

An abstract painting on a pottery vessel, featuring bold, expressive brushstrokes in black, white, orange, yellow, and blue. The composition is dense and layered, with visible textures and a sense of movement. The text is overlaid on the central part of the image.

CLAY

GREENWICH HOUSE POTTERY
NOT FOR RESALE

is
JUST
THICK
PAINT

JENNIFER ROCHLIN

JANE HARTSOOK GALLERY AT GREENWICH HOUSE POTTERY

Greenwich House Pottery

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GREENWICH HOUSE POTTERY
FOR RESALE

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Edited by Kaitlin McClure and Adam Welch

Foreword by Adam Welch

Essay by Angelik Vizcarrondo-Laboy

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CURATED BY ANGELIK VIZCARRONDO-LABOY

FEBRUARY 21 – MARCH 20, 2020

JANE HARTSOOK GALLERY AT GREENWICH HOUSE POTTERY

GREENWICH HOUSE POTTERY

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FOREWORD

It is with great pleasure that we were able to show the ceramics of Los Angeles-based artist Jennifer Rochlin. A fixture in the LA art scene, this is her second solo exhibition in New York City in as many years. Rochlin's work aligns with the post neo-expressionist ethos that has taken the art world by storm. New to the medium, Rochlin has left the baggage and trappings of tradition and the field at the studio door and brought with her a painter's sensibility.

Our *Ceramics Now* series showcases between seven and eight exhibitions each year. In addition to our own curated exhibitions, we receive more than 40 exhibition proposals. Angelik Vizcarrondo-Laboy's stood out among the others and we are thrilled to promote the voice of this energetic up-and-coming curator, in tandem with this prolific West Coast artist.

Greenwich House's first exhibition was held at 26 Jones Street in 1905, and showcased pottery and modeling made by students. The exhibition was organized to acquaint the community with the activities the neighborhood youngsters had been engaged in. Prior to the development of a dedicated space, exhibitions took place at multiple locations: 27 Barrow Street, 16 Jones Street (where the Pottery has been since 1948), off-site storefronts, Gertrude Whitney's studio on 8th Street, a New York City Public Library and patrons' garden estates. In 1970, Jane Hartsook (Director, 1945-1982) created an exhibition space on the second floor. Upon her retirement in 1982, the second floor gallery was renamed the Jane Hartsook Gallery in her honor. In 2013, the Gallery was relocated to street level and inaugurated with Linda Lopez's New York City solo-exhibition debut. The gallery continues Jane Hartsook's legacy in its new location,

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leading the field in the presentation of the most important ceramics exhibitions in New York City.

Over the next 115 years, the Pottery maintained its tradition of displaying ceramics for the benefit of both the artist and the community. Although it has evolved over the years, the core of that culture and certainly the spirit of exhibition manifest in those early endeavors still remain. The energy harnessed from these amateurs and our location in New York's West Village has been a constant at the Pottery. GHP is dedicated to expanding public awareness of the diversity and complexity of ceramics while fostering the development of artists through internships, residencies, exhibitions and classes.

In 2013, we launched *Ceramics Now*, the exhibition series and namesake of the resident and fellow exhibition, to highlight the varied works and artists that both shape and characterize the ethos of our time. We see the role of the series as posing the question, "What is ceramics now?" The work we select and the artists that create it are the catalyst to an answer. The series highlights the latest activities and developments, creative and technological, in the field. Without one grand scheme uniting the work on a conceptual level, we are afforded a broader spectrum of artists and artwork encapsulating many more possibilities. Selected by committee, co-chaired by Kaitlin McClure and myself, from artists' proposals and our own curatorial projects, no certain theme prevails, just a bouquet of possibilities.

Adam Welch is the Director of Greenwich House Pottery and Lecturer at Princeton University.

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BY ANGELIK VIZCARRONDO-LABOY

Clay is Just Thick Paint is an exhibition of work by Los Angeles-based artist, Jennifer Rochlin (born 1968, United States) at Greenwich House Pottery's Jane Hartsook Gallery. Trained as a painter, Rochlin began using earthenware to hand-build coiled pots and tiles out of slabs to explore a different aspect of her painting practice. She uses underglaze, glaze, and sgraffito (a scratching technique) to create highly expressive and painterly compositions on the surfaces of her pieces that suggest

spontaneity and dynamism. Borrowing from pop culture, decorative patterns, art history, the California landscape, and personal memories, her pots and tiles function as storytelling tools. This imagery populates the distinctive forms of her pots, each with a unique language of bulges, dents, undulations, and textures that echo the diversity of human bodies. The resulting work is a group of engaging sculptural vessels with vibrant and compelling surfaces. Their compositions are revealed as visitors experience them in the round.

