

# SAR NOW

WINTER/  
SPRING  
2022

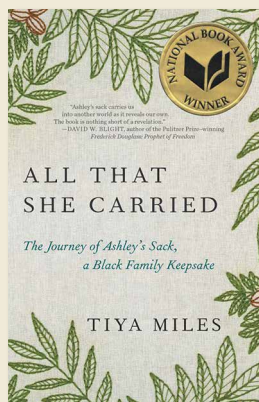
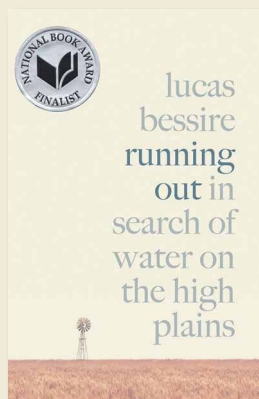
issue 09

SCHOOL FOR ADVANCED RESEARCH NEWS

## Thinking about Impact

*In the world of nonprofit organizations, it's fashionable to foreground the organization's impact—almost a requirement, in fact. When asked to specify the impact of SAR's diverse programs, however, I sometimes find myself struggling to offer a persuasive answer. Organizations that feed the hungry or house the homeless can readily quantify the impact of their efforts. For institutions devoted to research and education, in contrast, impact is harder to identify, largely because the results of support may be delayed by years and resistant to quantification.*

But now and then, facts converge in such a way that our influence becomes clearer. A recent instance is the short-listing of two SAR alumni for the 2021 National Book Award in Nonfiction: Lucas Bessire for *Running Out: In Search of Water on the High Plains* (Princeton University Press) and Tiya Miles for *All That She Carried: The Journey of Ashley's Sack, a Black Family Keepsake* (Penguin Random House). Tiya Miles's book was named the winner in November.



While we cannot take direct credit for the work of these two gifted writers, their success speaks volumes about SAR's efforts to identify and support talent wherever we can find it.

Several events on SAR's calendar in the coming months are likely to have a more immediate impact:

In February we will launch a series of webinars focused on different aspects of justice and, by implication, injustice. Topics include strategies for protecting the cultural and intellectual property of Native American communities; the recent, puzzling increase in violence in the United States and what might be done to combat it; and the threats to democratic societies of declining faith in the media and even the idea of truth itself. This series is supported by a grant

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## Seeking Justice: Toward a More Equitable America

*We are proud to announce that we were recently awarded a \$167,825 National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) grant, through the NEH American Rescue Plan, which will provide relief funding for SAR to recover from the economic impact of the pandemic. SAR joins other prestigious cultural and educational institutions in receiving this grant.*



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT  
FOR THE HUMANITIES  
*Democracy demands wisdom*



The funding will enable us to continue hosting the Creative Thought Forum, now in its fourth year, which brings to our Santa Fe community and beyond speakers who address topics of public interest and challenge us to look at the world in new ways. Beginning in early 2022, SAR will host Seeking Justice: Toward a More Equitable America, a series of six webinar-style public lectures and guided discussions on the theme of social justice as assessed through multiple social, cultural, economic, and environmental points of view. Presenters will be drawn from SAR's network of leading thinkers in academia and beyond, representing fields including but not limited to history, anthropology, Native American studies, and law. The series will be free and open to the public.

The continuation of online events is critical to SAR's principal mission, which is to expand public and scholarly understandings of cultural diversity and Native American arts and to promote more equitable and just societies. Although driven by a national public health emergency, the shift to online presentations has significantly increased the size and geographical diversity of SAR's audience. Over the past year we reached over three thousand viewers from all fifty states and twenty-five countries. SAR sought NEH support to further our recent success in attracting a global audience to our virtual programming.

In his announcement of the award, SAR president Michael F. Brown stated,

*We greatly appreciate NEH's support for a webinar series that will bring together prominent thinkers from law and the social sciences to reflect on a series of vexing social issues. These range from debates about how best to protect the intellectual and cultural property of Native American communities to the impact on democratic institutions of the so-called crisis of truth—that is, declining public faith in the news media and the findings of scientists.*

### Justice, Public Lands, and Indigenous Peoples

Over a century after the establishment of our national parks, this webinar addresses questions about the scope of parks and other public lands, their management, and the heritage of their original Indigenous stewards.

### Everyday Violence and Strategies for Its Reduction

Several experts consider factors driving the dramatic run-up in US violent crime that ends a period of steady crime reduction beginning in the 1990s, as well as approaches that might counter it.

