

## **Know Your Artist, Know Your Art**

Carbondale Arts believes in the power of art and we know you do, too. There is a deep connection that happens when you purchase a piece of art, and getting to know the artist makes that connection even deeper. Carbondale Arts hosts over 10 art exhibitions every year. Find some art you love and dive in.

We have launched a “Know Your Artist, Know Your Art” campaign, as Carbondale Arts works to build relationships between artists and patrons. Inspired by the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) model of Investing in local food, this Community Supported Art movement promotes the investment of local artists making a living in and around the newly established Carbondale Creative District, where Carbondale Arts makes its home.

**May 7 - 27, 2021**

# **HELD: What is the Value of the Vulnerable? by Jenn Weede & Shelly Safir Marolt**



**Sponsored by Land+Shelter**

At the Carbondale Arts R2 Gallery  
in The Launchpad (76 S 4th Street)  
[carbondalearts.com](http://carbondalearts.com) | 970-963-1680  
Open weekdays 10am - 5pm

As a foster parent, I took in a one-year old boy when he was released from the hospital in the middle of the night. He had been so severely neglected that all bodily functions had stopped, and he had been taken to the hospital because the adult that found him thought he was dead. When he came to me, he was frighteningly listless. He wouldn't eat or drink or pee or sleep. The tragedy was overwhelming, but when someone lays a baby before you, there is only one thing to do: Hold them. So, I took him out of his car seat and sent my despair away with the social worker. And I held him. All night. Eventually, he fell asleep. I held him. All day. First he drank. I held him all day and all night—he clung to me with such fierceness that it was not possible to set him down, so I didn't. The next day, he ate. By the third night I could put him to sleep in a crib. By the fourth day I could put him down to play. He smiled and laughed and took steps. The fifth day the social worker took him to live with his half-sister's family. I never saw him again. But on a cold, dark night when he had no one and nothing, I held him. It seemed to matter.

Does it matter that we hold those who cannot hold themselves or that which cannot hold itself? Does it matter that we hold what is not ours? What does not belong to us? Or does it? Where does individuality end and collective begin? How are we each part of the whole?

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“HELD” is a joint show honoring how we as people can hold the vulnerable in meaningful ways, while questioning if, when, why and how it matters to do so.

Ceramic artist Jenn Weede of the Fireweed Studio shows ceramic vessels holding aspects of nature, life and death, and the edges thereof—a wasp's nest, an animal skull, a snail's shell, river water, fresh flowers that turn to dried

over the course of the show—that ask the question: What is worth holding? Protecting? Why? The artist's ceramic vessels represent human creation, the human hand and conscience in the world, and the found objects represent the world around us, particularly the vulnerable aspects of it. [thefireweedstudio.com](http://thefireweedstudio.com)

Shelly Safir Marolt paints images of the vulnerable—pregnant and/or nursing women, the homeless, hospice workers, home care workers tending the elderly, nurses, farmers and transient workers harvesting produce, animals going extinct—to illustrate that it matters, immensely, that we value holding each other when we are at our most vulnerable. These acts tend to go unnoticed, and certainly undervalued in our culture. Training an eye on the intimate moments brings awareness. This awareness, shown large scale on the walls surrounding the ceramic-nature works, is itself a form of holding the viewer as s/he both experiences and questions the value of being vulnerable and being held. [shellysafir.com](http://shellysafir.com)

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Carbondale, as a part of the American West, the wild west, the frontier, has a long history of favoring the strong, the independent, the renegade. Rugged individualism was prized. Vulnerability was exploited. What might it mean for a community to reinvestigate how it wants to be? What if it means that the ways that once succeeded no longer work well? What if it means valuing what was once a great liability? These are just some of the questions that arise in how a community is held together. At the 50-year mark of our arts community, the vital question is not who or how have we been, but How do we want to be? HELD investigates this, and offers one perspective of a new way to be.

## VIGNETTES

### Let Them Eat Cake

Center of the room: Shiny white fancy cake stand holding a real white cake. Fancy shiny gold fork. Below table on floor: dirt with rows drawn. Empty rustic brown bowls in rows representing those who grow and harvest our food starving while the few eat cake, reflecting poverty and gross income inequity.

### Human Race

Cups, all similar shapes, but in varying colors representing human skin colors, priced based on how our culture values white over brown and black.

Painting: "Our Collective Shadow" by Shelly Safir Marolt

### Life Source

Vessels holding varying elements of nature: skull, skeleton, wasp nest, seeds. The vessels themselves look like bones as well as nature colors, stacked holding each other; the representing the need to protect what sustains life.