The exhibition features seven pots and three reliefs created around themes of love, lust, and longing. The inspiration for the more recent pieces in this group came from Rochlin's time at the Civitella Ranieri Foundation residency in Italy during the summer of 2019. While at this month-long gathering of international writers, composers, visual artists, and scholars, Rochlin bonded with her colleagues when they gathered for dinners on the veranda every night. Soon, many shared stories about how they fell in love with their significant others. A composer in the group instead described how she fell in love with her piano. These narratives became the source for the vignettes on *Sky Falls in Love* (2019), *Cyrus and Rosie* (2019), *Jerry and David* (2020), and *Falconers, Myra and Me and Rachel* (2019), each piece representing an individual love story. Rochlin developed a fascination with the emotive way her colleagues used their hands and began to photograph their hands as they were engaged in storytelling. She references these hands in this series of works, along with the veranda where the stories were shared; the latter is distinguishable by the recurring checkered tablecloth. Also in the exhibition are a trio of reliefs, a format that is relatively new to Rochlin's oeuvre. They represent an extension of her tiles, exploring more texture and dimension. *Wild Belle*, which was made in 2018 at another residency with Lefebvre & Fils in France, was also inspired by her surroundings and romantic longing.

Other featured works, such as *Some Time After Midnight* (2019), are autobiographical, inspired by the artist's own amorous and

sexual experiences, of which she allows us to have voyeuristic glimpses. She interweaves these snapshots of nudity with rug patterns—a recurrent motif throughout the artist's career—and imagery of natural sights such as California's Superbloom, a phenomenon in which a high concentration of wildflowers bloom in the desert. Rochlin's interest in the body extends beyond the paintings of people on the surfaces of her work. Her pots recall the organic lumps and bumps of the human body, from bellies to breasts, a result of being made by hand instead of on the wheel, making the artist's own body, particularly her hands, present. Furthermore, sometimes the pots also become bodies symbolically. *Bites and Bruises* (2019), for example, conveys Rochlin's penchant for biting as an erotic act. The artist bit the unfired clay, a method she first used in 2017 to better depict bites on the back of one of the figures she had painted on a pot. She now incorporates this technique into her practice regularly as a way to convey emotion and the urgency of desire. This pot also represents a departure from Rochlin's usual imagery-heavy pots, featuring an abstract pattern of blue and purple blots that represent bruises, as the title suggests. An admirer of artist Betty Woodman's (1930–2018, United States) ceramics, Rochlin is influenced by her use of color, painterly brushstrokes, patterning, and respect for classic forms in ceramics.

Rochlin's process is organic and raw, instinctive and intimate, showing deep respect for the material by letting the structure of the vessel appear as she goes, without much premeditation, and then inscribing blurry images on its surfaces, much like a diary or a dreamscape. However, her relationship with clay is young and developed through a trial by fire. She studied painting at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, where she received her MFA in 1999 and in 2002 took a job teaching art, mostly drawing and painting, at a high school in Los Angeles. During her first week at this job, the school received a \$10,000 grant to start a ceramics program. Despite her ease with clay now, at the time, she had never touched clay. Nonetheless, she took on the challenge. Rochlin signed up for a pottery class at a local ceramics studio and adapted what she learned there to set up

an entire ceramics program from scratch. She learned through experimentation alongside her students for five years, growing the program to be the most popular at the school.

Although Rochlin left the job in 2006 to focus on her career as a painter, the following year, she returned during the hot summer to work with clay in the comfort of the air-conditioned facilities of the school. It was then that she began to roll slabs into tiles on which she began painting, marking a seminal moment in Rochlin's career. Tile became her canvas. In 2014, Rochlin's friend suggested she paint on pots instead of tiles in order to tell a story in the round. Thus, she began her transition from tiles, which are relatively similar to cloth canvases in their two-dimensionality, onto what is now iconic of her practice: coil-built vessels. She has almost exclusively worked with clay since then. Her pots at times feel more akin to film than painting, unveiling new scenes with every turn that create a continuous narrative.

