



# MITCH IBURG

Diagenesis

SOLO EXHIBITION / LOS ANGELES

SageCulture™

MITCH IBURG  
DIAGENESIS



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# ABOUT THE ARTIST



Mitch Iburg (b. 1989) is an American ceramic artist based in Saint Paul, Minnesota.

His studio practice is influenced by the earth's geological record - specifically, as a manifestation of its ability to remember, rewrite, and inevitably forget the history through which it was formed.

The artist translates this concept into his work by using foraged clays, stones, fossils, and glacial debris to re-frame the volcanic eruptions, ancient seas, and ice sheets that have shaped the landscapes around him.

Researching the diversity of Minnesota's geological past has inspired a way of making that both embraces and challenges conventional ceramic traditions. In an effort to promote various materials along a spectrum of art forms, Mitch's work frequently shifts between vessel, sculpture, and two-dimensional formats.

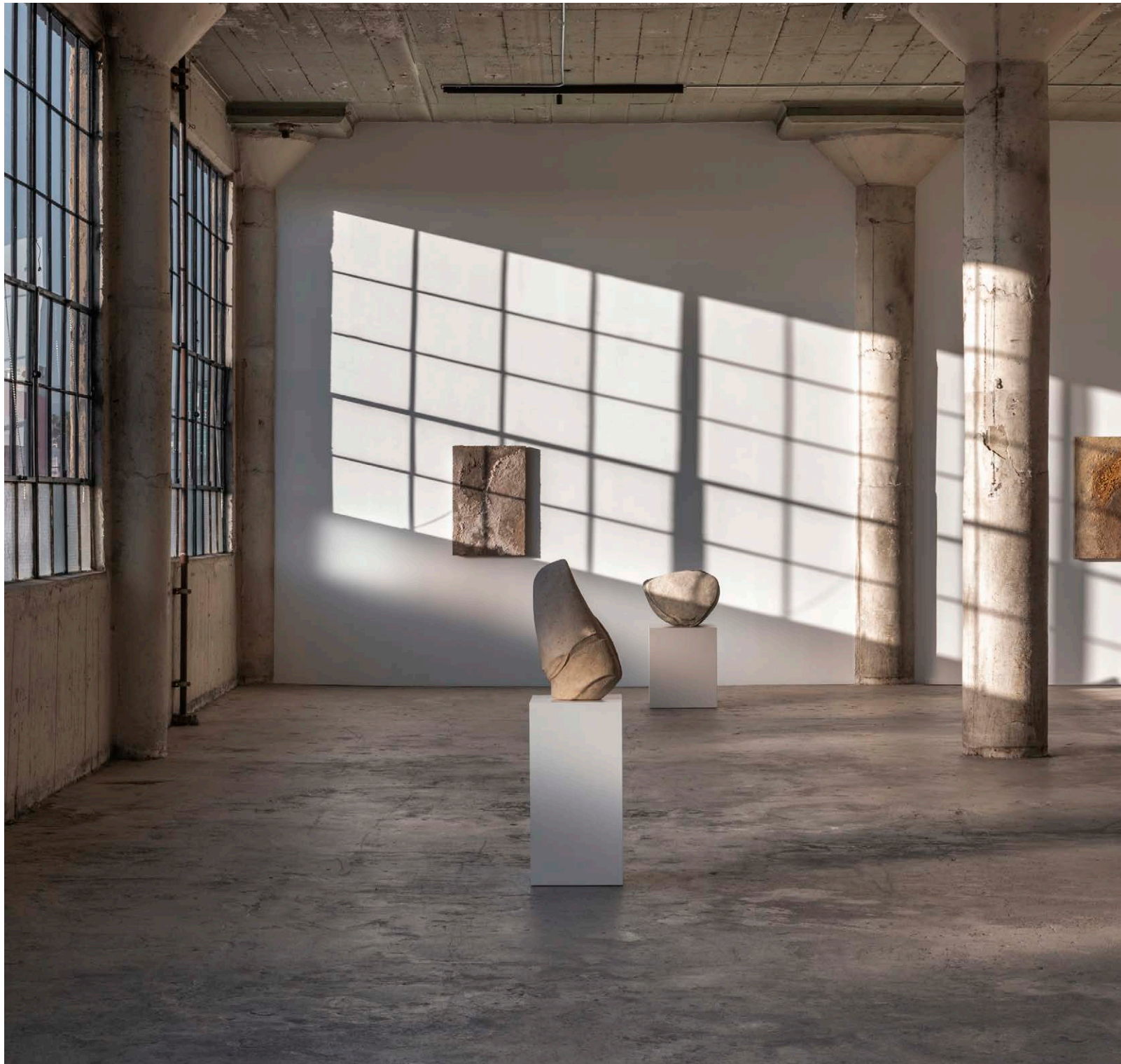
Each body of work conveys a unique dialect within the larger language of geological history. Collectively, he views each series as a specific resolution to the tension between artistic intent, ceramic tradition, and the intrinsic properties of natural materials.



*"Although all materials are sustainably collected with landowners' permission, I recognize that my practice takes place on territory stolen from Minnesota's Indigenous peoples. I respectfully acknowledge the Dakota and Anishinaabe peoples as the rightful owners and original stewards of the land on which I work".*

# ABOUT THE EXHIBITION





**Diagenesis (n):** *The physical and chemical changes occurring during the conversion of sediment to sedimentary rock*

Sage Culture is pleased to present "Diagenesis," a solo exhibition by the American ceramic artist Mitch Iburg.

The works in this exhibition portray the artist's ongoing exploration of clay and mineral resources collected from the Minnesota River Valley and their conversion from raw materials to finished art forms.

Through various approaches to working, Mitch Iburg is interested in showcasing the unique properties and geologic history of these resources through the distinct stages of his studio practice: examination of raw materials, research and testing, production of forms, and reclamation of waste. During each stage, he carefully observes and adjusts his physical presence to achieve a balance between the intrinsic voice of materials and his own creative intent.

Collectively, the research and work presented are the culmination of an evolving relationship with this region and its resources over a five-year time span. Throughout time, the landscape of Southwestern Minnesota has documented intervals of stillness and transformation as the region was inundated by ancient seas, carved by rivers, and scoured by glaciers. These natural forces reworked, sorted, and compacted sediments to form highly detailed records of Earth's geologic history.

In an effort to preserve this history, the artist's 'Raw Material Studies' archive the intrinsic properties of 40 unfired clay samples collected from a single site in the Minnesota River Valley. The highly varied colors, textures, stones, and organic impurities found within these samples reflect the diverse geological and environmental processes through which the clays were formed - a history that inevitably becomes lost in the later stages of clay preparation and making.

Prior to use in the studio, each clay is extensively tested to develop a deeper understanding of its properties. The testing stage is informed by many questions: How will a clay look when fired? What impurities are present, and how will they affect the outcome? What is the geologic context?

Answers to these questions arise from firing raw samples, developing color blend tests, and examining other materials found at the collection site. The research stage involves both intuitive explorations as well as systematic testing. Collectively, these two ways of working help identify the expressive potential and limitations of each material.

At the heart of the artist's research lies an interest in using the region's white-firing kaolinitic clays - ancient deposits formed through the weathering of granitic bedrock. Due to their rarity, these materials are reserved for finishes applied to the surface of the work before firing. Through extensive color blend tests, they are systematically mixed to achieve a variety of subtle hues and textures.

