or lattice-like structures; visual references to the natural and scientific worlds reoccurred. Few of the artists worked solely in a strictly utilitarian fashion.

Varied approaches and manners of expression are all valid in a world of diverse expression. Some artists delve into self-referential experiences, while others explore the external world. The artists in this exhibition attempt to capture the world as they see it, be it from within arm's length or on the distant gaze of global issues.

The works mirror the broader field of ceramic arts; incorporating years of artistic preparation, honed by schooling, travel, experience, critical theory, knowledge of place, and repeated trips to the studio revisiting themes and craft. Whether minimal or exuberant, intimate or expansive, the exhibition highlights the talents finding agency using fibrous clay.

All are rich in personal artistic expression. While technical matters are of utmost importance to some, others dwell in the realm of imagination without limitations. Process and material lead them all to unexpected outcomes. The works in the exhibition became metaphors for our transitory nature and the uncertainty of the world we inhabit.

In closing I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to all the artists who provided me the opportunity to become acquainted with their art. The advisory committee comprised of pioneering artists in the paperclay movement should be commended for their unwavering support of this project. Their enthusiasm for this exhibition enriched my experience throughout this project. Lastly, to Lore Nelson, the driving force behind the exhibition, who had a vision for this project many years ago, kept it alive in a myriad of ways, as well as providing an in-depth historical perspective of the paperclay movement.

7th-Part Purple

Fired and Unfired Porcelain Paperclay, Handmade Paper, Organic Material

49" x 24" x 5"