This exhibition borrows its title from a quote by renowned artist Peter Voulkos (1924–2002, United States), who, at age seventy-five—only three years before his death—during an interview said: “clay is just thick paint, and paint is nothing but thin clay.”¹ Voulkos initially pursued painting in school but was turned to ceramics through a range of interactions with the medium. Influenced by Picasso's ceramics and the tenets of Abstract Expressionism, among other cultural and artistic influences, Voulkos upturned his practice in 1956. Credited with changing the course of ceramics thereon, he violently slashed, dented, and pierced his perfectly thrown pieces until rendered not functional and rapidly brushed hobby glazes on the surfaces, techniques which were unseen at the time. These sculptures were the result of a desire to break with the prescribed norms of traditional ceramics, such as the necessity for pottery to be functional and well-balanced. Although he is best known for his ceramics, by the early 1960s, Voulkos had turned to painting and bronze-working almost exclusively. Despite this shift in focus in his career, he continued teaching ceramics at Greenwich House

Pottery through 1964 over the summers before returning to clay in 1968 full force.²

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More and more in recent years, the barriers between art and craft have collapsed nationally. This movement is particularly exemplified by the inclusion of craft materials, especially ceramics, in exhibitions and art fairs within the “mainstream” art world and through the vast number of artists from varied backgrounds turning to the medium for creative expression. Paint and clay are not chemically the same, but Voulkos’s intention was more metaphorical, implying that while not wholly interchangeable, both materials should be equivalent in being taken seriously as vehicles for artistic expression. He also said: “painting helps the sculpture, sculpture helps the painting, pottery helps both” foreshadowing the interdisciplinary process preferred by many artists today, including Rochlin.³ She makes a strong case for supporting Voulkos’s statements by not creating strictly paintings or pots, but rather a hybrid of both, proving the mediums can coexist equitably outside arbitrary hierarchies.

This exhibition presents a love story in its own right. That of Rochlin’s love for clay and painting, as she celebrates the most archetypal and rudimentary forms in the lexicon of ceramics, coiled pots and tiles, as transformed by the effects of the paintbrush. Through her work, clay comes to life, like a rippling skin that pulsates with energy as it forms a symbiotic relationship with the colors, brushstrokes, and scratches—a collection of three-dimensional ceramic paintings that demonstrate that after all, clay is just thick paint.

