

## **AMIE MCNEEL**

### **Bio**

Amie McNeel's art has been inspired by formal symmetries found in natural systems. She specializes in combining metal, clay, wood, and glass where methods of carving, casting and fabricating are integrated. Her sculptural forms are influenced by the designs of scientific devices for collection and observation. Ultimately, her goal is to synthesize simple, refined sculpture that reveal layers of meaning, relevancy, and complexity surrounding human impact on the physical and natural world.

Amie McNeel received her BFA from the Kansas City Art Institute and her MFA from the University of California at Berkeley. She has taught sculpture nationally and is currently teaching sculpture within the 3D Forum Studio Program at the University of Washington in Seattle. She has been an artist in residence at the John Michael Kohler Arts Center, Sheboygan, WI, The Studio at The Corning Museum of Glass, Corning, New York, the Pilchuck Glass School and the Museum of Glass Tacoma.

### **Statement**

McNeel is inspired by moments of critical interface in the physical and natural world. Her interest is in spheres of inquiry pertaining to scientific discovery, human history, and personal experience, and in locating points of overlap, collision, or alignment. McNeel's sculptural practice attempts to build a physical explanation of what happens at these pivotal intersections and to reconstitute these findings via physical forms.

The world around us is a dynamic physical place, defined by fluctuation and change. Such physical conditions, like weather, seasons, and other life cycles are alternately subtle or severe, predictable or chaotic. McNeel explores formal symmetries found within nature and highlights their mutually dependent extremes—a push and pull, give and take, cause and effect. She is fascinated with the gamut of polarities, from grand planetary and celestial forces to sensitive exchanges like evaporation and erosion. Taking clues from the unique evolutionary adaptations of species to their environment, McNeel's imagery draws also on mankind's perpetual refinement of tools for scientific or industrial exploration, the devices designed to better understand such phenomena, and the languages of science and mathematics that they articulate. Part of her aim as a sculptor is to capture both elements of the physical and metaphysical world that are difficult to articulate or visualize—such as the all-encompassing impact of gravity, magnetism, the fulcrums of the known and unknown, the seen and unseen. These designs incorporate centripetal

forms such as cones, circles, and spirals, conveying their implied energy via a static object. The results are fragments and artifacts of invented and borrowed systems, offering the potential to satisfy an imagined desire or envisioned need.

McNeel's steel constructions are formed and fabricated entirely by hand. The reality that hands and body coordinate as a sculptural tool is important, that the resulting objects engage viewers on a corporeal level. The malleability of steel offers precision for describing volume, reverberations, and trajectory. There is particular interest in integrating metal elements with other materials such as glass, wood, rubber and clay for their practical and associative qualities. Unique transitions are created between materials, forms, and spaces—including the position of the viewer. Much attention is given to the design of these physical connections as they establish the nature of the relationships being made. Many of her current sculptures combine blown glass forms reminiscent of beacons, buoys, and other nautical devices used for orienting and gathering information at sea. The glass shapes also reference qualities of this environment, with reflective, luminous surfaces and interiors supported by simple, yet specific mechanical structures.

The arts can actively engage a wide audience in critical global concerns, often in ways scientific facts and data cannot. This work is motivated by the intense impact that humans exert upon the planet, various eco-systems, and other species. There are severe repercussions to the pressures of overpopulation, consumption of limited resources, and the distribution of toxicity. Through this lens, McNeel's work can be seen as well-crafted objects that respond to both the beauty and precariousness of this dynamic relationship.

Amie McNeel received her degrees from the Kansas City Art Institute and the University of California at Berkeley. She is currently a professor within the 3DForum studio program, integrating ceramics, glass, and sculpture at the University of Washington in Seattle.