

The Chronicle

Art installation features ceramics collected by former geology professor

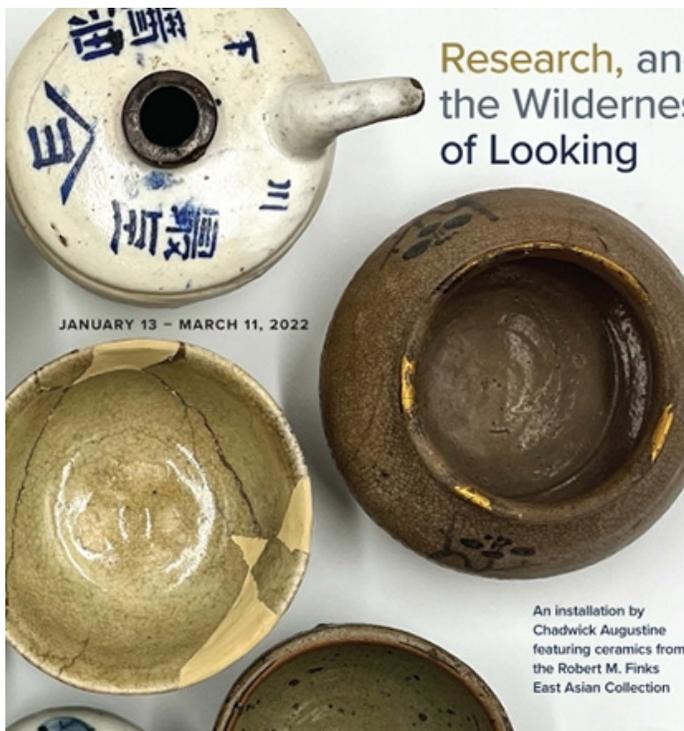
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An installation that showcases select pieces of Asian pottery collected by a former geology professor is on view at the Feigenbaum Center for Visual Arts.

“Research, and the Wilderness of Looking” runs through March 11 in the Crowell Gallery. It features works from the Robert M. Finks Collection of East Asian Ceramics, which is part of the Union College Permanent Collection.

The installation was designed by Chadwick Augustine, an artist working in Brooklyn and

Upstate New York, using wood and other mixed media.



A devoted scientist, mentor and teacher, Finks (1927-2014) was a research professor of geology at Union from 2003 to 2011. Previously, he taught paleontology at Queens College, City University of New York.

He specialized in the research and description of early to middle Paleozoic sponges, which inspired his affectionate moniker, “Sponge Bob.”

In addition to the 84 ceramic vessels that he donated to the College in 2012, Finks is said to have had a large collection of fossil specimens and historical objects, and he was a published poet.

Augustine holds a master's of fine arts from the New York State College of Ceramics at Alfred University, and he has exhibited throughout the United States and abroad. His work explores the lyrical network of materiality, landscape and the nature of objects to imply myth.

"Seeing that my practice borrows from the languages of craft, mythology and the collaging of sculptural forms, the invitation to work with the Finks collection felt like a natural pairing to deepen this exploration," he said.

Gathered together as a collection, "these vessels have been given a fresh context and have accrued meaning as valued possessions in the cabinet of Dr. Finks' endlessly inquisitive mind," said Sheri Lullo, associate professor of visual arts. "It is here that Augustine enters to select from the multitude of possible dimensions, from the historical to the material to the personal, that this composite collection might express."

All exhibit visitors will be required to follow Union College mask and vaccination protocols. This means wearing surgical or N95, KN95 or KF94 masks indoors, regardless of vaccination status.

Those unable to attend can take a visual tour of the exhibit [here](#).

