

DIRECTOR'S NOTE: *ON VICTORIA SCHONFELD*

Thirty-five years ago, early in my career, I met Victoria Schonfeld, a collector whose ceramic collection focused on women artists. Over the years, the collection grew to include works by masters Viola Frey, Betty Woodman, Toshiko Takaezu, Beatrice Wood - as well as less established at the time - artists Kathy Butterly, Chris Antemann, Mara Superior, Claire Curneen, Kate Malone, and Pippin Drysdale. Not limited by geography or gender, the collection grew to reflect her travels to the UK and throughout the US. Along the way, she established many relationships while visiting studios where she learned about and supported living artists through her acquisitions. Her collection grew to include works she purchased while attending events in support of programs at The Clay Studio in Philadelphia, Watershed Center for Ceramic Arts, MAD, and of course, galleries like ours whenever she visited.

Victoria Schonfeld (1950-2019) was a prominent New York lawyer, collector and generous philanthropist. She was a mentor to me, artists, and so many women in her life. When she passed, she left plans for her collection to be gifted to institutions to benefit the field and continue to support the careers of artists she cared deeply about. In 2021-22 at the Everson Museum in Syracuse, NY curator Garth Johnson presented a survey of her collection in the aptly titled exhibition *Mutual Affection*. Johnson's essay *Women in Ceramics* and the over 30 works gifted to the permanent collection are some of the contributions to scholarship and documentation to the history of contemporary ceramic art from the late 20th and 21st century that she imagined would take place through the donations.

Additional gifts to multiple institutions in 2025-6 included "More Plenty" by Kathy Butterly featured in her exhibition *Assume Yes* (February 14 - July 26, 2026) at the Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery at Skidmore College.

Vicki remains an inspiration to me and others whose lives were touched by her thoughtful collecting and equally appreciated by the artists and institutions whose collections are growing with her generous gifts.

Selected works from the Victoria Schonfeld Collection were acquired by the following museums in 2022-2025.

Asheville Art Museum
Everson Museum of Art
Figge Art Museum
Shelburne Museum
The Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery at Skidmore College
The Frick Pittsburgh

Vicki, we all thank you

–Leslie Ferrin