

August 21, 2024

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ANNOUNCING REPRESENTATION OF SAM SHOEMAKER

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA—After several years of collaborative partnership, OCHI is pleased to announce representation of interdisciplinary artist and mycologist Sam Shoemaker. OCHI eagerly anticipates advancing these long-awaited steps in nurturing and contextualizing Shoemaker's unique practice, which spans creative, scientific, and educational communities.

This partnership aligns with Shoemaker's inclusion in [World Without End: The George Washington Carver Project](#), a group exhibition co-curated by Cameron Shaw and Yael Lipschutz on view at the California African American Museum from September 18, 2024 through March 2, 2025. *World Without End* has received support from Getty through its [PST ART: Art & Science Collide](#) initiative. Carver was a pioneer of plant-based engineering and an early proponent of sustainable agriculture. In the early 1900s, he built a moveable school to share soil and plant samples, equipment, and other agricultural knowledge with farmers. Carver's radical ideas—including organic fertilizers, crop rotation, and plant-based medicines and construction materials—are now recognized as the forerunners of modern conservation. A trained and practicing artist, Carver used sustainable materials such as peanut- and clay-derived dyes and paints in his many weavings and still-life paintings. A timely and historical exhibition, the expansive nature of Shoemaker's practice is perfectly contextualized within the radical frameworks modeled by Carver.

OCHI first presented Shoemaker's unique reishi mushroom and ceramic sculptures at the New Art Dealers Alliance (NADA) Miami art fair in 2021, followed by Shoemaker's debut solo exhibition in Los Angeles, *More Permanent Than Snow*, at OCHI in 2022. Since then, Shoemaker's reishi ceramic sculptures have been included in several timely and topical group exhibitions, most notably at David Horvitz's Garden, Vielmetter, Make Room, and Emma Gray HQ, in Los Angeles, CA and at House of Seiko in San Francisco, CA.

In 2023, Shoemaker's work was prominently featured in *Wayfinding*, the third clay biennial at Craft Contemporary in Los Angeles, curated by Holly Jerger. In his review of the exhibition, George Melrod astutely noted that "in its quirky and utterly sincere reimagining of clay's utilitarian roots, his [Shoemaker's] work makes a persuasive argument, not just for the continued relevance of a ceramic biennial, but for the adaptability of this most humble and enduring of art forms."¹

Inspired by ecosystems, radical pedagogy, architectural design, and environmental psychology, Shoemaker explores collaboration with rare, native, and medicinal fungi in his basement

¹ Melrod, George. "Celebratory and Mournful: Clay Biennial at Craft Contemporary," [Artillery Magazine](#), Jul 4, 2023

laboratory, which he has meticulously built below his studio in Los Angeles. Drawn to responsive and relational objects that behave, react, change, grow, and carry rhythm, Shoemaker collects and propagates mushrooms, manipulating them in a highly controlled environment of his design. Shoemaker has developed unique substrate matters, which he embeds within sculptures and casts into molds to create large and small mycelium sculptures.

Alongside gallery and museum exhibitions, Shoemaker conducts mycological experiments in his lab, facilitates mycomaterial workshops, and develops long term projects. Growing a wild polypore mushroom foraged from his studio neighborhood into the shape of a 15-foot fishing kayak, Shoemaker launched a successful boat test of the largest mushroom boat on record in June 2024. A preview of the boat (a week before the test) is prominently featured in a video profile of Shoemaker's practice produced by Andy Schlachtenhaufen for the [Los Angeles Times](#) and a video of the successful [boat test](#) went viral on Shoemaker's own artist and mycologist social media feeds. OCHI is proud to share that Shoemaker is in a planning stage with Fulcrum Arts as this visionary multi-stage project develops, centering on a solo sojourn from Los Angeles to Catalina Island, a book detailing Shoemaker's research as an artist-mycologist, and an exhibition with public programming organized by Fulcrum Arts Curator and Artist Program Manager Patrick J. Reed.



Sam Shoemaker in his mushroom boat (2024). Courtesy of the Artist and OCHI. Photo by Ian Byers-Gamber.

ABOUT OCHI

Founded in 2015, OCHI is a contemporary art gallery with locations in Sun Valley, Idaho and Los Angeles, California. Nurturing and contextualizing a diverse roster of interdisciplinary artists, OCHI highlights a mix of traditional and experimental practices that investigate the conceptual and material boundaries of art. OCHI's program focuses on emerging and mid-career artists, collaborating with each artist to build momentum and visibility through robust activities such as institutional exhibitions, gallery partnerships, artist-initiated opportunities, educational and curatorial platforms, art fairs, and a range of press and publications.

OCHI is built upon a multi-generational belief that art has the power to build community, to evoke joy, expand horizons, to define culture, and to create a future that has not yet been imagined.

OCHI is a proud member of Gallery Association Los Angeles (GALA), New Art Dealers Alliance (NADA) and the Gallery Climate Coalition (GCC)

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