1 Drohojowska-Philp, Hunter. “Breaking Ground Still Fires Him Up.” *Los Angeles Times*, November 14, 1999.

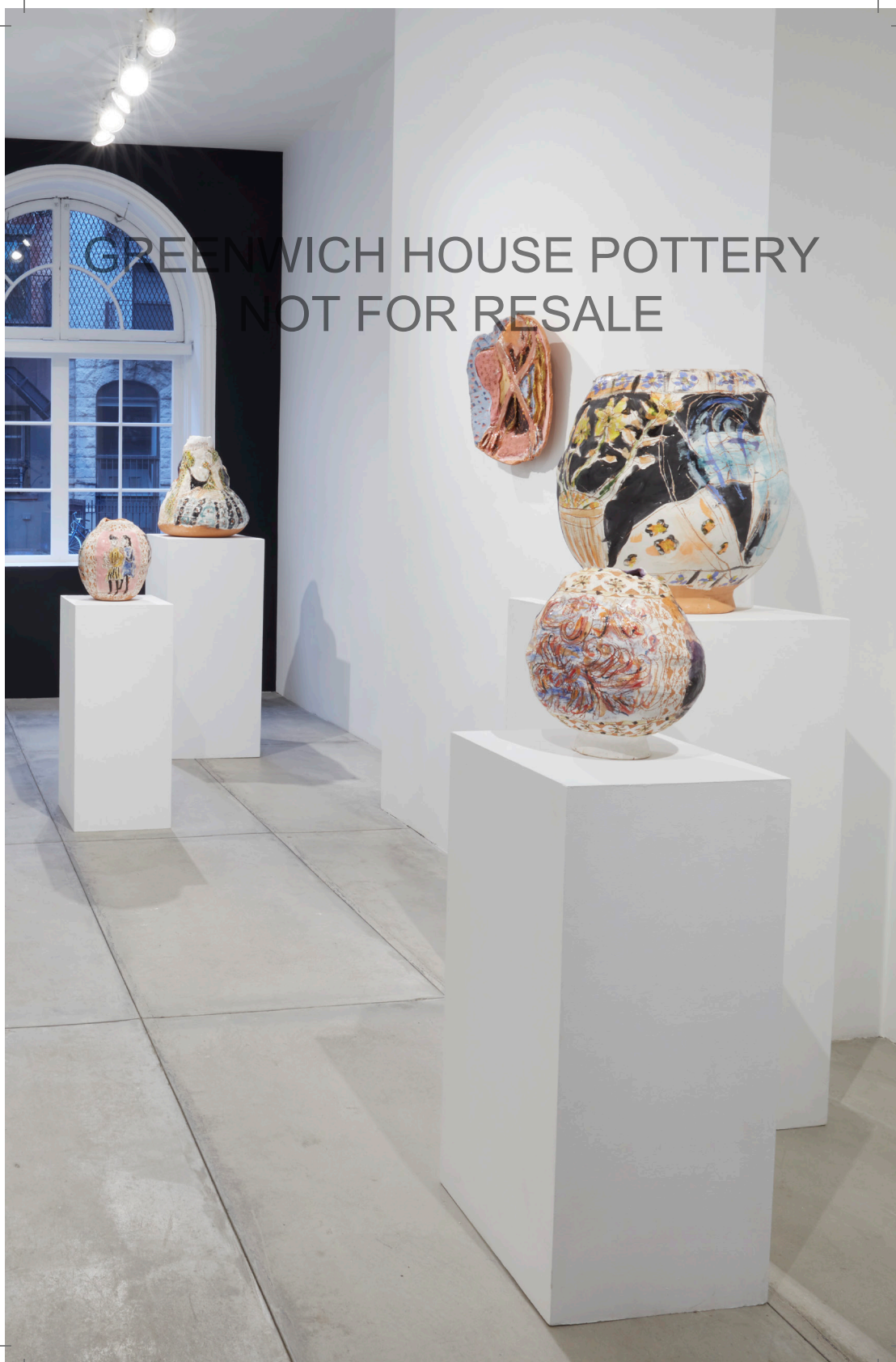
2 Adamson, Glenn. “Introduction.” In *Voulkos: The Breakthrough Years*, edited by Glenn Adamson, Andrew Perchuck, and Barbara Paris Gifford, 7. London: Black Dog Publishing Limited, 2016.

3 Paris Gifford, Barbara. “Thrown and Painted.” In *Voulkos: The Breakthrough Years*, edited by Glenn Adamson, Andrew Perchuck, and Barbara Paris Gifford, 166. London: Black Dog Publishing Limited, 2016.

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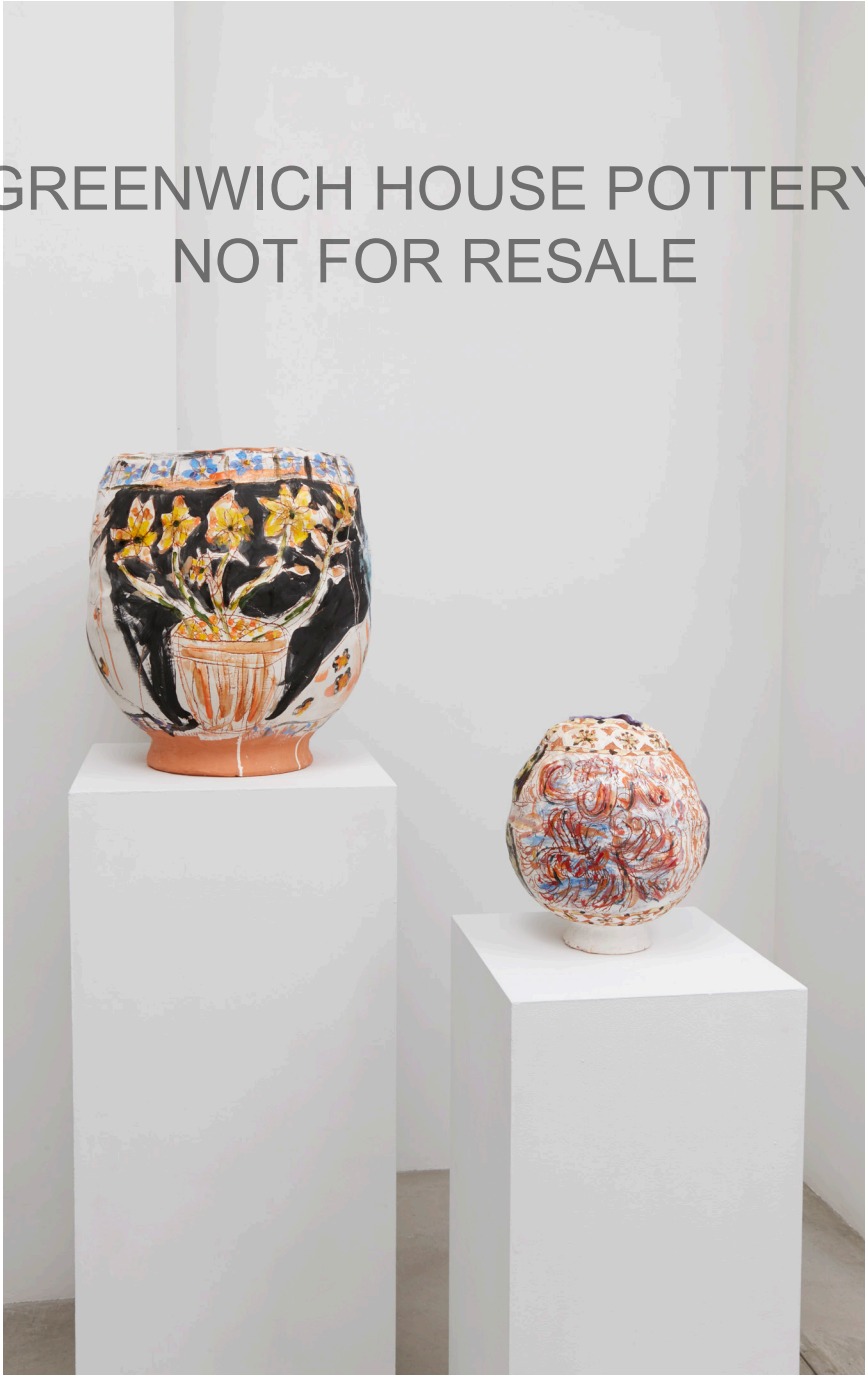


