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Immersive Ceramic Artist Maura Wright Brings Decorative Arts Inspiration to Cheekwood Residency

Maura Wright Named 2026 Martin Shallenberger Artist-in-Residence

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – Nationally recognized artist Maura Wright, known for creating immersive installations that blend sculptural ceramics and historic ornament, has been selected as Cheekwood Estate & Gardens' 2026 Martin Shallenberger Artist-in-Residence.

Wright's practice centers on intricately crafted clay vessels and sculptural forms. Working primarily in earthenware, she draws inspiration from decorative arts history, domestic objects, and folk traditions. Her installations combine richly ornamented ceramics with painted environments that evoke frescoed interiors and decorative wall treatments, exploring the relationship between objects and the spaces they inhabit.

During her residency, Wright will draw inspiration from Cheekwood's decorative arts collections, Historic Mansion, and expansive gardens. Her research will inform a site-specific installation that responds to the estate's rich artistic and architectural heritage.

The residency will culminate with an exhibition on view in Cheekwood's Mansion and Museum from August 1, 2026 until October 4, 2026.

"Maura's work beautifully bridges the worlds of decorative arts, architecture, and contemporary ceramics, making her an ideal fit for Cheekwood," said Sarah Sperling, Senior Vice President of Museum Affairs. "We are excited to support her creative exploration of our collections and landscapes and to share the resulting installation with our visitors."

"I'm so excited to be at Cheekwood," said Maura Wright. "Working at the incredible estate and alongside the beautiful gardens is a gift filled with endless inspiration."

About Maura Wright

Wright received her MFA from the New York State College of Ceramics at Alfred University in 2018 and her BFA from the Kansas City Art Institute in 2013. Her work has been exhibited at galleries and institutions across the United States and has been featured in Architectural Digest, Surface Magazine, Curbed, and Dwell, where her distinctive approach to contemporary ceramics and decorative form has drawn national attention.

Martin Shallenberger Artist-in-Residence Series

The Martin Shallenberger Artist-in-Residence series is an initiative focused on bringing national and international artists to Nashville. The residency enables artists to create and exhibit site-specific works at Cheekwood, while allowing for the opportunity to interact with staff, visitors, and the larger community. The program provides living arrangements and a stipend for the artist during the multi-week residency.

Past Artist-in-Residence participants include Tamara Kostianovsky, Sarah Nguyen, Craig Black, Hiroshi Sato, Gabriel Dawe and Soo Sunny Park.

For more information on Wright's upcoming exhibition or to purchase tickets visit:

<https://cheekwood.org/calendar-events/2026-martin-shallenberger-artist-in-residence-maura-wright/>

The Artist-in-Residence program is made possible through the generous support of the Shallenberger family. Martin Shallenberger's connection with Cheekwood started in 1971 when he exhibited 40 paintings, providing visitors with a glimpse into his life and travels around the globe.

About Cheekwood Estate & Gardens

With its intact and picturesque vistas, Cheekwood is distinguished as one of the leading Country Place Era estates in the nation. Formerly the family home of Mabel and Leslie Cheek, the 1930s estate, with its 30,000-square-foot Mansion and 55-acres of gardens, today serves the public as a botanical garden, arboretum, and art museum with furnished period rooms and galleries devoted to American art from the 18th to mid-20th centuries. The property includes 13 distinct gardens including the Blevins Japanese Garden and the Bracken Foundation Children's Garden, as well as a 1.5-mile woodland trail featuring outdoor monumental sculpture. Each year, Cheekwood hosts seasonal festivals including Cheekwood in Bloom, Summertime at Cheekwood, Cheekwood Harvest and Holiday LIGHTS. Cheekwood is a 501c3 nonprofit charitable organization. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums and nationally as a Level II Arboretum. It is a four-time voted USA Today Top 10 Botanical Garden, named the Most Beautiful Garden in Tennessee in 2025 by HGTV, in 2024 and 2025 received a Tripadvisor Travelers' Choice Award, and in 2021 was named by Fodors as one of the 12 Most Beautiful Gardens in the American South.

Cheekwood is located eight miles southwest of downtown Nashville at 1200 Forrest Park Drive. It is open Tuesday through Sunday, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m., with extended days and hours of operation depending on the season. Visit cheekwood.org for current hours and to purchase advance tickets required for admission.

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Images for Media

<https://show.pics.io/press-images/collection/6a3d6bd790073512c43d1aff>

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