

Rose B. Simpson: The Four

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ROSE B. SIMPSON: ABOUT THE ARTIST

Rose B. Simpson is a mixed-media artist whose practice is grounded in the ancestral pottery traditions of the Santa Clara Pueblo in New Mexico, where she was born, raised, and currently lives. She works not only in the medium of ceramic sculpture, but also in metal, fashion, painting, music, performance, installation, and custom cars. Simpson graduated as high school valedictorian from the Santa Fe Indian School, and in 2007, she earned a BFA in Studio Arts from the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe. In 2011 she was awarded an Honors MFA in Ceramics from the Rhode Island School of Design. Simpson is also a practitioner and a scholar in fields outside the fine arts—for example, from 2012-2015 she attended Northern New Mexico College's Automotive Science Program with a focus in Auto Body, and in 2018 she earned an MFA in Creative Non-Fiction from the Institute of American Indian Arts.

Simpson's sculptural works imagine a future where there are enhanced connections between realms of the psychological, cultural, spiritual, intellectual, and physical. It is a future where people are reconnected with land, rather than further detached from it.

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ROSE. B. SIMPSON: THE FOUR

In a series of new work commissioned by the Nevada Museum of Art, Rose B. Simpson uses the number four as a point of departure, alluding to the number of figures in her sculptural grouping, as well as to the Four Directions (north, south, east and west). Embellished ceramic figures—gracefully humanoid, intentionally non-gendered, and armless—appear to ascend from, or descend into, the Earth. The figures, that she has named *Groundbeings*, balance vessels on their heads, filled with rocks sourced from the Museum's grounds, providing local context. The *Groundbeings* relay the artist's intent to directly confront the human tendency to objectify the Earth and to exploit it as a resource for extraction, a territory for colonization, or a natural place subject to control and manipulation.

The photographs, taken near Simpson's home in New Mexico, are new to the artist's practice. They are evidence of her investigation into her own relationship with her ancestral homelands and relate her desire to find place and context for both her art and her life. The

bowl, filled with dirt and rocks from the Museum's grounds, is intended as a reminder, an offering, and a prayer for the Earth's regeneration.

Rose B. Simpson: The Four is a feature exhibition of the Museum's 2021 Art + Environment Season of exhibitions and virtual talks. As such, when conceptualizing this new body of work, Simpson focused her attention on the Season theme: "Land Art: Past, Present, Futures." Creating these large-scale sculptures during the pandemic, at a time when Indigenous communities have suffered great loss, resulted in works that reverberate with intensity. Through her work, Simpson metaphorically addresses questions including: What is the difference between direct encounters with nature, and encounters that are mediated by technology? Are we of the Earth, or do we own it?

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