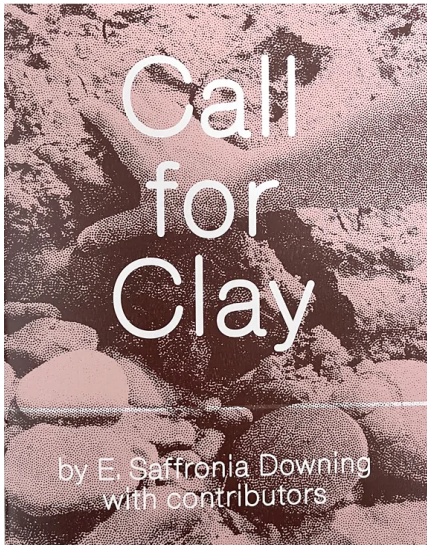


E. Saffronia Downing: *Call for Clay* Book Launch + Artist Talk

Sunday, September 20, 2026, 3 - 4:30pm
ACRE Projects
2921 N. Clark Street, Chicago, IL



ACRE Projects presents the Chicago launch of *Call for Clay*, a publication cataloging the results of E. Saffronia Downing's crowd-sourced clay project, which explores wild clay as a material embodiment of place and memory.

On **Sunday, September 20 at 3pm**, join the artist for a tour of her solo exhibition at ACRE Projects, [Pressed Flower](#), and a discussion about her publication, *Call for Clay*, to celebrate its launch.

About *Call for Clay*:

Through public open calls in 2023 and 2025, Downing invited participants to send her samples of foraged clay along with letters describing the places where the clay was gathered. Forty contributors from nineteen states and three countries responded, mailing parcels of clay alongside stories that

describe deeply-held relationships with the land. Presented as a scrapbook and archive, *Call for Clay* demonstrates collective attention toward our shared earth.

Downing remarks that, "foraging wild clay is an opportunity to unearth stories held by people and places. Although the earth is a source of healing, the land also holds histories of harm in its sediment. Sometimes these histories are visible in the clay, like the traces of lead, cadmium, and barium that leach from industrial landscapes and settle in clay strata. Often, these stories require conscious digging to bring to the surface."

Call for Clay is published by the John Michael Kohler Arts Center. [Purchase](#) your copy online or at ACRE Projects.

About the Artist:

[E. Saffronia Downing](#) (she/they) is a ceramic artist whose research explores material studies and ecological thought. Downing works with wild clay to create sculptures and installations that map relationships to place. She received her MFA in Ceramics from School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2020. Downing has been a recipient of awards, fellowships, and residencies such as the Future Bodies symposium at the Gardiner Museum, Toronto, ON, and a studio session at A-B Project, Los Angeles, CA; grants from SPACE American Rescue Plan and Buck Lab for Climate and Environment; fellowships at College of the Atlantic, Lunder Institute of American Art, and Oxbow School of Art; and residencies at PADA, ACRE, and Tokyo Arts University. Recent exhibitions include *Terrestrial Extra* at the Dorsky Museum, New Paltz, NY; *A Beautiful Experience*;

The Midwestern Grotto Tradition at the John Michael Kohler Art Center, Sheboygan, WI; Tracks and Other Signs at Old Friends Gallery, Chicago, IL; Clay-In-Place at Triangle Projects, Los Angeles, CA; and Field Dug Over at Bad Water Gallery, Knoxville, TN.

About ACRE:

Founded in 2010, ACRE (Artists' Cooperative Residency and Exhibitions) is an artist-run non-profit devoted to providing resources to emerging artists and nurturing a diverse community of cultural producers. ACRE's programs support this generative community with materials, equipment, expertise, conscientiously produced food, and opportunities to exhibit and share work.

ACRE's annual summer residency in rural Wisconsin brings together emerging artists to live and work in a communal setting. ACRE's gallery, A corresponding year-long program of exhibitions and events held at ACRE Projects, ACRE's Chicago gallery space, creates ongoing opportunities for idea exchange, feedback and growth. ACRE Projects is open Tuesdays through Thursdays from 11am - 3pm and by appointment.

ACRE is supported in part by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Field Foundation, Good Chaos, Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events, Gaylord & Dorothy Donnelley Foundation, Arts Work Fund, and Illinois Arts Council Agency.

Lead Sponsors: Patti Gilford, Valerie Carberry and Richard Wright, Jay Dandy and Melissa Weber, The California Clipper, 710 Group

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Event Sponsors: DOCUMENT, Marz Brewing, Middle Brow, Apologue Liqueurs, Exfolia Botanical, Schlep

Accessibility Information:

ACRE Projects is on the ground level with a 4-inch step to enter the building. The bathroom is wheelchair accessible. Masks are not required to enter the space but we do have masks available upon request. For additional information, please contact the gallery's accessibility coordinator Lauren Leving at exhibitions@acreresidency.org.