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For Immediate Release

## ARTISTS EXPLORE CULTURAL HERITAGE IN INNOVATIVE NEW EXHIBITIONS AT FITCHBURG ART MUSEUM



Daniela Rivera, **Tilted Heritage**, 2015, ash on canvas, stretcher bars, C-clamps, cable, dimensions variable. 2019 FAM installation includes copperpoint wall drawing. Photo credit: Charles Sternaimolo.

Visitors will be drawn into two new immersive solo exhibitions at the Fitchburg Art Museum (FAM): **Daniela Rivera: Labored Landscapes (where hand meets ground)** and **David Katz: Earth Wares**, on view now through January 12, 2020. Artists Daniela Rivera and David Katz explore the concepts of labor and the relationship among earth, the body, and cultural heritage. Rivera's exhibition showcases three distinct projects that capture the breadth of the artist's work, including new paintings and the site-specific installation **White Noise**. Katz's new clay sculptures and site-specific installation at FAM reflect his recent investigation of the vessel as a symbolic form.

### **Daniela Rivera: Labored Landscapes (where hand meets ground)**

Daniela Rivera's painting focuses on the intersections of various histories—of art, nation, and her own personal experiences. Her established practice not only smartly plays on multiple histories but also exists between painting and architecture, minimalist and baroque aesthetics, the poetic and the literal.

In this exhibition, three distinct installations offer a compelling survey of Rivera's practice. The "labored landscapes," as she calls her new topographical paintings of miners' hands and torsos, merge portraiture and landscape. The landscape is represented as a "living document" of Chuquicamata, one of the world's largest open-pit copper mines, located in northern Chile. This mine, once the source of national pride and economic might, has since experienced poor environmental conditions that have necessitated the town's population to relocate to nearby Calama. Rivera's large-scale paintings, accompanied by photos etched with interviews of former workers, explore the physical and emotional connections that are made with the earth through the labor of the miner and, in turn, the artist.

The miners' interviews and Rivera's own impressions of her native Chile, like other narratives visually explored in the artworks, allude to the complexity and uncertainty of national and personal stories, as well as the paradox of labor that is both productive and destructive.

The other two works by Rivera in the exhibition dramatically respond to the spaces within which they are installed, thereby heightening viewers' engagement with the art and galleries. Like her "labored landscapes," **Tilted Heritage**, and **White Noise** are inspired by place—urban infrastructure, an industrial landscape, and/or museum architecture. **Tilted Heritage**'s canvas walls are layered with ash, alluding to the trauma of a devastating fire in Valparaíso, Chile in 2014 and the old infrastructure that exacerbated it. Rivera's **White Noise** draws attention to architectural features of FAM's Connector Gallery, which bridges the Museum's original building with a later addition. Her copperpoint drawing mirrors the slope of the Gallery windows, creating an experiential, literal reference to one-point perspective—a traditional technique used in the illusionistic representation of three-dimensional space. Fitchburg Art Museum Curator, Lisa Crossman, notes: "These installations upend perspective through the labor of simulation and encase stories within deposits of material, rewarding viewers with both a physical and conceptual experience."

As with all exhibitions at FAM, gallery labels and wall texts will be in both English and Spanish. For **Daniela Rivera: Labored Landscapes**, FAM will also produce a small bilingual exhibition catalogue and an expanded online version.

**This exhibition is supported by a generous sponsorship from Resource Management, Inc. (RMI).**

### David Katz: Earth Wares



David Katz, **Artifactual Body** (detail), 2019, clay, wood, wire, dimensions variable. Photo credit: Charles Sternaimolo.

In **Earth Wares**, David Katz presents new sculptures and a site-specific installation that are inspired by the formal traditions of vessels produced in geographic regions ranging from China to Peru. Katz expands upon his past experimentation with unfired clay installations that address themes of impermanence and make plain the evidence of labor. In addition to his use of clay, a material that has been employed to craft vessels for thousands of years, Katz also considers the breadth of ceramic history to be a mosaic of cultural innovation and tradition that reveals both cultural distinctions and fluidity across geographic regions.