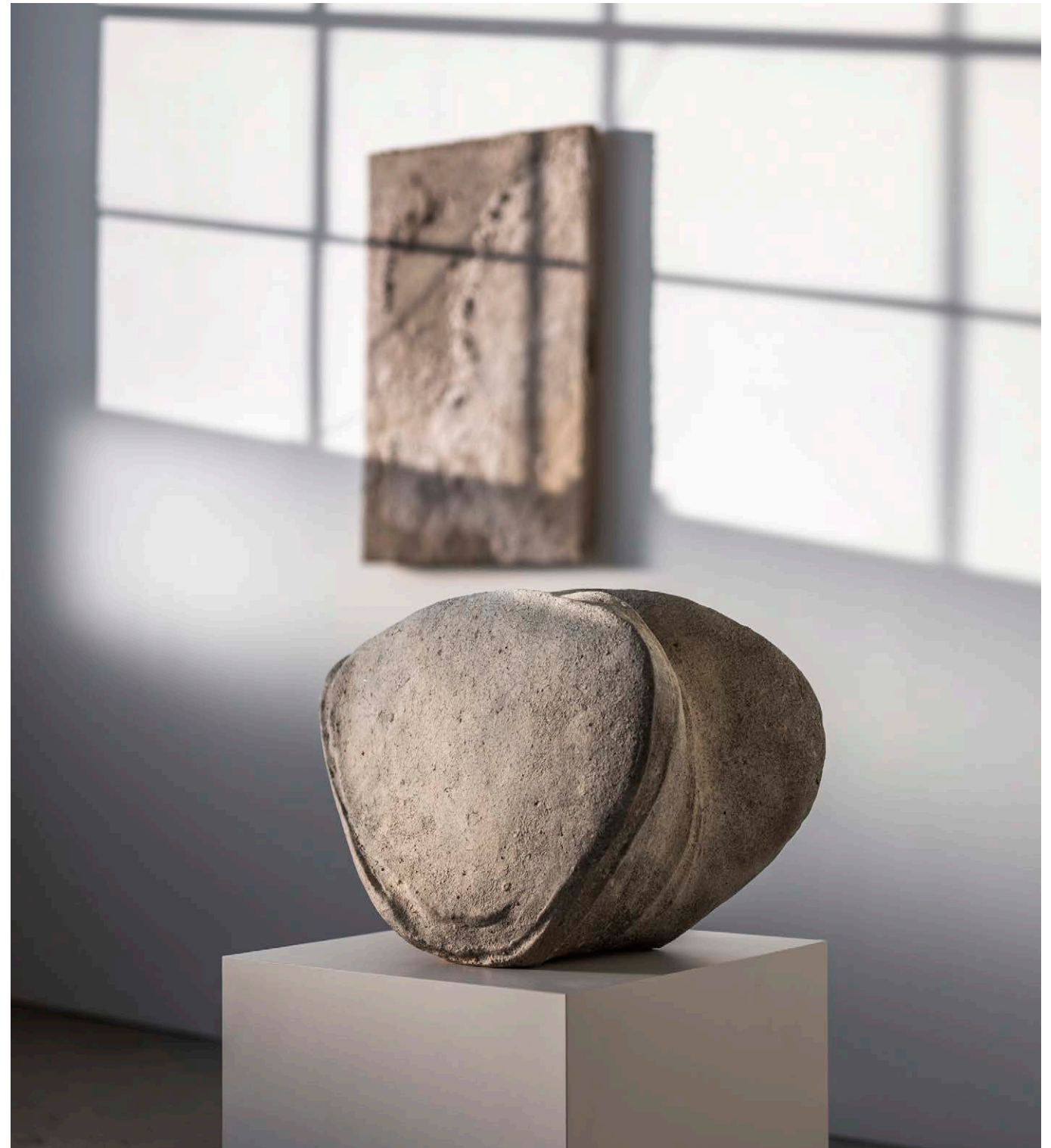
The gallery is excited to introduce the continuity of the Anamnesis series, first presented four years ago at Mitch's first solo exhibition with Sage Culture.

The sculptural forms of Mitch's 'Anamnesis' series respond to the dramatic movements found within the region's geologic formations as well as deeper archetypal expressions of Earth in a state of flux. These hand-built forms reinterpret the forces of the Earth's tectonic plates, the stratified layering of sediments, and the erosion of stone.

The balance and gesture of each form is first developed through a series of maquettes. Through this process, many original features are rearranged until the resulting expressions become distant memories of the landforms that once inspired them.

In an effort to reduce waste and present materials through diverse ways of working, sand and mineral impurities removed from the clays are thoroughly washed, sorted by color, and treated as coarse pigments in the artist's painting series, 'The Conservation of Matter.'

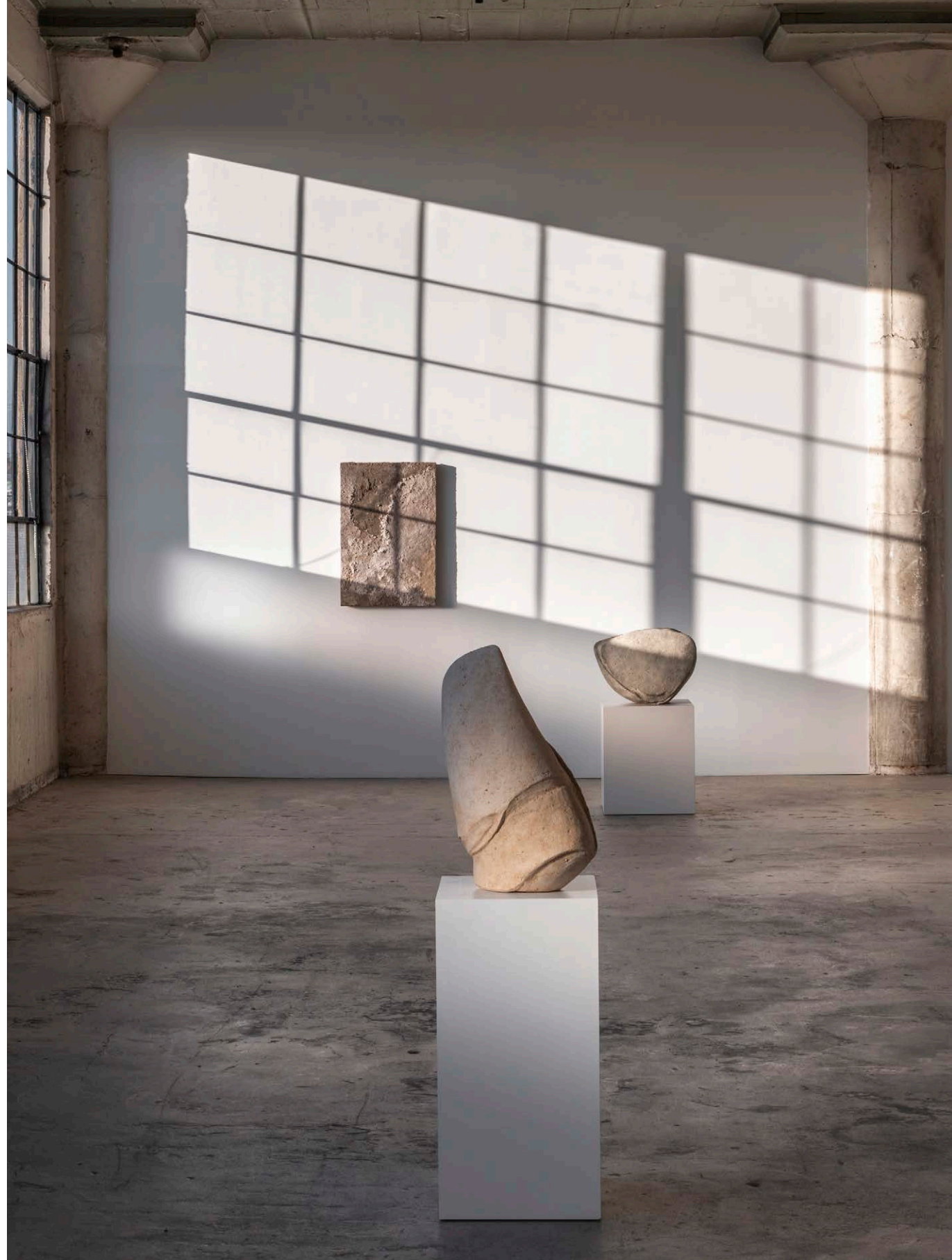
In order to produce the paintings for this exhibition, debris was collected from five clay deposits over a period of two years. Each deposit yields a unique geological signature - sand, silt, and stones that are naturally present in the clay - as well as varying levels of impurities brought by glaciers and rivers. When examined independently, these impurities convey a deeper expression of each clay's origins and chemistry.