### Finding Just Solutions to Cultural Appropriation

Exploring the line between cultural appreciation and cultural appropriation, this conversation offers perspectives from Indigenous and non-Indigenous legal scholars on prospects for protecting the intellectual and cultural property of Native Americans while addressing the necessity of marketing their creations to broad audiences.

### Climate Change and Environmental Justice

Moving beyond questions about the reality of climate change, this conversation will share perspectives on how to address its impact, from strategies to reduce the unequal distribution of environmental damage to consideration of the risks of experimenting with more aggressive technological interventions.

### The "Crisis of Truth" in Democratic Societies

Observers of democratic life in the United States and elsewhere have concluded that appeals to untruths have become far more common in political life. This webinar considers whether the alleged crisis of truth represents a serious danger to democratic institutions and, if so, what can be done about it.

### Rethinking Monuments and Memorials

Although exchanges about statues and other public monuments have become painfully contentious in recent years, this conversation considers fresh and creative approaches to preserving public memory without opening old wounds.

\* Event dates and speakers will be announced in early 2022.

## GROWING OUR AUDIENCE SAR'S NEW HYBRID SEMINARS

Over the course of the pandemic, SAR has worked hard to offer as many public and scholarly programs as possible, in a safe and accessible way. We have transitioned multiple programs and services to a digital or hybrid format, which has provided us with the opportunity to develop new content and to grow our local and global audiences. It has also allowed us to maintain our most successful scholar programs, including the seminars.



ENVIRONMENTAL ADAPTATIONS OF SPATIAL GRAMMAR IN DIALECTS OF NAHUATL SEMINAR. FROM LEFT: CAROLYN O'MEARA, LAURITS STAPPUT KNUDSEN, MAGNUS HANSEN, HUGO ÁLVARO SALGADO, AND ABELARDO DE LA CRUZ (ABSENT FROM PHOTO: PAJA FAUDREE)

SAR's seminar program was developed to provide scholars from various fields the opportunity to discuss in person their research on a shared topic. This interdisciplinary experience provides researchers with a uniquely productive approach that has resulted in hundreds of books and the advancement of research and critical analysis in social sciences and humanities for more than fifty years. Despite being postponed in March 2020 due to the pandemic, the seminar program has now been restarted in a hybrid format that allows participants who are able to travel to meet on our Santa Fe campus, while also providing direct access to those who cannot. To accommodate all participants, we set up video and audio

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Broader Conversations: 2021–2022 Weatherhead Fellow Chelsi West Ohueri

Thinking she would become a pre-med student in college, Chelsi West Ohueri took an introductory anthropology class to fulfill a graduation requirement but found that the class drove a “curiosity that was invigorating.” She now holds a doctorate in sociocultural anthropology from the University of Texas, Austin, and is also an assistant professor in their Department of Slavic & Eurasian Studies. One of SAR’s 2021–2022 Weatherhead fellows, West Ohueri is working on a book manuscript called “Albania in Red, Black, and White: An Ethnography of Racial Belonging in the Communist Afterlife.”

While still an undergraduate, West Ohueri accompanied her advisor, along with other professors and students, on an ethno-archaeological research trip to Albania—her first experience outside of the United States. Her primary task included survey archaeology, yet once her team had secured permission from local people to survey their land, she found herself being invited into their homes and drawn into conversations with them, even when they didn’t speak the same language. Eventually, her advisor suggested that she might be more interested in joining the cultural anthropologists as they traveled around conducting interviews. However, West Ohueri also had to convince her family that she could both have a career in anthropology and study in Albania:

My junior year, I had to tell my parents, I am going to major in anthropology. And my dad was super concerned. Later, when I got a Fulbright to Albania, the local newspaper wrote a story about it because people didn’t often get Fulbrights in my hometown and no one had ever gotten one to Albania. That really did shape a lot of my relationship to the discipline because my family was asking, What is this? And it made me question as well—in thinking about people like Zora Neale Hurston and Pearl Primus and the amazing work that Black anthropologists have done for years—why that felt so foreign. And what that said about my relationship to anthropology, because for so long it was white anthropologists who “studied” everyone else.