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Wild Belle

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Left: *Pot of Flowers*, Bethany Hamilton, *Sgraffito Figures*
Right: Jerry and David

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Jerry and David

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Jerry and David

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Pot of Flowers, Bethany Hamilton, Sgraffito Figures

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Left: *Bites and Bruises*
Right: *Joe's Back*

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Some Time After Midnight

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Some Time After Midnight

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Falconers, Myra and Me and Rachel

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Sky's Hands

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Sky Falls in Love

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Cyrus and Rosie

CURATOR ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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It has been a great pleasure to curate *Clay Is Just Thick Paint* for Greenwich House Pottery's Jane Hartsook Gallery—the sole exhibition space dedicated to the medium of clay in New York City. First and foremost, this show would be impossible without the artist. I want to give an enormous thank you and congratulations to the incredible Jennifer Rochlin. Thank you for agreeing to come on this journey with me and for trusting me with your work. I am immensely grateful to the entire team at Greenwich House Pottery for believing in this project and helping realize it, especially Director Adam Welch and Gallery and Residency Manager Kaitlin McClure. The latter has been an instrumental collaborator throughout the making of this exhibition.

Thank you to Elizabeth Essner for providing me with the article from which I borrowed the title of the show and to the editors of *Voulkos: The Breakthrough Years*, Glenn Adamson, Andrew Perchuck, and Barbara Paris Gifford, and author Jenni Sorkin, for the most foundational education on Peter Voulkos. I would also like to thank MAD Chief Curator Elissa Auther for supporting and encouraging me in this endeavor, MAD Curatorial Assistant Alida Jekabson for providing invaluable feedback on the essay, and Barbara Paris Gifford, MAD Associate Curator for her keen eye for design. Last but not least, I would like to thank my partner Frank Lopez for being the most supportive presence in my life and for instilling a more profound love for California and everything it has to offer in me.

BIOS

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Jennifer Rochlin (born 1968 in Baltimore, MD) is a Los Angeles-based artist working in ceramics and painting. She has had solo exhibitions at Geary Contemporary (New York, NY; 2019), Lefebvre & Fils (Paris, France; 2018), The Pit (Los Angeles, CA; 2018) and Black Dragon Society (Los Angeles, CA; 2007). Rochlin's work has been featured in numerous group and two person shows such as *Paintings and Pots*, The Green Gallery (Milwaukee, WI; 2018); *Jennifer Rochlin/Gene Moreno*, Institute of Visual Arts, University of Milwaukee, (WI; 2007); *Home Show, Revisited*, Santa Barbara Contemporary Arts Forum (CA; 2011), *Open Daybook*, Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions (CA; 2011); *MKE-LAX*, Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design (WI; 2012); Venice Beach Biennial, in conjunction with *Made in LA*, Hammer Museum (Los Angeles, CA; 2012) and *Sculptures*, 356 Mission (Los Angeles, CA; 2013). Rochlin is the recipient of the Individual Artist Grant from the Belle Foundation (2015) and the Durfee Foundation ARC Grant (2007) and has had residencies at Lefebvre & Fils (Versailles, France; 2018) and Civitella Ranieri (Umbria, Italy; 2019).