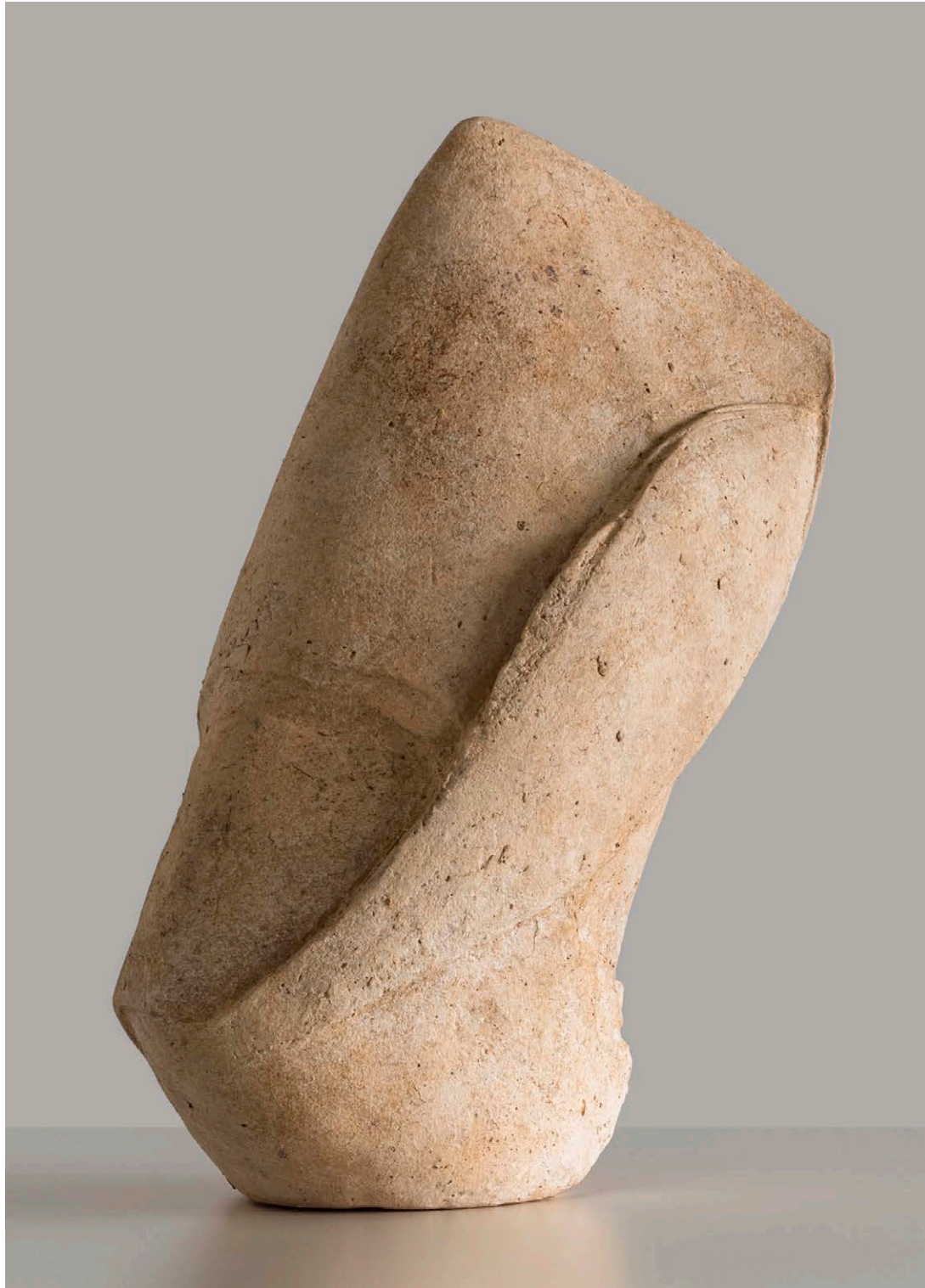




# FEATURED WORKS

MITCH IBURG'S SOLO EXHIBITION / DIAGENESIS





**Anamnesis 13, 2022**

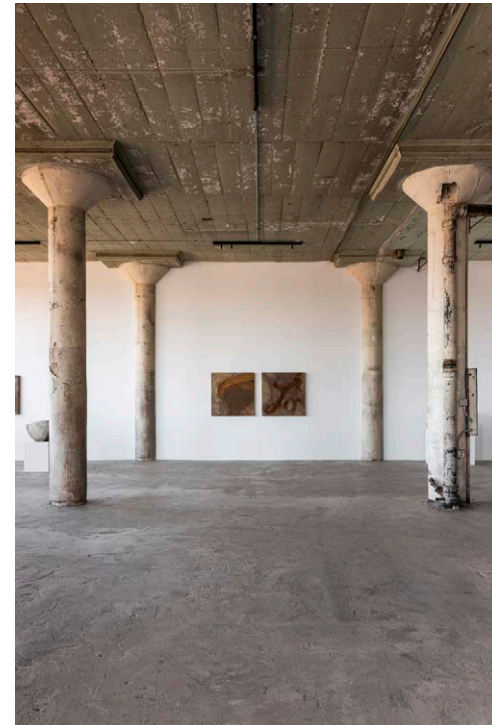
FORAGED MINNESOTA CLAYS AND  
MINERALS, FIRED TO 2200 F. IN OXIDATION  
23 × 17 × 9 1/2 IN | 58.4 × 43.2 × 24.1 CM





**Anamnesis 13, 2022**

FORAGED MINNESOTA CLAYS AND  
MINERALS, FIRED TO 2200 F. IN OXIDATION  
23 × 17 × 9 1/2 IN | 58.4 × 43.2 × 24.1 CM



**The Conservation of Matter: 4, 2022**

FORAGED SAND, MINERALS, STONES,  
PVA BINDER ON BOARD  
40 × 40 × 2 IN | 101.6 × 101.6 × 5.1 CM



The Conservation of Matter: 6 & 4, 2022

FORAGED SAND, MINERALS, STONES,  
PVA BINDER ON BOARD

40 × 40 × 2 IN | 101.6 × 101.6 × 5.1 CM (EACH)