CHELSEI WEST OHUERI  
2021–2022 WEATHERHEAD FELLOW

West Ohueri realized that many of the conversations she was having with her family and had in Albania were “broader conversations around whiteness and blackness and how people are racialized.” Members of her family looked at photos of people she

had met in Albania and wanted to know, Do Albanians consider themselves white people? Albanian hosts extended hospitality and kindness while offering blunt critiques of her appearance: You’re very beautiful, but it’s too bad you’re so Black. “Racial logics shape our livelihoods globally,” she says, “whether we acknowledge them or not.”

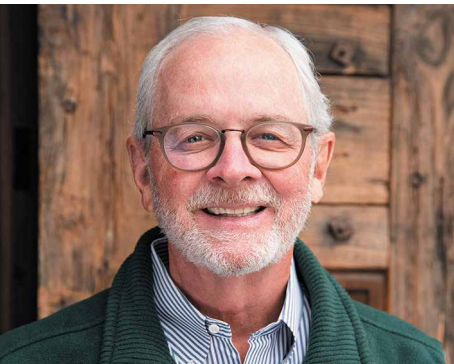
West Ohueri’s work at SAR resonates, of course, with her experience in the field, but also in many ways with the current moment in the United States. She uses the word *afterlife* in her book title because words like *postcommunist* or *postsocialist*, with their emphasis on ending and transition, don’t “speak to the presence of the past.” “I’m actually thankful for this moment, even though this moment has been very stressful,” she says. “It’s very frustrating and very frightening. As a Black woman, I do feel like we are on the cusp of a reckoning, if we will allow ourselves. And that’s the challenge, right?”

Watch West Ohueri’s resident scholar colloquium on our YouTube channel: [sarsf.info/ohueri](https://sarsf.info/ohueri)

The President’s Garden Restored

The President’s Garden, with its view into the large windows of the president’s office, sits outside the iconic Administration Building of the School for Advanced Research, which was designed by renowned Santa Fe artist William Penhallow Henderson and modeled after the church at Laguna Pueblo. A strong Moorish influence can be seen in the design of the walled garden, built in the late 1920s. The garden includes a pineapple-shaped marble fountain said to be a Victorian symbol for hospitality—a fitting setting for SAR’s president to meet with guests in an outdoor space.

Over the years, nature has taken a toll on the garden’s stone patio and stucco wall. However, SAR’s Board of Directors, championed by Vice Chair Ken Cole, raised the funds needed to restore and repair the garden during the time SAR’s campus was closed by the COVID-19 lock-down. Over the past year, the stucco wall has been patched and replastered, the bancos reconstructed, the flagstone replaced, new railings installed, and new outdoor lighting and water-efficient drip irrigation placed. Finally, the finished garden was landscaped using native Southwestern plants and flowers.



KEN COLE  
SAR’S BOARD OF DIRECTORS VICE CHAIR

“We were able to take advantage of our closed campus to begin much-needed renovations to our historic estate, El Delirio,” reflects Cole. “It is our role as stewards to safeguard one of SAR’s most valuable assets and the story it represents. I look forward to the day SAR can fully reopen and we can welcome back SAR’s supporters to our beautifully restored President’s Garden.”



THE PRESIDENT’S GARDEN BEFORE RESTORATION (TOP) AND AFTER RESTORATION (BOTTOM) WITH LANDSCAPING DESIGNED BY KENNETH FRANCIS AND SURROUNDINGS, SANTA FE

Growing Our Audience // continued from page 1

“TO OUR GREAT RELIEF, PARTICIPANTS FROM BOTH SEMINARS REPORTED THAT THE HYBRID FORMAT WORKED SURPRISINGLY WELL.”

—Paul Ryer, SAR’s director of Scholar Programs



RESTLESS SPIRITS AND HUMAN REMAINS: LIFE, DEATH, AND JUSTICE IN POST-WAR NORTHERN UGANDA SEMINAR. FROM LEFT: LUCIA ELGERUD NORSTRÖM, DAWNIE STEADMAN, JOSHUA OBALLIM, HUGH TULLER, TRICIA HEPNER, JAYMELEE KIM, AND JULIA HANEBRINK

equipment in the Seminar House, enabling both remote and on-campus seminarians to gather for multiple days of intense discussions. This format maintains the collaborative experience that has always been such a crucial element in the success of our seminars.

