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Images available upon request

Three Regional Artists Celebrate Museum Solo Debuts

Three women explore resilience and the creative journey



DUBUQUE, Iowa, February 12, 2025—Just ahead of Women’s History Month, three artists will make their solo debuts at the Dubuque Museum of Art (DuMA). Celebrate all three exhibitions on Saturday, February 22 at 4:30 pm. Join University of Wisconsin artist and Professor Gerit Grimm, Dubuque-based artists Stina Joy Henslee, and Jenni Brant, and guest curator Hieyler Pimpton as they discuss their global and creative journeys. A reception follows with food by City Girl Farming and music by DJ Echoras inspired by the exhibitions. Tickets at dbqart.org.

“I’m excited to bring together the work of these extraordinary artists” says DuMA’s Curatorial Director Stacy Peterson. “Each found her own way, her own approach to living a creative life in ways that inspire me and, I think, will inspire anyone who seeks a creative path.”

Odyssey: The Voyage of Gerit Grimm on view February 22–June 28

This solo exhibition and DuMA debut curated by guest curator Hieyler Pimpton, explores twenty one years of the career of ceramicist Gerit Grimm through 22 objects. Growing up in East Germany under socialism, Ms. Grimm was exposed to ceramics as a young adult working in a factory as a production potter. As a young girl, she and her father had dream to sail around the world. Now an Associate Professor at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, she describes herself as an explorer, researcher, and photographer.

Travel is a major inspiration for Grimm. “Adventures have become my storybook. Instead of just making clay figures about stories known, I’m telling new stories, a new folklore for grandmas to tell their granddaughters.”

Grimm’s work transgresses the boundaries of traditional ceramics, folk art, fine art, theatrical installations, and contemporary sculpture. She often works in a life-size scale and uses reduction kiln-firing techniques to produce austere (a subtle metallic sheen or bronze looking) surfaces that portray moments frozen in stone and in time. Grimm appropriates historical narrative subjects from fables and myths and interprets them in forms that have visual and conceptual affinities with contemporary fine art. The results evoke stories about dolls, puppets, and statues coming to life in ways that are elegant, fanciful, and sometimes uncomfortable.

About the artist

Born and raised in the formerly East German city of Halle, Gerit Grimm learned the traditional German trade of pottery at the Alt Bürgeler blau-weiss GmbH in Bürgel and then worked as a potter for Joachim Jung in Glashagen. She earned an Art and Design Diploma for her ceramics studies at Burg Giebichenstein in Halle and an MA from the University of Michigan School of Art and Design. She received her MFA from the New York State College of Ceramics at Alfred University. She has held numerous teaching positions and residencies, including the Kohler Arts & Industry Program and the Archie Bray Foundation. Today, Grimm is an associate professor at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Her work is represented in collections around the world including the American Museum of Ceramic Art in Pomona, California; the Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts in Omaha, Nebraska; and the John Michael Kohler Arts Center in Sheboygan, Wisconsin. Guest curator Hieyler Pimpton is an Atlanta-based artist whose work was recently featured at DuMA in *I Have Told You Fifty Times*.



***Stretched Thin: Visual Musings on Tension* by Stina Joy Henslee. February 22–June 28**

Dubuque-based artist Stina Joy Henslee represents a healthy way of coping with our current age of anxiety. In 16 paintings, Henslee explores visual manifestations of tension and relief and exposes the undercurrent of apprehension in our everyday lives. The figures in her paintings are precariously balanced— on tightropes, under water, in yoga poses, on suspension bridges—with straining muscles, clenched jaws, and a palpable sense of disquiet

appropriate to our time. Amidst her riotous figures and scenes of instability, viewers can find symbols of peace, humor, and ease: laughter and smiles, dancing, fluidity, weightlessness.

“We do our best to cope and block out the noise,” says Henslee, “in both healthy and not so healthy ways.”

About the artist

Stina Joy Henslee is an artist and designer based in Dubuque. After a year attending a fine arts school in Helsinki, Finland, she continued her arts education at Washington University in St. Louis, from which she graduated with a trifecta of impractical degrees: printmaking, German, and art history. Working now as a self-taught graphic designer, she specializes in catalogue and book design as well as logo and branding development. Her work has been shown at several galleries in her hometown of Chicago, including Heaven Gallery, Drive Thru Gallery, and Ugly Step Sister Gallery. Most recently she has shown at Chicago’s Studio Oh! Gallery and Portland’s Ampersand Gallery.



Jenni Brant: *Formed in the Land of Fire & Ice*. February 22–June 28

DuMA presents a selection of work created by Dubuque-based ceramicist Jenni Brant during her four-week residency at the Fish Factory Creative Centre in Stöðvarfjörður, Iceland. The remote former fishing village and its dramatic landscape inspired Brant to experiment with new materials and concepts. Brant is a passionate advocate for the arts in Dubuque and a vocal champion of artist residencies. Alongside 28 vessels and wearable ceramic works, Brant will install photographs, artifacts, and journals that document the creative journey of her residency.

“I’m committed to arts advocacy and fostering community through service, sharing, and education,” says Brant. “Doing so is integral to my ongoing studio practice, empowering communities through infusion of the arts, just as I elevate the everyday experience through the insertion of handmade objects.”

About the artist

Jenni Brant received her BA from the University of Wisconsin–Whitewater and an MFA from the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, supported by a prestigious Hixson-Lied Fellowship. She

has also been the recipient of a national award from the Society for Glass and Ceramics Arts, named as a finalist for the Lydon Emerging Artist Program by the Society for Contemporary Craft, and featured as an Emerging Artist by Ceramics Monthly. Working also in leadership roles in public and private arts administration and currently on the Greater Dubuque Development team, Brant was recognized in 2023 with a Governor's Arts Award.

Formed in the Land of Fire & Ice is sponsored by Rick and Rae Ann Dickinson. Support for select artist residency and exhibition activities was provided by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Iowa Arts Council, which exists within the Iowa Economic Development Authority.

Images available upon request. Above: Gerit Grimm, *Sirens* (detail), 2016, stoneware, 33x12x50 in., courtesy of the artist. Stina Joy Henslee, *Someone I Used to Be* (3 tightrope walkers), 2024, oil on canvas, 49x73 in., courtesy of the artist.

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About the Dubuque Museum of Art

The Dubuque Museum of Art (DuMA), founded in 1874 and accredited by the American Alliance of Museums in 2004, is Iowa's oldest cultural institution. Named a national affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution in 2016, DuMA's mission is to create engaging art experiences that excite, inspire, and connect our community. The Museum is open Wednesday through Saturday from 10 am to 4 pm and Sunday from 1 pm to 4 pm. More information can be found at dbqart.org.

Free for members, youth 18 and under, active military members, veterans, and their families with a military or veteran ID or to those receiving food assistance (SNAP benefits) who present their EBT card. Adults are \$8, seniors \$8, and college students \$6. Admission is free for youth 18 and under and for all on Thursdays.

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Contact: Gary Stoppelman
Executive Director
563-557-1851 x112
gstoppelman@dbqart.org