**The Conservation of Matter: 6, 2022**

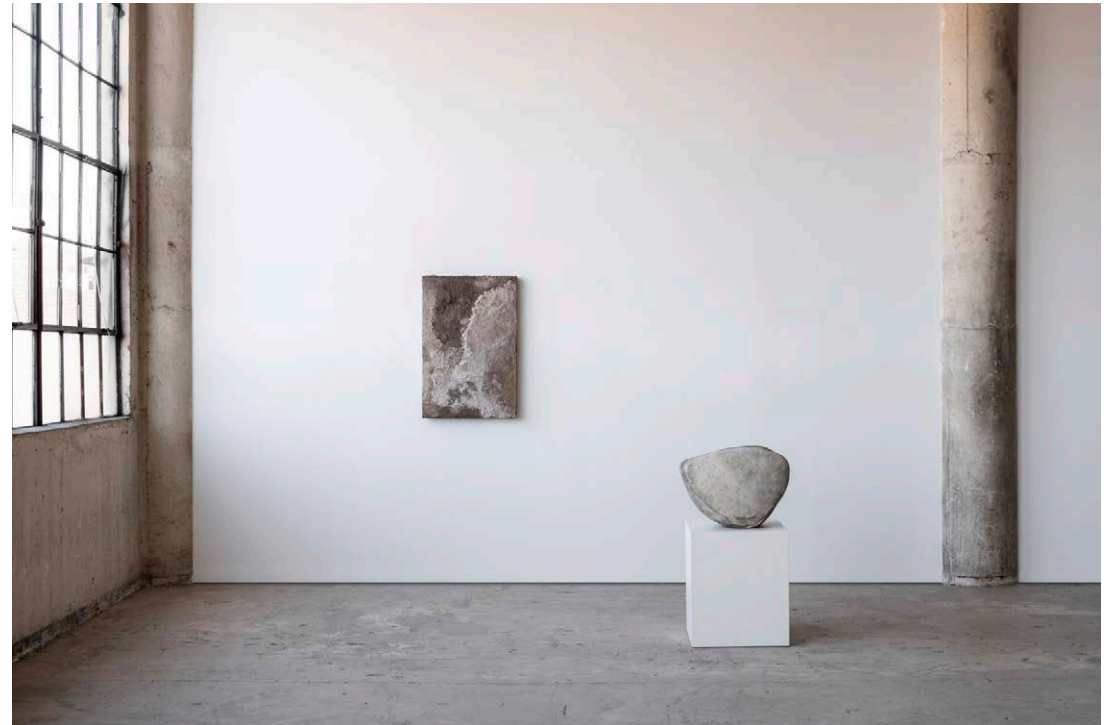
FORAGED SAND, MINERALS, STONES,

PVA BINDER ON BOARD

40 × 40 × 2 IN | 101.6 × 101.6 × 5.1 CM





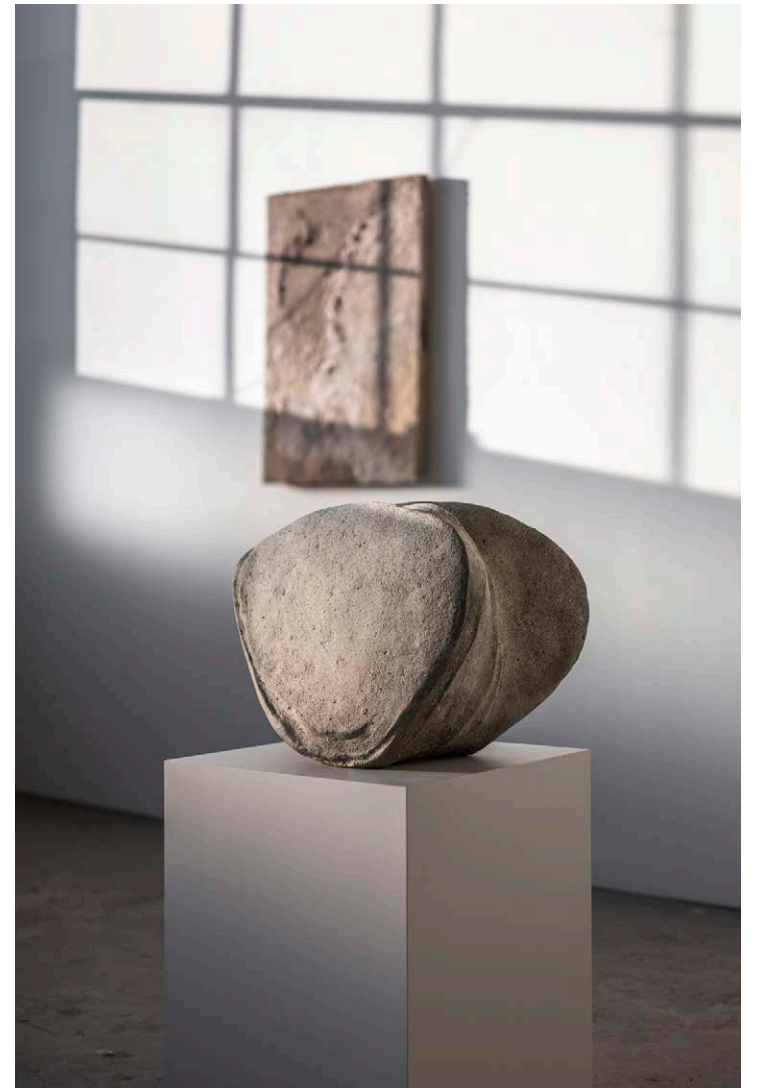


**The Conservation of Matter: 5, 2022**

FORAGED SAND, MINERALS, STONES,  
PVA BINDER ON BOARD

36 × 24 × 2 IN | 91.4 × 61 × 5.1 CM

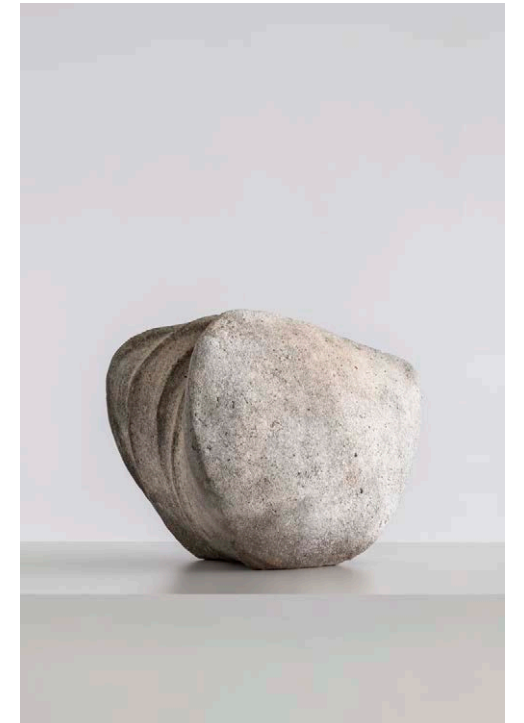




*Anamnesis 15, 2022*

FORAGED MINNESOTA CLAYS AND  
MINERALS, FIRED TO 2200 F. IN OXIDATION

16 × 25 × 11 IN | 40.6 × 63.5 × 27.9 CM



*Anamnesis 15, 2022*

FORAGED MINNESOTA CLAYS AND  
MINERALS, FIRED TO 2200 F. IN OXIDATION

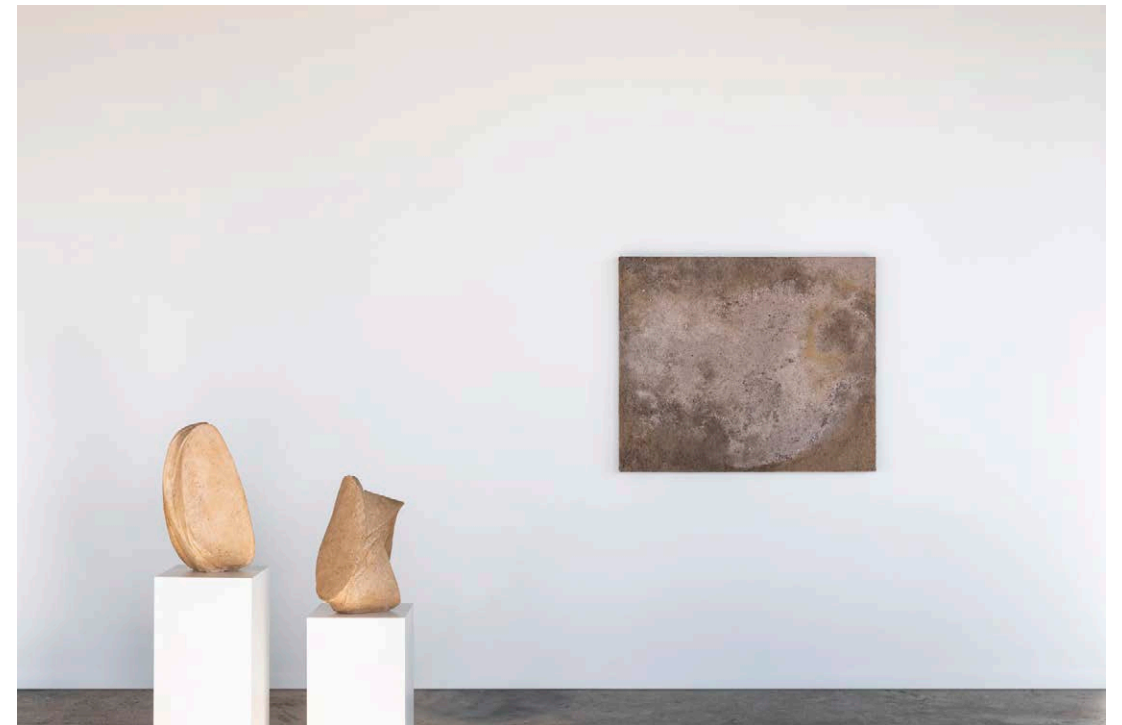
16 × 25 × 11 IN | 40.6 × 63.5 × 27.9 CM



**The Conservation of Matter: 7, 2022**

FORAGED SAND, MINERALS, STONES,  
