

# SIXTY INCHES FROM CENTER

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**Review: 36° 15' 43" N 29° 59' 14" E at Goldfinch Gallery**

written by Christina Nafziger

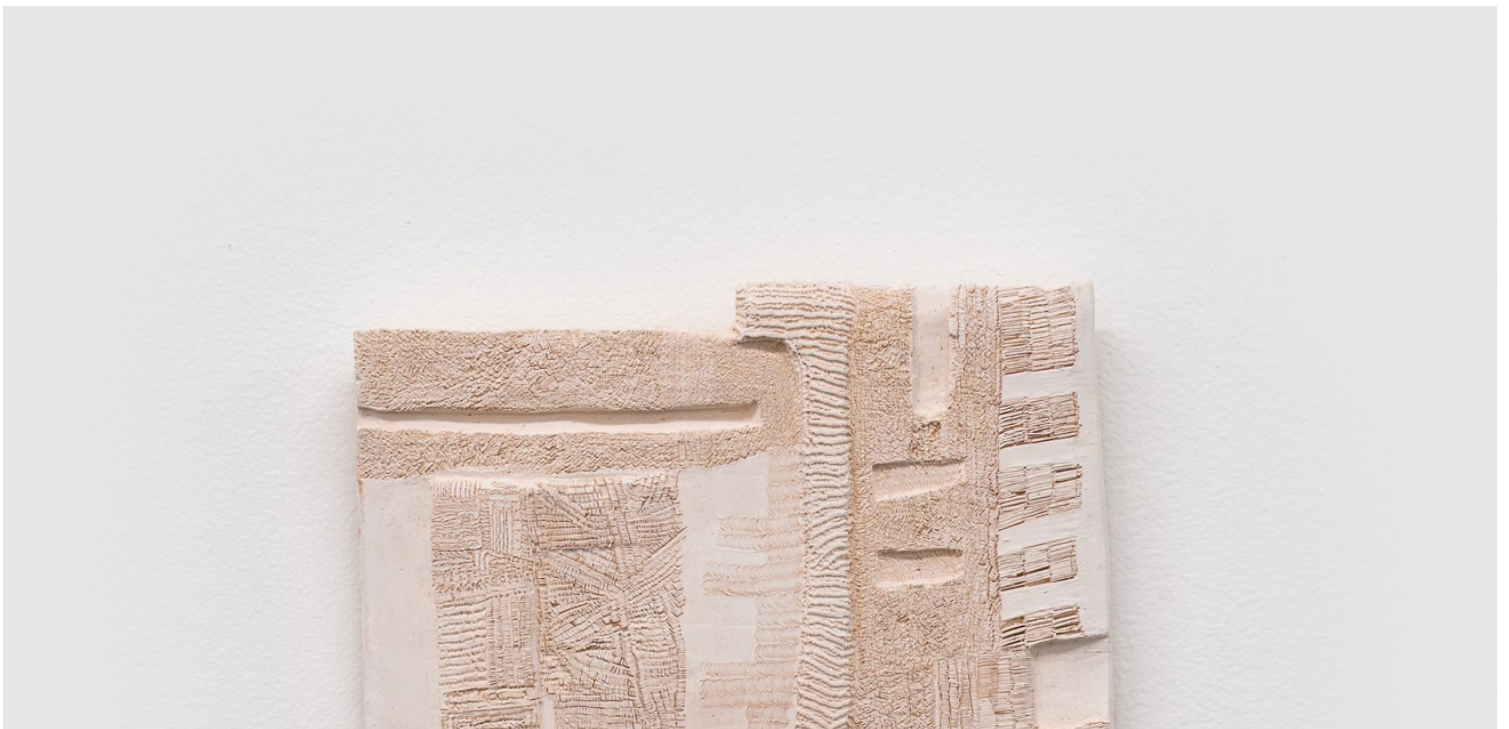


Texture as memory, as language, as impression of thought and purpose; this is what is brought forth onto and within the imprints on the surface of objects made by [SaraNoa Mark](#). Tactile and intricate, the artist's mark making oftentimes reads like indecipherable

words, while other times appears as imagery unfolding within the cracks of the surface, much like a relief. These carved and etched lines are akin to the marks made in drawing, which is at the heart of the artist's practice. "Drawing is the lens through which I experience the world," says Mark. "I view the earth, itself, as a drawing — continuously drafted by environmental and human gestures."