The ceramic sculptures on view are inspired by a selection of traditions to emphasize the vessel as a shared, age-old cultural icon. Terrana Curatorial Fellow, Marjorie Rawle, states: "Katz's fusion of various ceremonial and functional wares recognizes distinct techniques and designs developed by specific cultures, while finding commonality in the vessel as a



shared transnational form. In doing so, Katz challenges the rigidity of cultural identity and edifice.”

Katz’s intimate installation, **Artifactual Body**, was crafted on site from unfired clay and provides the viewer with a metaphorical experience of the vessel’s principal function: containment. Clay is a familiar material that embodies the primal and temporal. Its use for both utilitarian and sacred vessels is embraced in Katz’s installation, which is unexpected and immersive, while remaining familiar through the repetition of a common form.

These exhibitions are organized by FAM Curator Lisa Crossman and Terrana Curatorial Fellow Marjorie Rawle.

## Artists’ Biographies

Born in Santiago, Chile, **Daniela Rivera** is a Boston-area artist who received her BFA from Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile in 1996 and her MFA from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts at Tufts, Boston in 2006. She is currently an Associate Professor of Studio Art at Wellesley College. She has exhibited widely in Latin American cities including Santiago, Chile, as well as in the United States. Rivera is the recipient of the deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum’s prestigious 2019 Rappaport Prize. She has also been awarded residencies at Proyecto ACE in Buenos Aires, Vermont Studio Arts Center, and the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. Notable fellowships and grants include: from Now + There, VSC, the National Association of Latino Arts and Culture, and the Berkshire Taconic Foundation. Recent or upcoming exhibitions include: *The Andes Inverted*, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (2017–2018); *Fragmentos para una Historia del Olvido/ Fragments for a History of Displacement*, The Davis Museum, Wellesley College, Wellesley, MA (2018–2019); *En Busca de los Andes*, solo exhibition with Proyecto ACE, Buenos Aires, Argentina (June 2019); *Root Shock: Hannah, Chalew, Daniela Rivera, Corrine Spencer* at the Kniznick Gallery (summer/fall 2019); *Sobremesa (Karaoke Politics)*, a public art project developed during her Now + There Accelerator Fellowship, Boston MA (summer/fall 2019).

**David Katz** is a Rhode Island-based sculptor and installation artist working with ceramics, found objects, and unfired clay. His work explores notions of existence within a fabricated reality of cultural space, human tendencies of expansion, and the fragility of social constructs. Katz received a BFA from the University of Wisconsin in 2005 and an MFA from Indiana University in 2012. He has been awarded residencies at Greenwich House Pottery, Arrowmont School of Arts & Crafts, Watershed Center for Ceramic Arts, Arizona State University Museum of Art, and at the International Ceramic Research Center in Denmark. David has held numerous teaching appointments including at Bennington College, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, the Hubei Institute of Fine Arts in China, and his current position at Rhode Island School of Design. A recent recipient of the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts Fellowship in 3D Arts, his work has been widely exhibited nationally and internationally in-group and solo exhibitions as well as through corporate commissions.

## Programming

Artist Talk: Pushing the Boundaries with Daniela Rivera and David Katz  
Sunday, November 10, 1:30 pm

Event FREE with Museum admission.

## About FAM

FAM Mission: The Fitchburg Art Museum is a catalyst for learning, creativity, and community building. We accomplish this mission with art historical collections and exhibitions, special exhibitions of contemporary New England art, education programs, public art projects, community partnerships, and creative economy initiatives.

FAM Vision: All decisions, initiatives, projects, and programs at the Fitchburg Art Museum reflect our commitment to education and the greater community.

The Fitchburg Art Museum serves the cities of Fitchburg and Leominster and the surrounding communities in North Central Massachusetts and Southern New Hampshire. Founded in 1925, FAM plays a vital role in the cultural life of the region and has recently repositioned itself to focus on community access and service. FAM uses its artistic and educational resources to aid in the economic revitalization of Fitchburg, and the Museum maintains active educational partnerships with the local school systems, as well as Fitchburg State University. FAM is an engine for creativity, education, community building and fun!

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