PVA BINDER ON BOARD

40 × 48 × 2 IN | 101.6 × 121.9 × 5.1 CM



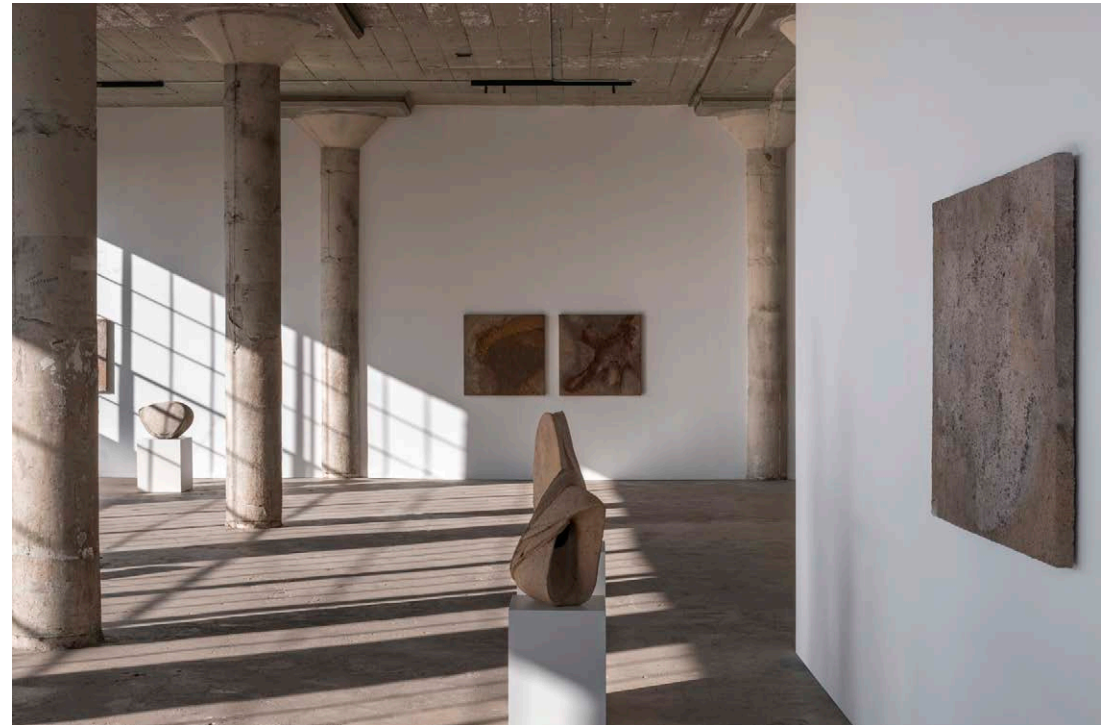
**The Conservation of Matter: 7, 2022**

FORAGED SAND, MINERALS, STONES,  
PVA BINDER ON BOARD

40 × 48 × 2 IN | 101.6 × 121.9 × 5.1 CM







*Anamnesis12, 2022*

FORAGED MINNESOTA CLAYS AND  
MINERALS, FIRED TO 2200 F. IN OXIDATION  
22 × 14 × 11 IN | 55.9 × 35.6 × 27.9 CM



*Anamnesis12, 2022*

FORAGED MINNESOTA CLAYS AND  
MINERALS, FIRED TO 2200 F. IN OXIDATION  
22 × 14 × 11 IN | 55.9 × 35.6 × 27.9 CM



**Anamnesis II, 2022**

FORAGED MINNESOTA CLAYS AND  
MINERALS, FIRED TO 2200 F. IN OXIDATION

23 1/2 × 13 × 8 IN | 59.7 × 33 × 20.3 CM

The Conservation of Matter: 8 & 9, 2022

FORAGED SAND, MINERALS, STONES,  
PVA BINDER ON BOARD

48 × 16 × 2 IN | 121.9 × 40.6 × 5.1 CM (EACH)