Earthy and mineral-esque, Mark's objects appear as solid as a rock and as precious as a relic. Manifesting their pieces from carved ceramic, clay, and stone, the artist has chosen a monochromatic palette that accentuates their mark making. With difference in color out of the way, the rich, lush texture is left bare for us to examine and search, so dense and palpable that I can almost physically (or metaphysically?) feel the roughness, the smoothness, the patterned impressions on my skin. For Mark's work, an intentional change in hue is not needed, as their carving and cutting into the surface of the works create its own slight change in tone, a subtle gradient only gifted to those that take the time to be still and look.

Regarding texture, the artist describes this element of their work as a, "primary medium of artistic communication. I seek to rework that which exists, whether in clay, stone, or fiber. I aim to enter into conversation with carved languages, ranging from sidewalk graffiti to Assyrian reliefs, with the impulse to score picture into place. I am trying to create a visual language that is as much about touch as it is about sight."



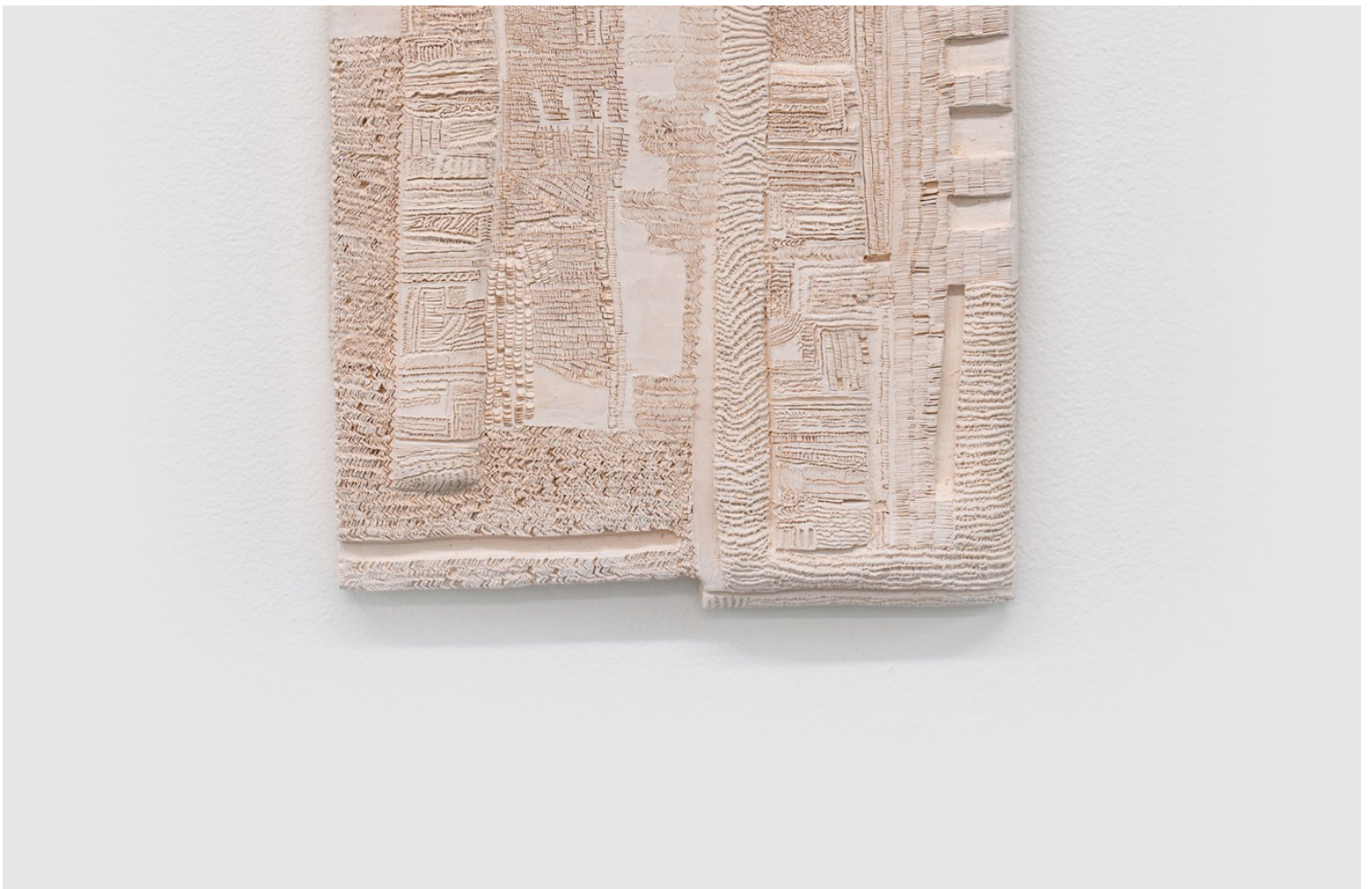


Image: Remnants of a Sandy Substance by SaraNoa Mark, 2021, carved clay. Photo by Tran Tran. Courtesy of Goldfinch Gallery and the artist.

Mark's newest body of work is on view in their solo exhibition titled  $36^{\circ} 15' 43'' N 29^{\circ} 59' 14'' E$  at Goldfinch Gallery. A result of Mark's recent Fulbright research fellowship in Turkey, the works in the show draw from the artist's experience among the country's rock monuments and ancient city sites, such as the Lycian metropolis. The title of the show,  $36^{\circ} 15' 43'' N 29^{\circ} 59' 14'' E$ , refers to the coordinates of this location, or more specifically, the "backside" of the mountain at this site. "For Mark, this 'secret' or neglected part of an ancient site threw into very literal relief questions about pilgrimage and abandonment, value and neglect," explains Goldfinch Gallery. What is value and neglect tied to and what is it contingent on? What compels us to preserve and memorialize some objects and sites over others? Is value inherent, or is it thrust upon an object based on our own judgements and hierarchies of cultures, aesthetics, and measured 'usefulness' or function?





