

WESTERN
ART & Architecture
From Cowboy to Contemporary

The Art of Simplicity: Painter Tom Browning
Hope and Beauty: Lakota Mosaic Artist Angela Babby
Infinity and Divinity: Artist Robin Cole
Architecture in the West: From California Mission Style to a Contemporary Colorado Homestead

plus:

Perspective: Agnes Lawrence Pelton's Poetic Inclinations
Designing the West: Jackson, Wyoming's Elevated Living
Wanderings: Oaxaca, Mexico
Rendering: Guesthouses that Impress





Kristine Poole's fired-clay sculpture *Duende* offers an eloquent, poetic manifestation of the artist's life and career. A reclining woman holds her right hand in the Palli Mudra, a yoga gesture connecting to one's inner voice and self-confidence. On that hand rests a Brahminy kite, a powerful Hindu symbol for following one's life passion. Swirling patterns on the bird's breast flow up the woman's arm and across her back. "That

embodies the blossoming that occurs when passion is your guide through life," notes the artist, who chose to title the piece with the Spanish word for "passion."

Passion and poetry suffuse Poole's life and her "classically inspired contemporary realist" sculptures. *Overcome*, for example, depicts a man on the ground, surmounting or surmounted by forces external or internal. "I would say about half the people who see it think he is on the ground getting up, and others that he is being pushed down," says the sculptor. She highlighted that openness to interpretation by inviting people online to contribute their thoughts, which she carefully inscribed — in languages including English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Swedish, and Finnish — in the dried clay before firing. One example, shared by Brazilian sculptor Rafael Mifano: "*Quanto mais fundo caio, mais forte me levanto.* (The deeper I fall, the stronger I rise.)"

Such profound multidisciplinary probing comes



Duende
Fired Clay with Stains | 24 x 22 x 22 inches | 2021

naturally to Poole. She's "always been a creative person" since her grade school days in rural Michigan, when she'd "draw outlines of animals and put their names inside them, following their shape." By high school, that process had grown even more intricate. "If I drew a wood grain floor, I would hide stories and names in its patterns." An epiphany came in her second year in the art department at Northern Michigan University when she first set foot in the clay studio. "I knew the smell and the feel of it as if from another life. I just never looked back." She graduated in 1992 with a BFA in ceramic sculpture.



Overcome
Fired Clay with Stains | 16 x 44 x 24 inches | 2022

A couple of years later, work at the famed, belated Shidoni sculpture foundry north of Santa Fe brought her to New Mexico. While there, she also encountered the world of ballroom dancing and wound up running her own dance studio for a decade. The career shift ultimately influenced her future work. "You learn so much about bodies and expression, people and the stories they tell about their lives," she says. Then, one night at a tango north of Santa Fe, she met painter and sculptor Colin Poole. "He asked me to dance, and we both just knew. Two weeks later, we went to Michigan to tell my parents we were getting married."

Today, the couple lives and works — sometimes collaboratively — in their combination home, studio, and gallery on 2 acres in the foothills of the Sangre de Cristos, about 7 minutes from Santa Fe's Plaza. "We have a bedroom, a bathroom, a kitchen, a studio space, and a gallery space," says Poole with a laugh. "It's a moderate house, but it's mostly devoted to art."

Poole's work is represented by EVOKE Contemporary in Santa Fe, New Mexico. ■

Based in San Rafael, California, **Norman Kolpas** is the author of more than 40 books and hundreds of articles. He also teaches nonfiction writing in The Writers' Program at UCLA Extension.



Dove Dreams of Flying
Fired Clay with Acrylic | 18 x 14.5 x 24 inches | 2023



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