

## ***Linda Sikora: DARKENING GROUND***

Ferrin Contemporary presents solo exhibition of new works from award-winning artist  
April 22 - June 11, 2023

NORTH ADAMS, MA—Ferrin Contemporary is pleased to present artist Linda Sikora and her new exhibition ***DARKENING GROUND***, a poetic and conceptual look at forms, vessels, and other ceramic gestures. Sikora uses three distinct visual categories—woodgrain, blackware, and redware—and refers to them as Ground I, Ground II, and Ground III. In this, Sikora is thinking about the dark as a generative space and time; a landscape for internal, interpersonal, and cultural constraints and realities to shift and realign.

Ground I, or what the artist calls “a compost of drawn lines” is a wall drawing that brings up ideas around the density of darkness and what gets lost or found in the fecund and fertile heaps. Ground II is referred to as “a fairy tale.”

In fairy tales, darkness is a necessary rite of passage to obtain wisdom and move into a new stage of life. The deep forest under a starless dark sky is the transformative darkness of fairy tales. Ground III or “a broken box” is a resolution of sorts, necessary and transitory objects that are found after searching Grounds I & II. The audience actions surrounding these Grounds are also part of the conceptual thinking about transition from one ground to another, which can be viewed as moving from one stage of initiation or understanding to another or one landscape to another. “The water pot, storage jar, broken box, cut sticks are both synchronous and asynchronous with the embedded actions around the object:



holding, pouring, opening, collecting, hiding all contain a framework that requires physical action, from bowing the head to looking into, or bending down, holding, or passing by entirely,” said Sikora.

“In 2023 we are celebrating four decades of presenting contemporary ceramic art by focusing on a group of artists we’ve worked with over the years,” said Leslie Ferrin, founder and director. “We invited Linda Sikora, a renowned artist and educator who consistently exhibited with our gallery from the first decade in Northampton to her solo shows at our locations in Lenox, Pittsfield and North Adams. These exhibitions traced her development as a studio potter whose work references ceramic history through classic forms and richly glazed surfaces. Her newest series takes a conceptual turn by placing familiar objects in groups, installations and relationships. Forty years later, it is a privilege to present *Darkening Ground* at Ferrin Contemporary.”

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

Linda Sikora’s studio is anchored in the genre of functional ceramics. Service, storage, and display are platforms for culture and behavior that Sikora explores with her work. She commonly refers to her ceramic forms as gestures due to their nature: to serve is to engage or offer; to store is to hold and remember; to display is to share and invite.

These gestures are also scalable and occur in close proximity at individual, private household levels but also in large-scale social functions. Additionally, service, storage, and display are the conceptual underpinnings of ceramic subjects, such as a teapot, a water pot, or a jar. Meaningfully made objects stretch our imagination toward large and abstract conditions, such as time. A teapot is “performative” over finite durations (until the tea is drained), and the storage jar actively holds stillness and silence, sometimes across generations.



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Sikora is the recipient of a United States Artists Fellowship as well as many awards for excellence in teaching. Her work was acquired by the Smithsonian in 2022 and featured at the Renwick in their 50th anniversary exhibition "This Present Moment: Crafting a Better World". She is a renowned ceramics professor at Alfred University where she maintains an active studio practice and lives with her husband and daughter.

To learn more about the artist, watch the PBS [Craft in America](#) documentary featuring her work.

Photo of the artist page one by John Polak Photography, 2020.

Photo of artwork page two "Ground III: Broken Box with Teapot" ceramic, 8.5 x 11 x 11 inches, 2022, photo by John Polak Photography, 2023.

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#### CALENDAR LISTING:

##### **Linda Sikora: DARKENING GROUND**

Sat., April 22 - Sun., June 11, 2023

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Spring hours (beginning April 19):

Thurs - Sat 10 am - 5 pm

all other hours by chance or appointment

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