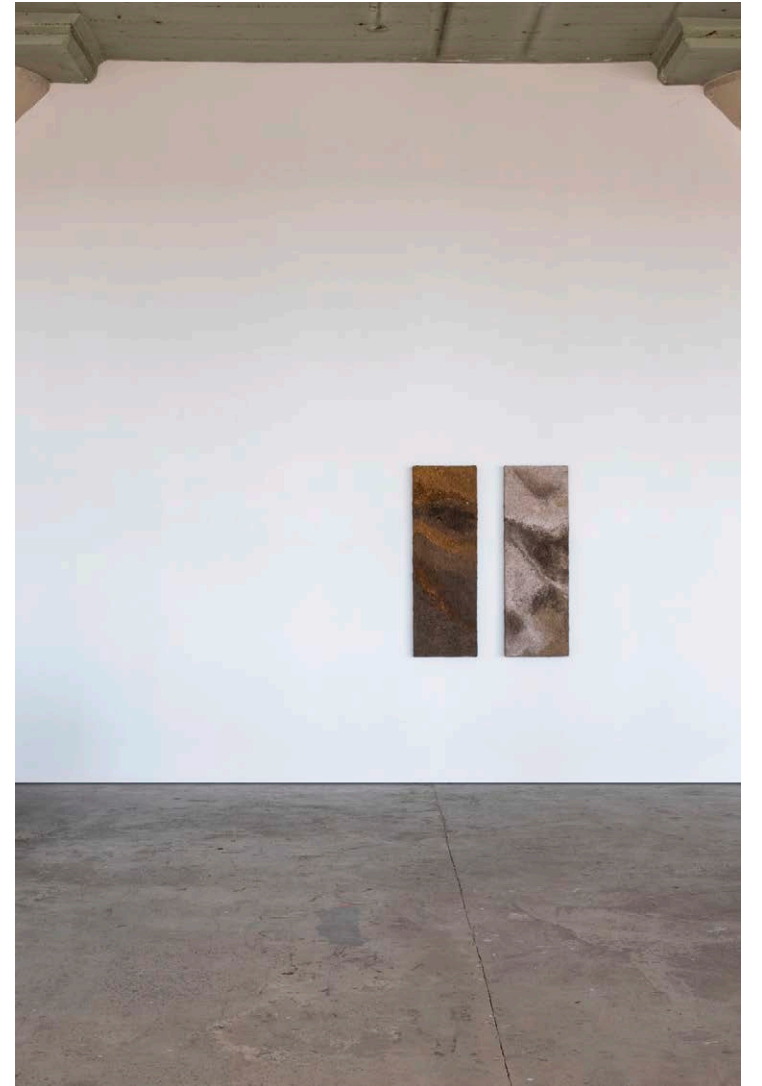


The Conservation of Matter: 8, 2022

FORAGED SAND, MINERALS, STONES,  
PVA BINDER ON BOARD

48 × 16 × 2 IN | 121.9 × 40.6 × 5.1 CM



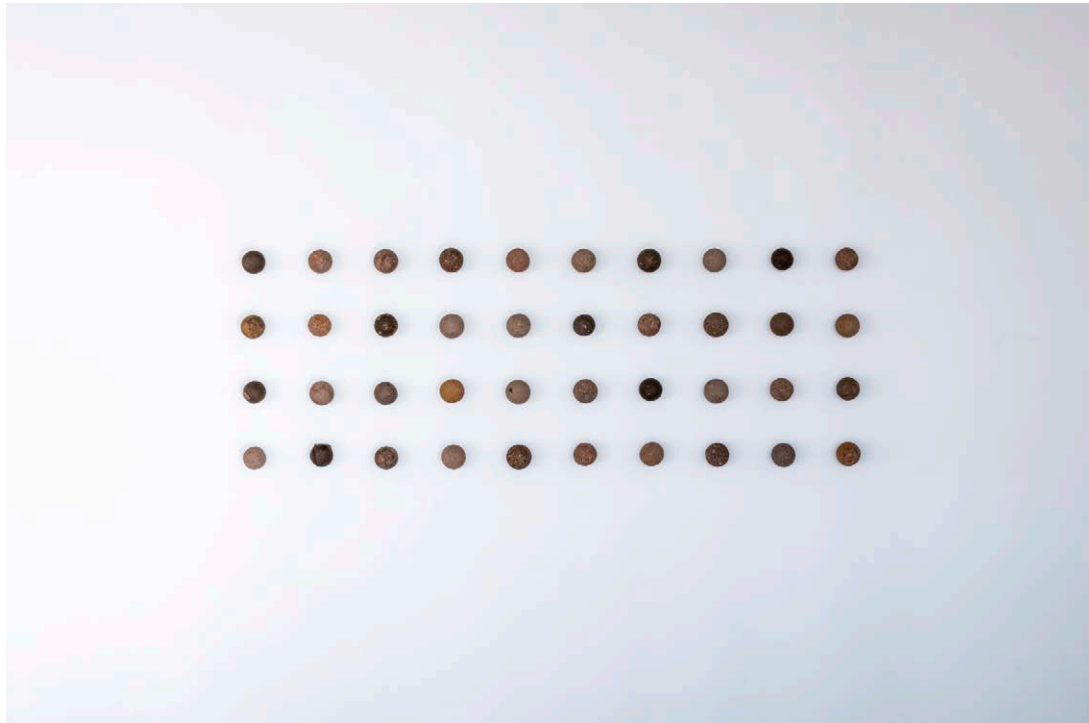


**The Conservation of Matter: 9, 2022**

FORAGED SAND, MINERALS, STONES,  
PVA BINDER ON BOARD

48 × 16 × 2 IN | 121.9 × 40.6 × 5.1 CM

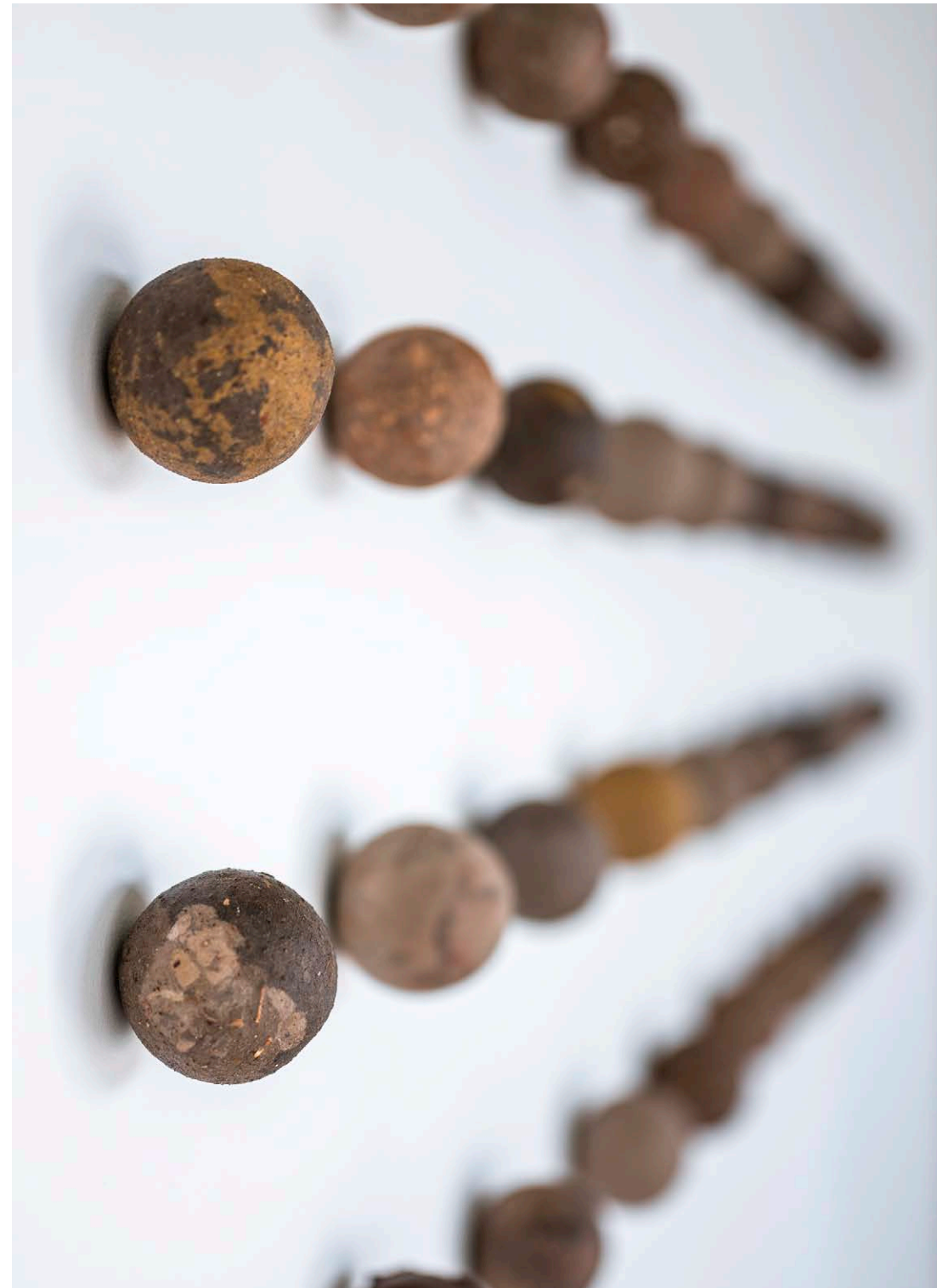




Raw Clay Studies, 2022

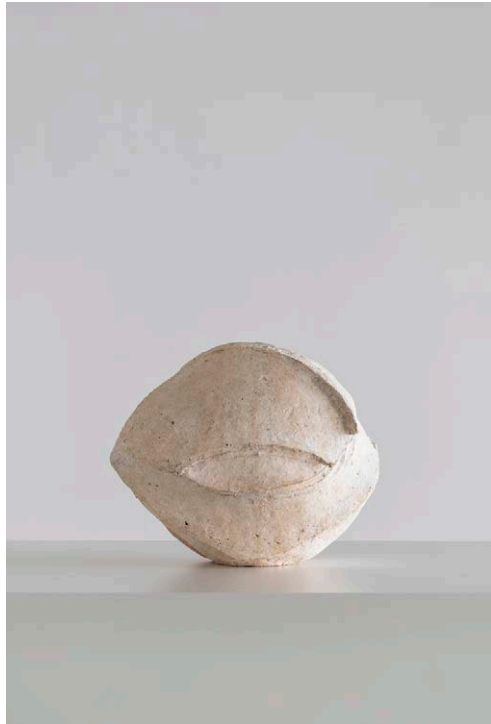
FORTY UNFIRED SPHERES MADE FROM  
DIFFERENT UNPROCESSED CLAYS AND MINERALS

32 × 80 × 2 IN | 81.3 × 203.2 × 5.1 CM









**Anamnesis 09, 2022**

FORAGED MINNESOTA CLAYS AND  
MINERALS, FIRED TO 2200 F. IN OXIDATION  
11 × 18 × 15 IN | 27.9 × 45.7 × 38.1 CM



*Anamnesis10, 2022*

FORAGED MINNESOTA CLAYS AND  
MINERALS, FIRED TO 2200 F. IN OXIDATION

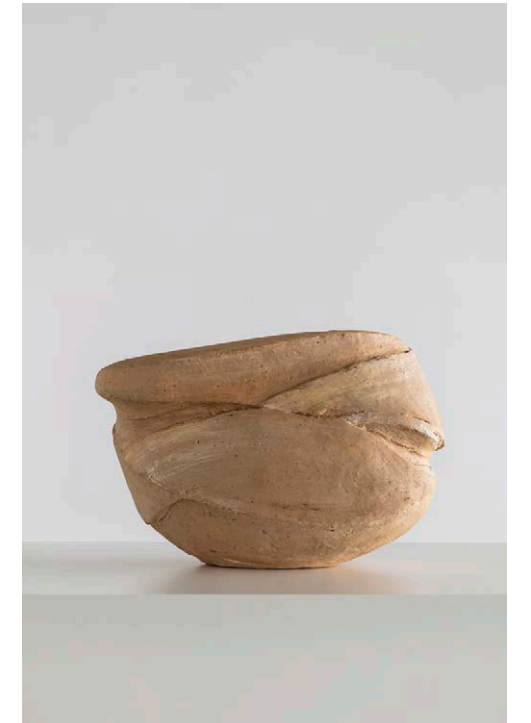
12 × 19 × 11 IN | 30.5 × 48.3 × 27.9 CM





*Anamnesis 14, 2022*

FORAGED MINNESOTA CLAYS AND  
MINERALS, FIRED TO 2200 F. IN OXIDATION  
15 × 23 × 13 IN | 38.1 × 58.4 × 33 CM



**Anamnesis 14, 2022**

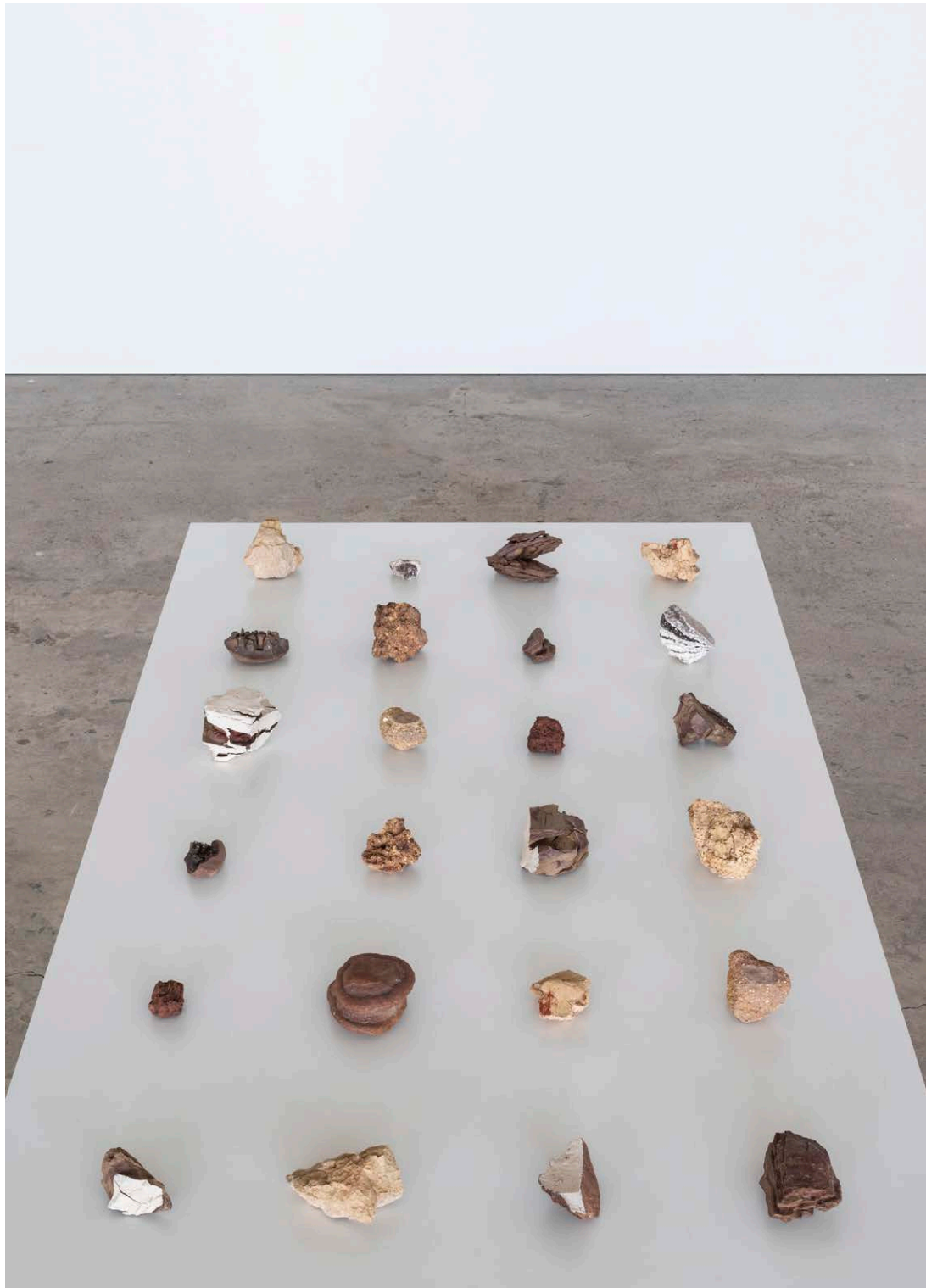
FORAGED MINNESOTA CLAYS AND  
