

Roberta Massuch: Artist-In-Residence
June 3, 2021 – December 30, 2021

Art in Conversation: The Wharton Esherick Museum Reopens with an Installation of Site-Specific Works by Artist-in-Residence Roberta Massuch

Malvern, PA – The Wharton Esherick Museum is pleased to announce the opening of *Roberta Massuch: Artist-in-Residence*, on view beginning June 3, 2021.

Massuch, a Philadelphia-based artist best known for her sculptural and functional work in ceramics, spent several on-site residency days at the Wharton Esherick Museum during fall 2020 and winter 2021. *Roberta Massuch: Artist-in-Residence* features new site-specific works that reflect her sensitive and slow observation of Esherick’s idiosyncratic home and studio over the course of many months. As the Esherick Museum reopens for tour reservations, *Roberta Massuch: Artist-in-Residence* will offer visitors a new perspective, with paper and ceramic works incorporated into the Museum’s immersive surroundings.



Roberta Massuch, *Shadow Gap Filler*, 2021.
Earthenware, slip, glaze, 11" x 12" x 0.5". Installed in the Wharton Esherick Museum.

Roberta Massuch: Artist-in-Residence asks compelling questions about how we experience a space, paying attention to the changeability of what is seemingly static -- objects, architecture, sculpture. Massuch centers the power of the ephemeral to transform what is rooted, asking how light might impact a room over the course of a day or even across a span of seasons or how a shifting shadow or reflective color may help us see something with new eyes. The objects Massuch created over the duration of the residency period engage with both interior and exterior elements of the campus. Equally subtle and transformational, these works not only shed new light on how we might experience Esherick but also serve as a reminder of the power of a call-and-response between artists that bridges past and present.

“Each room in the studio is so different depending on the season or the time of day; it has been a fulfilling challenge to create work that speaks to or highlights the impact of constantly shifting light over the existing objects and beautifully crafted furniture in the studio,” reflects Massuch. “Occasionally, I felt like an intruder in a carefully curated world of his objects and belongings, but that emotion would quickly pass to

curiosity, appreciation, and the highest esteem for what Esherick built. I hope that the work I made as a response to his space speaks to the sensitivity and materiality of his studio and artwork.”

The exhibition marks the Museum’s first invitational artist residency aimed at engaging contemporary artists in conversation with Esherick’s legacy, a growing focus of the Museum following the success of collaborations like the [Becky Suss/Wharton Esherick exhibit](#) at Philadelphia’s Fleisher/Ollman Gallery in 2018 and the [‘Creatives on Esherick’ virtual programming series](#). This summer, visitors can also see contemporary artworks in conversation with Esherick in [Wood And....](#), an on-site and virtual project which highlights the winners of the museum’s 27th Annual Juried Woodworking Exhibition.



Roberta Massuch, *Skewed Grid*, 2021. Earthenware, glaze, epoxy, 35" x 28" x 7". Installed in the Wharton Esherick Museum kitchen window.

Roberta Massuch: Artist-in-Residence is an onsite exhibition open June 3, 2021 - December 30, 2021.

To visit the Museum, you must make advance reservations for a tour. Details and COVID-19 guidelines can be found at whartonesherickmuseum.org.

About the Artist: Roberta Massuch received her BFA in ceramics from Northern Illinois University (DeKalb) in 2005 and her MFA from Louisiana State University (Baton Rouge) in 2013. In addition to posts as an instructor at The Clay Studio (Philadelphia, PA), Tyler School of Art (Philadelphia, PA), and the Community College of Philadelphia (PA), she has received awards including the Jerome Ceramic Artist Project Grant in 2009, the Independence Foundation Visual Arts Fellowship in 2015 and further recognition through publications such as *Clay Times*, *Ceramics Monthly*, *Musing About Mud*, and various exhibition catalogs through The Clay Studio. She is currently a 2021 Summer McKnight Artist Resident at the Northern Clay Center in Minneapolis. Massuch’s work has been exhibited at universities, institutions, galleries and museums across the United States including Northern Clay Center (Minneapolis, MN), Appalachian Center for Craft (Smithville, TN), Worcester Center for Craft (MA), The Clay Studio, Philadelphia Museum of Art Craft Show (PA), Goggleworks Center for the Arts (Reading, PA), and the Visual Arts Center of Richmond (VA).

About the Wharton Esherick Museum: The Wharton Esherick Museum, located just outside of Valley Forge Park in Malvern, PA is the handcrafted home and studio of Wharton Esherick (1887-1970), an internationally significant artist and leader of the Studio Furniture Movement. Esherick worked primarily in wood and extended his unique forms to furniture, furnishings, interiors, buildings, and more. His motto, “If it isn’t fun, it isn’t worth doing,” is evident in the joyful expression of his work. A National Historic Landmark for Architecture, his hilltop studio/residence, with more than 300 of his works on exhibition, has been preserved much as it was when the artist lived and worked there.

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