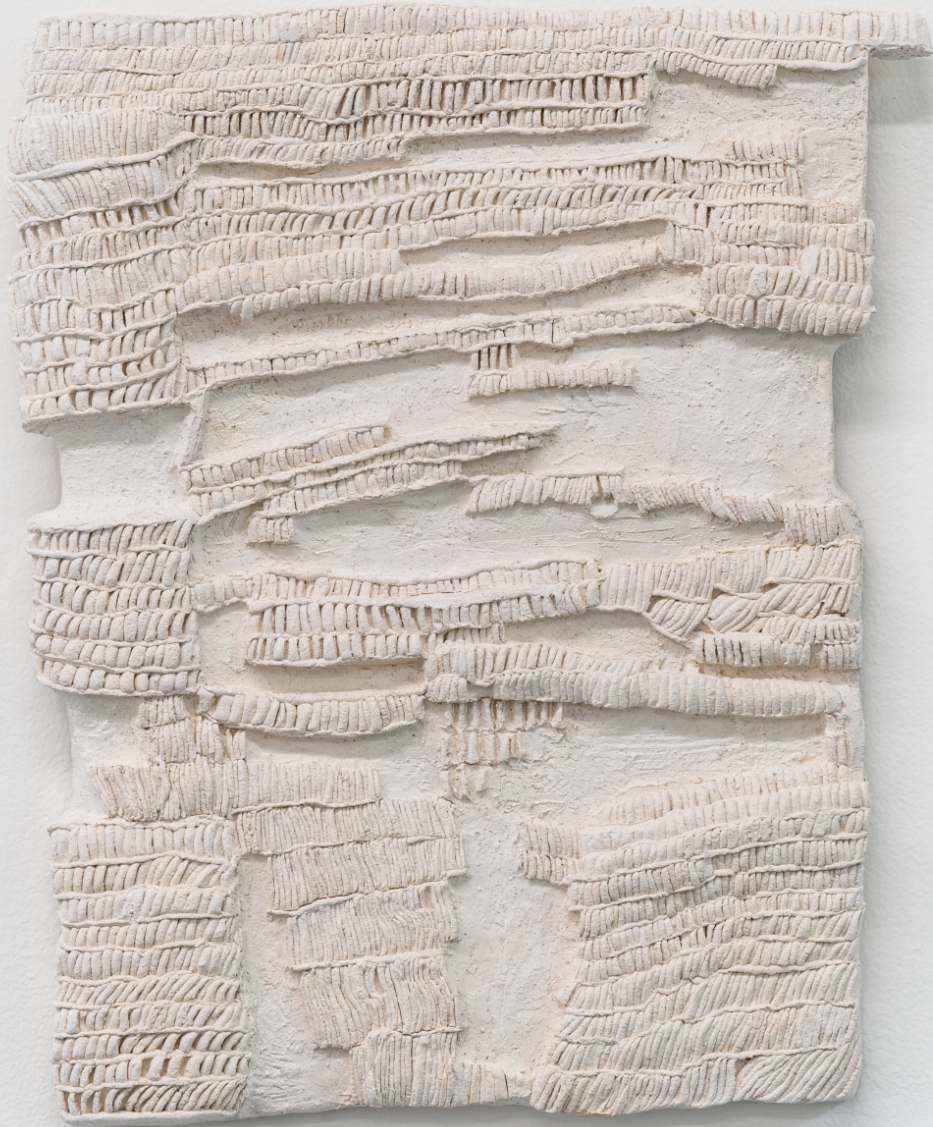


Image: A City Unaware of Its Own Existence by SaraNoa Mark, 2021, carved clay. Photo by Tran Tran. Courtesy of Goldfinch Gallery and the artist.

With some pieces hanging on the white gallery walls and others sitting on a table of sand, the works differ greatly depending on location. Contingent on what they sit against and

the works differ greatly depending on location. Contingent on what they sit against and depending on their own immediate environment, the textures vibrate and slowly change. For *A City Unaware of its Own Existence*, the texture exists in striking contrast to the smooth wall it hangs upon. Yet against beige sand, more time is demanded in the viewing, as the clashing of textures forms a tension that tricks the eye—at least, my own eyes—into seeing movement. An energy is sought and drawn out in a way that implies a spirit, a memory, a history.

I would be remiss if I did not mention specifically what were, for me, the stand out pieces of the show: *Shaping Sand*, 2021, made out of carved clay and hung on a wall, and its four counterparts, which are displayed lying down flat. The deep grey-black tone of the clay caused me to immediately notice them, as the rest of the show is largely hues of cream and beige—but it was the tight sophistication of the tiny, intricate cuts into the surface that left me struck. Like all of Mark's pieces included in *36° 15' 43" N 29° 59' 14" E*, these pieces left a satisfying taste in my mouth, one that is created only when one experiences artwork that has formed its own distinct language—a “non-verbal alphabet”—one that lingers on the tongue.



Image: Shaping Sand by SaraNoa Mark, 2021, carved clay. Photo by Ryan Edmund Thiel. Courtesy of Goldfinch Gallery and the artist.

36° 15' 43" N 29° 59' 14" E is on view at Goldfinch Gallery from February 27 through April 10, 2021.

*Featured image: A detail view of the piece titled Miscellaneous Utensils in an Orange Grove by SaraNoa Mark, 2021, steel, sand, carved clay, carved brick, museum armatures. Photo by Tran Tran. Courtesy of Goldfinch Gallery and the artist.*



Christina Nafziger is an art critic, editor, and writer based in Chicago (occupied land of Ohklahomo, Potawatomi, Ojibwe, and Odawa people). Earning an M.A. in Contemporary Art Theory from Goldsmiths University of London, her research focuses on the effect photo collections and archiving have on memory and identity and the potential capacity these collections have in altering and editing future histories. Working with a collaborative approach to her editorial work, her writing investigates the work of artists with research-based practices and how they engage with archives.

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