

VISIONARY WOMAN AWARDS

2019 Honoree

Jill Bonovitz '74

Fine Artist



Upon graduation from Columbia University, Jill Bonovitz taught children with special needs in New York City. After moving back to her hometown of Philadelphia, she studied at Moore College of Art & Design. In 1974, with four fellow Moore affiliated artists, Bonovitz founded The Clay Studio, which has become a vital and material ceramic arts center promoting the medium and the work of emerging artists worldwide.

Bonovitz's practice started in clay where her porcelain works, mostly within the boundaries of vessel form, explored the intersections of line, shape, translucency and aestheticism. Later, she experimented with wire, and she now works with both media. "The quality of fragility is common to all my work," she says of her approach. "I am guided by intuition and engagement with the material and am never certain of a work's destination. In wire sculpture, I am creating the edges of what is not there; in clay, I am creating the essence of what is."

Bonovitz has been in both solo and group exhibitions nationally and internationally, including: the Honolulu Museum of Art (2018), Hermitage State Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia (2014), Santa Monica Museum of Art (2005), Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia (2002), DesignMuseo, Museum of Art and Design, Helsinki, Finland (2002), and The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Morris Gallery (1993). Her work is included in the collections of The Hermitage Museum; Philadelphia Museum of Art; Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, Holland; Montreal Museum of Decorative Arts, Montreal, Canada; Museum of Arts and Design, New York, NY and the Contemporary Museum, Honolulu, HI.

She and her husband Sheldon were early collectors in the field of Outsider Art. In 2013 the Philadelphia Museum of Art hosted a major exhibition of more than 200 works of outsider art. which Bonovitz and her husband gave to the museum. More recently, they have gifted many works by the artist Purvis Young to Philadelphia public schools. Bonovitz has served on the boards of the Merce Cunningham Dance Company and The Clay Studio and she is currently vice president of The Fabric Workshop and Museum.



1998 - 2016, porcelain clay with glaze, 4" - 10"H



2015/2016, wire, paint, clay, and plant material, dimensions variable

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