



Paul S. Briggs: Material Shapes in Clay

January 20 — March 23, 2022*

*The five pinch-formed vessels in the front room
will only remain on view through March 17.*

**Swarthmore College is pleased to honor
Paul S. Briggs as the Donald J. Gordon
Visiting Artist and Lecturer for 2021–2022**

The List Gallery is pleased to present *Paul S. Briggs: Material Shapes in Clay*, a selection of signature works by the noted American ceramic artist. Early in his career, Briggs became well known for creating high relief clay vessels that evoke the delicate symmetry of plant forms. He pinch-forms these vessels through a labor-intensive and meditative process, and the resulting works evoke a corresponding sense of ritual and gravitas. Briggs' slab-formed vessels have the spiritual resonance of ancient architecture and the muscular beauty of varied Chinese ceramic traditions. A centerpiece of the exhibition is *Cell Personae: The Impact of Incarceration on Black Lives*, an ambitious wall installation made up of 25 slab and coil sculptures. Each component of *Cell Personae* measures approximately 6 x 8 inches, reflecting the proportions of prison cells in the United States, which measure, on average, approximately six by eight-feet. *Cell Personae* grew out of Briggs' work as a Baptist pastor from 2004-2014, and his wide-ranging social justice initiatives, such as facilitating interfaith study groups, working to mitigate and prevent domestic violence, and advocating for affordable housing.

Briggs earned an MFA from the Massachusetts College of Art, an MSED from Alfred University, and a PhD in Art Education/Educational Theory and Policy from the Pennsylvania State University. Currently, he is Associate Professor of Art Education at Massachusetts College of Art and Design. He has also taught in various contexts, including at the Penland School of Craft in North Carolina, Haystack Mountain School of Craft in Maine, and the Harvard University Ceramics Program in Massachusetts as a resident artist from 2019-2020. His recent awards include a grant from the South Eastern Minnesota Arts Council. He is represented by Lucy Lacoste Gallery, Concord, Mass and exhibits with Friedman Benda Gallery, New York, NY. More information and images: psbriggs.com, <https://artaxis.org/paul-briggs/>

This exhibition and accompanying events have been made possible by The Donald J. Gordon Art Fund and the ongoing generosity of the family of Donald J. Gordon '49.