Painting: "The Disappearance" by Shelly Safir Marolt

### Divine Feminine

Vintage milk bottles representing the value of women in our society, especially related to care-taking children.

Painting: "Drop of Life" by Shelly Safir Marolt

### This Must Be the Place

Ceramic incense burner/votive houses representing the value of safe shelter, and how insecure that can be for many.

Painting: Actual cardboard begging signs Shelly collected from homeless people in exchange for new cardboard, a new Sharpie marker, and \$10

### Tender Loving Care

Pitcher, basin and chamber pot

Painting: "Katherine's Care" by Shelly Safir Marolt

### Here's Looking At You, Kid

Ceramic bowl depicting Gaia embracing swaddled babies

Painting: "Inside Out" by Shelly Safir Marolt

### I Really Do Care. Do you?

Join artist Jenn Weede in caring for some of the most vulnerable children on the planet. Visitors are invited to choose one of the swaddled babies in "Gaia's Embrace" and make a donation to Vertile Foundation, which cares for destitute children in one of the poorest places on Earth.

\$25 provides medical care for a child for one month

\$50 educates a child for one month

\$100 feeds a child for one month

\$375 sponsors a child for a month

\$50,000 moves all kids into a safe home and school

Vertile Foundation is a 100% volunteer organization, so all of your tax-deductible donation will go directly to the programs that protect and support children most in need.

Visit [vertilefoundation.org](http://vertilefoundation.org) to donate online.

## **SHELLY SAFIR MAROLT**

### **Artist Statement**

Though my subject matter is universal, my subjects are often closer to home. I often use family members as models or subjects as jumping off points. I was an oil painter for 25 years. When I moved into a smaller home studio, oil paint wasn't safe to use anymore. I ventured into acrylics. At first I felt like a beginner painter all over again. Everything felt new. I loved exploring different techniques and substances that can be added to acrylics. I'm still evolving every time I walk into my studio to paint but this is where I am today.

Shelly's paintings of the vulnerable—nursing women, the homeless, hospice and home care workers tending the elderly, animals going extinct, the collective shadow of racism—illustrate that it matters, immensely, that we value holding each other when we are at our most vulnerable. These acts tend to go unnoticed, and certainly undervalued in our culture. Training an eye on the intimate moments brings awareness. This awareness, shown large scale on the walls surrounding the ceramic-nature works, is itself a form of holding the viewer as s/he both experiences and questions the value of being vulnerable and being held.

[shellysafir.com](http://shellysafir.com)

## **JENN WEEDE (Fireweed Studio)**

### **Artist Statement**

Trained as a social scientist and journalist, my work is inevitably a commentary on the world around me as much as within me. Often, it's questioning.

Working in clay grounds me within and shifts me out of my mind into the still place beyond. From there, I can process the intangible without thoughts or words, and allow new truths, new perspectives, new understandings to unfold. It challenges my own narrative, catalyzes insights, and creates a tangible expression, reflection and reminder, of that new consciousness. Is it possible to catalyze—growth, tolerance, understanding—through functional art? Can a cup conjure compassion? Can a bowl console? Can a plate serve grace? Can clay embody consciousness?

Jenn's ceramic vessels show aspects of nature, life and death, and the edges thereof—a wasp's nest, an animal skull, river water, soil and seed—that ask the question: What is worth holding? Protecting? Why? The artist's ceramic vessels represent human creation, the human hand and conscience in the world, and the found objects represent the world around us, particularly the vulnerable aspects of it.

[thefireweedstudio.com](http://thefireweedstudio.com)

## Acknowledgements

“HELD: What is the Value of the Vulnerable” is generously sponsored by Land+Shelter. Land+Shelter is a local architecture and planning company that seeks to harmonize the built environment with the natural environment and, in so doing, practice sustainable design. We partner with clients to create sustainable, modern architecture that respects the land and enhances community. Land+Shelter provides an integration of architecture, sustainable design, owner’s representation, planning services, and community outreach – since 2005.

Find out more at [landandshelter.com](http://landandshelter.com)

Special thanks to Savanna LaBauve, Lindsay Jones, and David Thickman for gallery preparation, and to Kirk Robinson and Jenn Weede for gallery installation assistance.

## R2 Gallery Committee Members

**Staff:** Brian Colley, Staci Dickerson, Amy Kimberly

**Board Liaisons:** Nicholas DiFrank, Leah Swan

**Non-staff:** Lindsay Jones (Chair), Savanna LaBauve, Vanessa Porras, Kirk Robinson, Laura Stover, David Thickman, and Matt Vickers

These committee members work with the Gallery Manager to choose exhibitions each year. Interested in learning more? Email [brian@carbondalearts.com](mailto:brian@carbondalearts.com).