Angelik Vizcarrondo-Laboy (born 1992 in San Juan, Puerto Rico) is a New York-based curator, writer and arts administrator focusing on contemporary art and craft, with an emphasis on ceramics. She serves as Assistant Curator at the Museum of Arts and Design (MAD), New York. Since 2016, she has been part of MAD's curatorial team, helping to organize over nineteen exhibitions and installations. She also manages MAD's Burke Prize, a contemporary craft award, and curates its accompanying exhibition. She is a 2020 Curatorial Fellow at the Center for Craft (Asheville, NC), where she is curating *Sleight of Hand*, a group show of ceramics that demonstrate the power of humor as a tool of resistance, resilience, and healing. She holds an MA from the Bard Graduate Center in Decorative Arts, Design History & Material Culture and a BA in Art History from the University of Florida, with minors in Anthropology and Ceramics.

SPONSORS

GREENWICH HOUSE POTTERY

GHP is a community space where artists come together to work out ideas and create new works—sharing knowledge and supporting one another in a social context that is rich in history, culture, expertise and ideas. Community and collaboration at GHP are fostered through discussions between faculty, students and staff. Over the past 115 years, GHP has stayed true to its core values—to inquire and to create—by experimenting with the creative use of clay.

Nonprofit arts organizations like GHP play a vital role in community building and providing access to the arts.

Our programs are supported by the Windgate Foundation, the Lenore G. Tawney Foundation, the Hompe Foundation, the Milton and Sally Avery Arts Foundation, and by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.

THE WINDGATE FOUNDATION Founded in 1993, the Windgate Foundation was formed by Dorothea Hutcheson of Fort Smith, Arkansas. It is a private grant-making foundation with primary funding interest in projects that promote and support contemporary craft and visual arts.

THE LENORE G. TAWNEY FOUNDATION was established in 1989 by pioneer fiber artist Lenore Tawney (1907-2007) for charitable and educational purposes. She endowed the Foundation with her life's resources, artistic and financial. Consistent with the artist's philanthropic interests, the Foundation supports the visual arts with a focus on craft media, including fiber art. Its broad aim is to increase public access to and knowledge about the visual arts and to assist learning opportunities for emerging artists. For additional information about Lenore Tawney's life and work and the Lenore G. Tawney Foundation, please visit: Lenore G. Tawney Foundation: <http://lenoretawney.org/>

Lenore Tawney was a pioneering American artist. She created a body of innovative woven work that helped to shape the course of fiber art during the second half of the twentieth century. Tawney is equally known for the highly personal collages, sculptural assemblages, drawings and postcards that she began during the 1960s and continued to create throughout her long life.

GREENWICH HOUSE POTTERY

ROBERT AND BEATRICE HOMPE FOUNDATION was founded in 1963 to help support the Police Athletic League of Philadelphia. Upon the untimely death of Robert Hompe in the 1970s, the management of the foundation was taken over by Beatrice Hompe, Patricia Hompe Gibson and Robert Hompe II. Currently, it is operated by Patricia, Deborah Gibson Kiernan and David Downing Gibson. The foundation has expanded its giving to include many community-focused organizations such as the Church of the Redeemer, the Ministry of Caring, the University of the Arts, Washington College and Hamilton College, among others.

