



**"A Whisper of Where It Came From" opens at
Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art**



Nicole Cherubini, Sun Was Blue

KANSAS CITY, MO.- For the second consecutive year, Kemper Museum of Contemporary, Kansas City, Missouri, has been awarded a prestigious grant from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). One year ago, the NEA announced a grant to Kemper Museum in the amount of \$20,000, in support of the exhibition Adam Cvijanovic: American Montage, and coordinated programming.

In December, the NEA announced awards in its first funding round of fiscal year 2016, including an Art Works award of \$40,000 to Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art in support of the 2016 exhibition titled, A Whisper of Where It

TRACY WILLIAMS, Ltd.

Came From. The exhibition opened March 11 and remains on view through July 24, 2016 in the Museum's Charlotte Crosby Kemper Gallery. A Whisper of Where It Came From is organized by Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art and curated by Erin Dziedzic, Curator and Head of Adult Programs.

A Whisper of Where It Came From, coinciding with the National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts' (NCECA) 50th Anniversary Conference held in Kansas City, features works by six artists who integrate ceramics into their broader mixed-media art practices including painting, printmaking, sculpture, and installation. Artists Huma Bhabha (b. 1962), Nicole Cherubini (b. 1970), Mark Cooper (b. 1950), Jiha Moon (b. 1973), Sterling Ruby (b. 1972), and Arlene Shechet (b. 1951) each activate the tactility of clay by creating surfaces that capture the gesture of the artist's hand. The works of art, created during the past decade, include references to figuration, abstraction, landscape, and still life traditions.

Arlene Shechet's gestural sculptures embody notions of improvisation in the playfulness of shapes and colors she employs, and become a record of the artist's hand through the built layers and impressions formed in the clay. Giving equal focus to form and duration in her sculpture, Shechet's practice is akin to the Buddhist philosophy of considering the whole of the work. Mark Cooper's mixed-media installations feature organically shaped structures, lotus flower-like ceramic vessels and vibrantly colored forms displaying stylistic influences from Asian art and culture. Korean-born Jiha Moon draws attention to complex cultural iconography by blending references such as computer emoticons, lotus blossoms, Hopi Kachina figures, and talisman-like works inspired by Korean norigae in her paintings and sculptural ceramic objects and installations.

Artist Huma Bhabha imaginatively combines raw and industrial materials such as clay, plexiglass, wood, wire, and Styrofoam to create forms whose gestures convincingly mimic the human body. Bhabha's crude gestural portraits drawn and collaged onto photographs of abstracted earth textures, rubble, and landscapes,

TRACY WILLIAMS, Ltd.

serve as a setting for her sculptural works and provide imagery that speaks to the artist's inspiration from the landscape in and around her birthplace of Karachi, Pakistan. Sterling Ruby fills large-scale ceramic basins with an array of ceramic objects fashioned into tools, rocks, animal tusks, and shards of rusted metal. Gathered inside the pinched, poked, and prodded vessel's interior and splashed with glazes in an earthy palette, Ruby's collection of disparate objects appears both fossilized and fresh. In her practice, Nicole Cherubini uses both ceramic and unfired clay, finished and working material, to approach historical and contemporary motifs of vessels and tiles. Together, artist's works in *A Whisper of Where It Came From* speak to the expanded field of contemporary ceramics.