

eric firestone gallery



Sana Musasama (b. Queens, NY 1951) is a ceramic artist whose work is informed by her global travels and her interests in women's studies and indigenous artistic practices. Musasama began traveling as a way to recover identity and cultural place. Clay was the geographical catalyst that first brought her to West Africa where she studied pottery with the Mende people in Sierra Leone (1974–75). Later venturing to Japan, China, Cambodia, and South America, she continued her quest, expanding her interests to tribal adornment practices. She is challenged by issues concerning women's safety, specifically rituals involving rites of passage and female chastity. Her body of work ranges from intimate ceramic objects adorned with stitching and found objects from nature, to large colorful biomorphic shapes. She also experiments with melted glass, embracing a fragility in her work which evokes the precarious existence of the female bodies she encounters in her travels and at home.

Musasama grew up in St. Albans, Queens, and continues to live and work in her childhood home. She received her BA from City College, City University of New York in 1974, and her MFA from Alfred University in 1987. Musasama is the recipient of an Anonymous Was a Woman Grant (2002) and the Outstanding Achievement Award (2018) from the National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts (NCECA) for her years of teaching and her humanitarian work with victims of sex trafficking in Cambodia. In 2024 she was the subject of a solo exhibition at the Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, NY, and became the first recipient of the NCECA Innovator Award. Musasama's work is held in the collections of the Studio Museum in Harlem, New York; the Hood Museum of Art, Hanover, NH; the Museum of Art and Design, New York; Cooper Hewitt National

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Design Museum, New York; Mint Museum of Craft and Design, Charlotte, NC; the European Ceramic Center in Hertogenbosch, the Netherlands; the Archie Bray Foundation in Helena, Montana, and the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York.

Eric Firestone Gallery began working with Musasama in 2022, presenting an in-depth solo installation of her work at the 2023 New York edition of the 1-54 Contemporary African Art Fair. Over the past two years, Musasama has participated in a series of residency programs: the Watershed Center for the Ceramic Arts, Edgecomb, ME; Township10, Marshall, NC; The New York State College of Ceramics at Alfred University, NY; Penland School of Craft, Mitchell County, NC; the Archie Bray Foundation, Helena, MT; and most recently the Shangyu Celadon Modern International Ceramic Center in Zhejiang Province, China.

Her work will be included in the exhibitions *Re-Union: Syd Carpenter, Martha Jackson Jarvis, Judy Moonelis, Sana Musasama, and Winnie Owens Hart* at the Frances M. Maguire Art Museum and *Clay Has Memory: Generational Knowledge from Africa* at the Princeton University Art Museum, both opening in 2026.

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