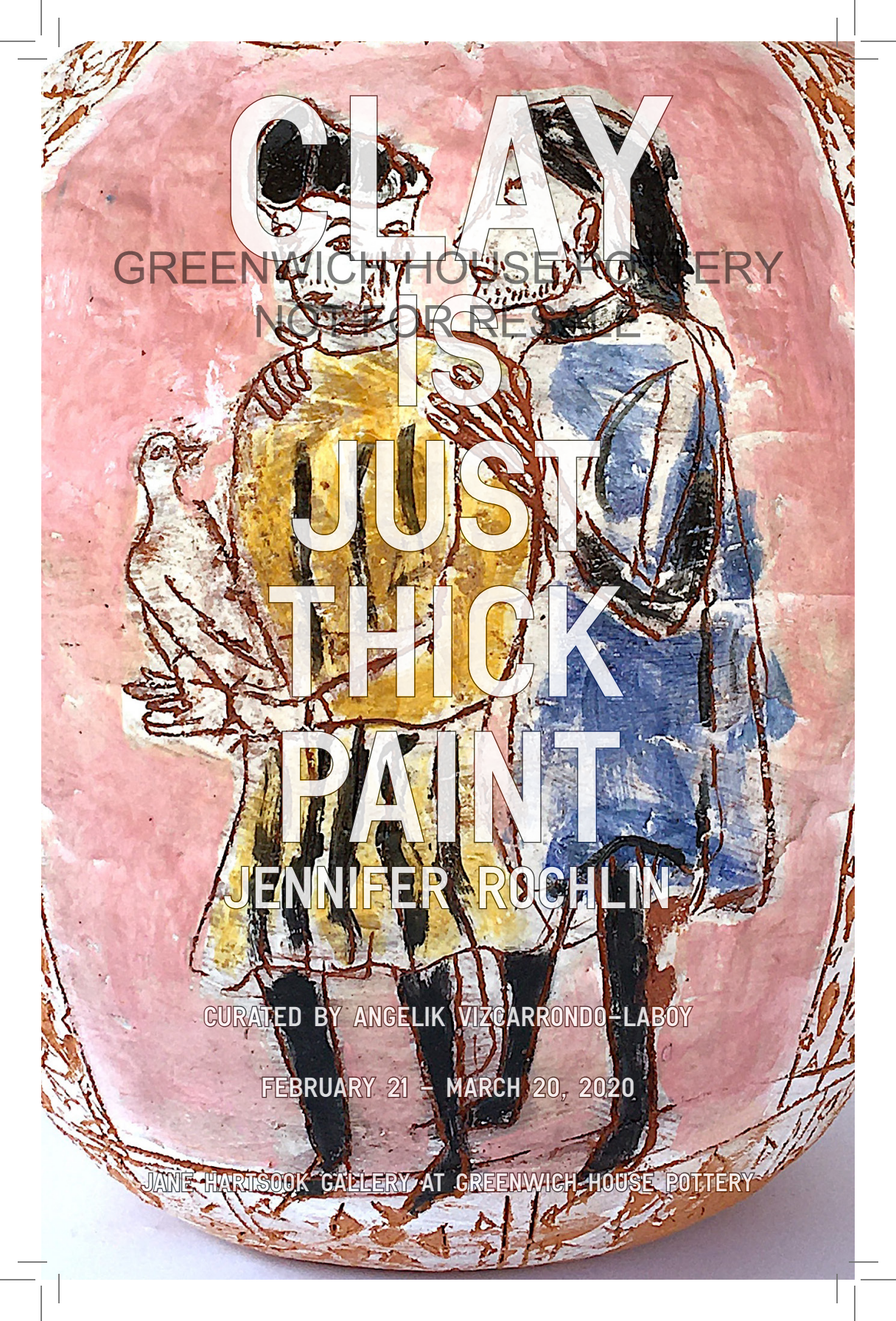
MILTON AND SALLY AVERY ARTS FOUNDATION Founded in 1980, the Milton and Sally Avery Arts Foundation is committed to supporting institutions and projects in the arts and arts education. Milton Clark Avery was an American Painter. Sally Michel was an American illustrator.

THE NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS (DCLA) is dedicated to supporting and strengthening New York City's vibrant cultural life. Among the primary missions is to ensure adequate public funding for nonprofit cultural organizations, both large and small, throughout the five boroughs.

DCLA also works to promote and advocate for quality arts programming and to articulate the contribution made by the cultural community to the City's economic vitality. The Department represents and serves nonprofit cultural organizations involved in the visual, literary and performing arts; public-oriented science and humanities institutions including zoos, botanical gardens and historic and preservation societies; and creative artists at all skill levels who live and work within the City's five boroughs.

Through its Materials for the Arts Program, DCLA provides free supplies for use in arts programs offered by nonprofit groups and New York City public schools. DCLA has also changed the physical landscape of New York City through its Percent for Art program by commissioning more than 180 works of art by some of the world's leading artists at public building sites throughout the city.





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