MINERALS, FIRED TO 2200 F. IN OXIDATION

15 × 23 × 13 IN | 38.1 × 58.4 × 33 CM



Initial Material Studies, 2022

FIRED RAW CLAYS, FOUND  
MATERIALS  
24 SMALL SAMPLES



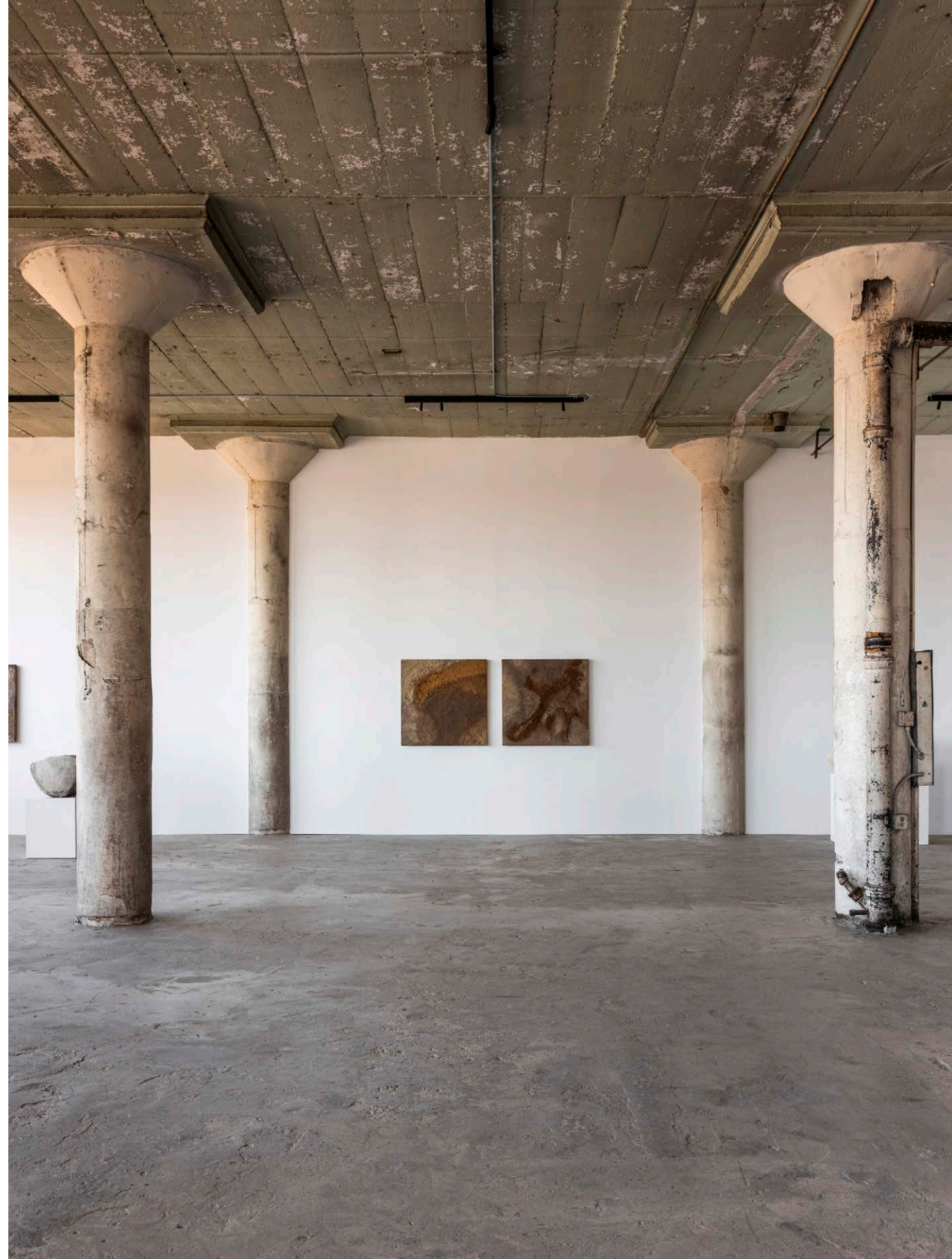
## Initial Material Studies, 2022

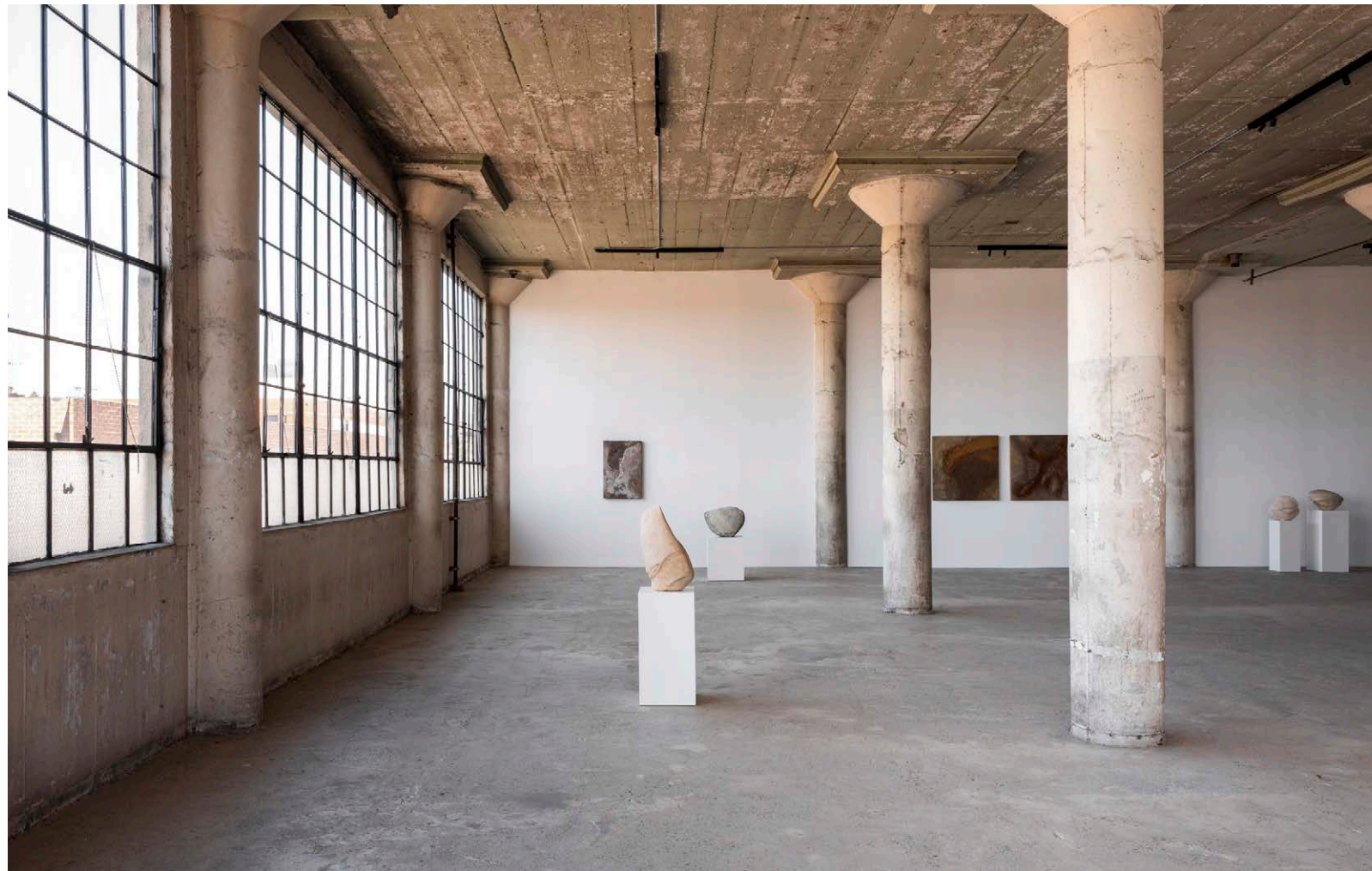
FIRED RAW CLAYS, FOUND  
MATERIALS  
24 SMALL SAMPLES



# ABOUT THE GALLERY

MITCH IBURG'S SOLO EXHIBITION / DIAGENESIS





# Sage Culture™

DOWNTOWN L.A.

Sage Culture is an art gallery based in Downtown Los Angeles. Founded in 2017, it comprises art exhibitions and a diverse range of projects within the arts and cultural sector.

The appreciation of nature and wisdom in translating this experience into artistic expressions define the gallery's mission, curation, and aesthetics.

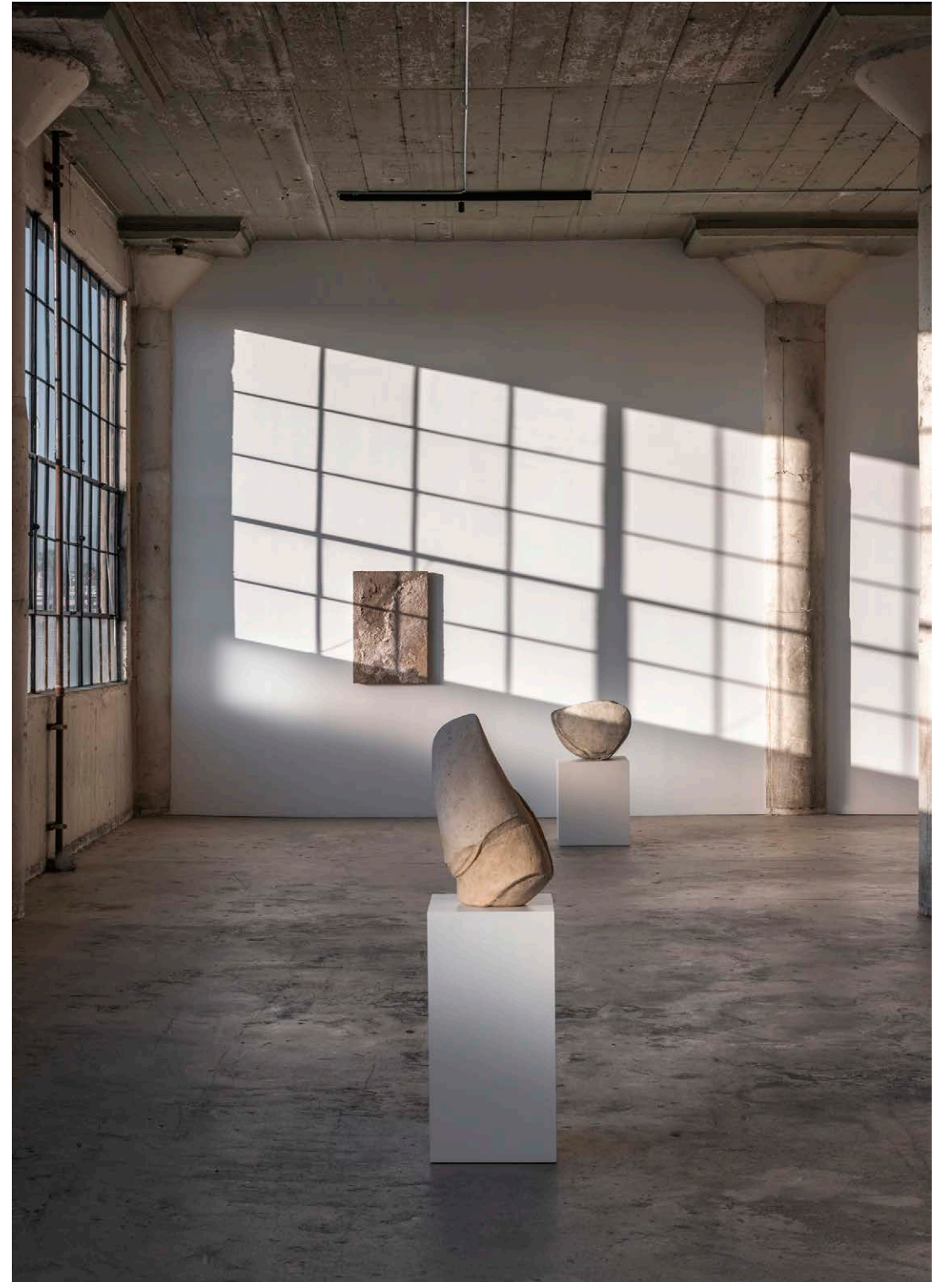
A visit to Easter Island was the starting point and primary inspiration for developing the early concept of Sage Culture. The remote island's rich history and how ancient art forms have always acted as a powerful transformation tool for humankind profoundly inspired the founders throughout the creative process.

The result is a constant attempt to artistically portray the relationship between people and nature – from observing humanity's primordial cultures and its complete integration with the environment to the recent efforts to make sense of this relationship today.

Sage Culture's concept relates to the land and oceans, our deeper soul, and the transformative power inherited from our most primitive ancestors. It is the ancient wisdom connected to the present and future through contemporary artistic expressions.

In line with its concept, the gallery represents artists whose deep connection to nature serves as their primary source of inspiration. By using natural materials or promoting discussions on the subject, they contribute to reimagining this crucial but endangered bond with Earth.

These artists are particularly focused on their processes, which are often challenging and sometimes defy traditional practices and techniques. The results frequently blur the lines between media and the established boundaries of art, craft, and design.



CREDITS

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