In addition to those noted in the photos (above and previous page), the following seminarians participated via Zoom. In the Environmental Adaptations of Spatial Grammar in Dialects of Nahuatl seminar, Paul Kockelman, Paola Gutiérrez Aranda, Gabriela Citlahua Zepahua, Ditte Boeg Thomsen, and Bill Palmer. In the Restless Spirits and Human Remains: Life, Death, and

Justice in Post-War Northern Uganda seminar, Deo Komakech, Sonia Akareut, Jeffrey Kenneth Opiyo, and Sarah Wagner.

While nothing can replace the experience of in-person interaction, and we hope to return to fully in-person seminars in the future, the hybrid format has already allowed us to host the two National Science Foundation (NSF) Research Team Seminars mentioned. Six additional seminars have been scheduled for 2022. Due to a scheduling backlog, we are only accepting applications for NSF Research Team Seminars; however, we hope to begin accepting applications for all of our seminars in 2023.

Learn more about or apply for our seminar program: <https://sarweb.org/seminars/>



# The Clay Called Me, and I Was Lucky Enough to Hear It: Brandon Adriano Ortiz-Concha

Ortiz-Concha is a Taos Pueblo micaceous-clay potter, aspiring architect, and historic preservationist. Surging through each of these disciplines is an exploration of space—spaces of being and belonging, identity and community. His interest in pottery began at the University of New Mexico, where he sought an escape from the computer-heavy coursework of an architecture degree. Encouraged by Diné potter and instructor Jared Tso, Ortiz-Concha studied with Ohkay Owingeh artist Clarence Cruz at the ceramic studio in 2017, learning the fundamentals of speaking with clay.

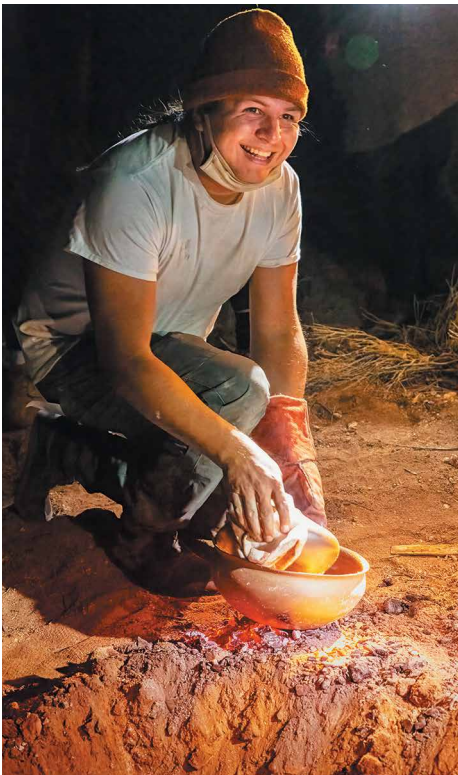
Since then, Ortiz-Concha has navigated his own relationship with pottery. Knowing that his pueblo was recognized for micaceous vessels, he was determined to adapt Cruz’s lessons to the micaceous clay bodies of northern New Mexico, embracing a trial-by-fire method:

While it was all brand new, there was also something that felt familiar and tapped into the making and resourcefulness that I’d grown up with. I never really felt as though I had a choice in it—the clay called me, and I was lucky enough to hear it.

Taos Pueblo micaceous pots have not historically been known for their adornments. They were primarily used as utilitarian objects, such as cooking pots, seed jars, and serving vessels. It took most of the twentieth century for micaceous vessels to even be considered art objects. Potters like Angie Yazzie, Christine McHorse, and Lonnie Vigil changed this perception with their beautiful, sculptural micaceous works that transcend function and demand artistic recognition.

In his pottery, Ortiz-Concha seeks to blend these two worlds: the utilitarian and the decorative. He prefers his vessels be used, but he also wants to explore new, intentional forms of decorating. During his time at SAR, he experimented with screen printing, sgraffito, block printing, and stenciling, while also encouraging smoke clouds to bloom in specific areas on the pots. While not every technique developed as he’d hoped, Ortiz-Concha came to a realization through the work:

Only recently have I started to understand that for me, exploring the decoration of pottery means . . . to explore body and racial politics, and what it means to be a contemporary Indigenous person and a Taos Pueblo person in particular.



BRANDON ADRIANO ORTIZ-CONCHA  
2021 ROLLIN AND MARY ELLA KING  
NATIVE ARTIST FELLOW

With his mixed heritage, Ortiz-Concha admits it can be difficult to feel like he belongs completely to one culture or another. Micaceous clay is his tactile connection back to the pueblo: working with clay, he says, “reassured me that you can be wholly Indigenous and completely yourself.”

Watching Ortiz-Concha during his firing felt like witnessing a relationship unfold. He and the pots seemed to be in conversation as he added them to the coal base, built up the fire, covered the pit in thinly split cedar, and waited for the clouds to speak. “This is the most difficult part of the process,” he said, “controlling your emotions. We have to let go of it and just listen to the fire.”

—Emily Santhanam,  
SAR Anne Ray intern 2020–2021



ORTIZ-CONCHA FIRING HIS POTTERY AT SAR DURING A PRESIDENT’S CIRCLE MEMBERS’ SPECIAL EVENT (TOP), AND ONE OF HIS VESSELS SHOWING A SMOKE BLOOM (BOTTOM)

Watch Ortiz-Concha’s artist talk, “Conversations with Clouds”:  
[sarsf.info/ortizconcha](https://sarsf.info/ortizconcha)

## Thinking about Impact // continued from page 1

from the National Endowment for the Humanities and will include presentations by historians, anthropologists, legal scholars, political scientists, and journalists.

In late July, SAR, in collaboration with the Vilcek Foundation, will open its first-ever public exhibition of Pueblo pottery at Santa Fe’s Museum of Indian Arts & Culture (MIAC). The exhibition, *Grounded in Clay: The Spirit of Pueblo Pottery*, is both a celebration of the IARC collection’s centennial and a radical rethinking of how to approach an Indigenous art form whose significance transcends the merely aesthetic. Rather than being curated by a professional art historian, the works displayed and described in *Grounded in Clay* draw on the knowledge of sixty Pueblo individuals, together called the Pueblo Pottery Collective. These Native curators bring to the exhibition a broad range of age, experience, and expertise.

*Grounded in Clay* reveals the impact of years of work at SAR and other institutions to bring the voices of Native people to center stage when their work is represented to the general public. We expect the exhibition to travel nationally after its stay at MIAC.

As winter turns to spring, SAR is forging ahead with a range of ambitious online offerings despite the national and global resurgence of COVID-19. We remain confident that by late spring we can resume most in-person events, including field trips and lectures. Pandemic or no pandemic, sharing the insights of talented scholars and Native American artists with our members remains at the heart of SAR’s mission.

Cordially,  
  
Michael F. Brown  
President

## Stay Connected

Sign up for our weekly e-mail, *SAR Connects*, and receive inspiration from scholars and Native American artists directly to your inbox. If you aren’t receiving these messages, please reach out to our membership team to update your e-mail address at [schiffer@sarsf.org](mailto:schiffer@sarsf.org).

As we head into the spring, SAR has planned a full slate of programs, from virtual speaker series and conversations with leading thinkers to artist talks and maker events. Be sure to check the online calendar for opportunities to engage with SAR from home.

[sarweb.org/calendar](https://sarweb.org/calendar)

## SAR MEMBERS ARE SAYING:

“During this pandemic, SAR has allowed me to be less isolated and certainly less stagnant as it has grown its online presence. Through lectures, artist studio visits, virtual tours of the collections, and so much more, members and the public have been able to learn and grow. It was through one such Creative Thought Forum lecture by Philip Deloria, a favorite professor of my two nephews, that I had the thought to gift them a Virtual Membership; thereby extending the inherited familial connection with SAR. We will see how that grows with the next generation.”

—Joan Spalding, SAR member, April 2021

“Thank you for bringing these scholars to us, through the pandemic time, and after. Your programs . . . have helped me feel connected, and [to] keep learning. I feel sure that there are many viewers who have been able to ‘visit’ and ‘meet’ speakers that they wouldn’t be able to, even if there had not been a pandemic.”

—Virtual attendee of “Chaco: Crafted Space, Remembered Place”

## CLASSES, COLLECTIONS, AND MORE

Looking for more? We have a wealth of resources available to you on our website and YouTube channel.

Purchase sessions from our In-Depth classes, even after they’re over. See the full selection at <https://sarweb.org/education/classes/>, where you can find courses on topics ranging from ethnographic writing to Native art to Southwestern archaeology.

Or dive into a collection of videos on our YouTube channel at [sarsf.info/playlists](https://sarsf.info/playlists). Whether you’re interested in SAR Artists Live on Instagram, resident scholar colloquia, SAR Press book talks, or something else entirely, we have a program for you!

## SAR VIRTUAL MEMBERSHIP

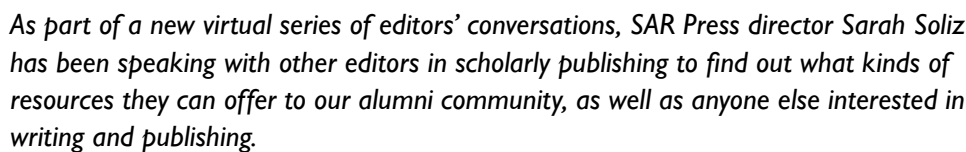
Last spring, SAR launched a virtual membership for new members. You can welcome friends and family into the SAR community and introduce them to a world of fascinating ideas, regardless of their location, by gifting a virtual membership for just \$25 a year. Learn more at [sarsf.info/virtualmember](https://sarsf.info/virtualmember).

The School for Advanced Research gratefully acknowledges the very generous support of the Paloheimo Foundation for publication of this newsletter.

The Foundation’s grant honors the late Leonora Paloheimo and her mother, Leonora Curtin, who served on the board of managers of the School from 1933 to 1972.



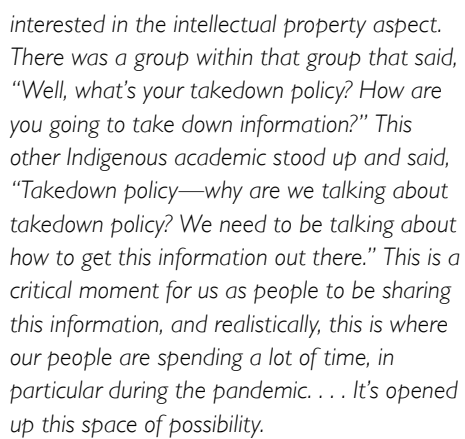
*How do you find a publisher? Which press is right for your project? What else do publishers do?*



The first conversation, with Katie Stileman of PUP Speaks, focused on a new in-house speakers' agency at Princeton University Press that works with PUP authors to develop global speaking platforms. The second, with market and business development manager Morgan Tunzelmann and author Davis McKenzie, explored RavenSpace, a division of the University of British Columbia Press and a publishing platform for media-rich, interactive books created in collaboration with Indigenous communities and scholars.

The world of publishing may sometimes appear opaque to scholars and writers. Through events like these and other resources, SAR Press hopes to provide a forum for questions and exchange. In our most recent program, McKenzie described a discussion that took place during the development of *As I Remember It*, a unique collaboration showing the potential of digital publishing forms to circulate Indigenous knowledges across networks and generations:

I was sitting with a bunch of academics, smart folks in the room, and they were quite



Knowing how important it is for writers of all kinds to reach their intended audience, SAR Press supports those spaces of possibility: new kinds of texts, new kinds of engagement, and the connections they engender.



Watch SAR Press Editors' Conversations:  
[sarsf.info/ravenspace](https://sarsf.info/ravenspace) and  
[sarsf.info/pupspeaks](https://sarsf.info/pupspeaks)

**Contributors:** Lindsay Archuleta, Michael F. Brown, Ashley Flores, Nate Francis, Melinda Robbins, Emily Santhanam, Sarah Soliz. **Photos:** clockwise from top left: page 1: graphic courtesy NEH, book covers courtesy respective publishers; page 2: garden photos, courtesy SAR; page 4: graphics, Nate Francis; all other photos, Garret P. Vreeland.

The SAR logo consists of a stylized spiral graphic to the left of the letters 'SAR' in a bold, sans-serif font.

**SAR**

School for Advanced Research

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## NOW MORE THAN EVER

With your support, SAR continues to be a resource for scholars, artists, and the intellectually curious.

Visit [sarweb.org/donate](http://sarweb.org/donate) to make a difference.

We look forward to seeing you online now and on campus soon.

660 Garcia Street  
Santa Fe, New Mexico


# SAR NOW

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issue 09

SCHOOL FOR ADVANCED RESEARCH

NEWS



# GROUNDING IN CLAY

THE SPIRIT OF PUEBLO POTTERY

July 2022  
Museum of Indian Arts & Culture  
Santa Fe, New Mexico

From SAR's Indian Arts Research Center and the Vilcek Foundation comes *Grounded in Clay*, a Native American community-curated traveling exhibit developed to showcase the deep history and beauty of Pueblo pottery while bringing to life the complex narratives and stories of this essential art form.