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Underground World Experience: Future Retrieval

26 September 2025 – 24 January 2026

OPENING RECEPTION

Friday, September 26, 5-7 PM, 2nd Floor



FUTURE RETRIEVAL | Braywave, 2022. Stoneware, 15 x 23 x 10 in (38.1 x 58.42 x 25.4 cm).
Photo by Marylene Mey, courtesy of form & concept

(Santa Fe, NM) Taliesin West fellows, Guy Michael Davis and Katie Parker of Future Retrieval, present a biomimetic installation of ceramics, textile art, and works on paper informed by decades of inquiry into the history of decorative arts.

(September 2025) Founded in 2008, Future Retrieval aims to synthesize Davis and Parker's creative practice with their critical research into the history of decorative arts. The exhibition, *Underground World Experience*, features biomimetic textiles, handmade paper, and stoneware pots and wall tiles partially made during Davis and Parker's residency at Taliesin West, legendary American architect Frank Lloyd Wright's winter studio and home. The exhibition opens on the second floor of form & concept on September 26 from 5 to 7 PM.

Underground World Experience is a feast of color and texture built of small units and an extension of Future Retrieval's generative and iterative process. "The blank wall is a starved environment," says Davis. Future Retrieval feeds these voids with objects that are thoughtfully designed, meticulously made, and aesthetically arresting. In 2011, the artists' participation in an exhibition that invited local artists in Cincinnati, OH, to create work in response to the permanent collection at the Taft Museum of Art led to other projects where the creation of works was informed by research and the study of museum and library collections. Mindful of the institutional spaces and histories their works were in dialogue with, they conceptualized exhibitions that carried their distinct presence while integrating with those specific environments. Of their process, Parker states, "We work in a continuum, where projects bleed from one to the next as we build our personal library/lexicon of images and objects through permissions and access to archives and collections."

Underground World Experience represents the most recent iteration of Davis and Parker's research. Their digital archive of images sourced from illustrated books in the Lloyd Library and Museum in Cincinnati continues to grow and includes the endpapers of rare books on mycology from the Lloyd Library that serve as a visual reference for the hand-cut paper assembled to simulate marbled paper featured in this exhibition. The holes and swirls within these hand-cut paper pieces provide the silhouettes and patterns for the biomorphic ceramic sculptures (that resemble sea creatures or the East Asian scholar's rocks) and the hand-knotted rug, which generated the color scheme and patterns for the large pot that sits on the rug. Gallery director Carina Evangelista notes, "If the art of marbling paper known as *ebru*, Turkish for 'the art of the clouds,' is about the blossoming of patterns through the mastery of floating ink in water, Future Retrieval extracted multiple iterations from the water baths that produced marbled endpapers centuries ago—from paper to textile to stoneware in the earthy colors and lush flora of the Sonoran desert."

In their recent research at Taliesin West, Future Retrieval has inverted Frank Lloyd Wright's philosophy of integrating objects into the landscape by integrating the landscape into their objects. Hand-formed stoneware pots and wall tiles feature the sunlit hues of the Southwest, reflect the stone and sand of its terrain, and evoke the desert daisies that populate the arid wilderness of Taliesin West. The chromatically saturated wool rug made of hundreds of individual hand knots gives physical form to the abstract idea of a microscopic primordial soup that once occupied the ocean that was the Southwest tens of millions of years ago, and from which bacteria, fish, reptiles, mammals, and eventually intelligent life evolved.

Through their works' ecological motifs, Future Retrieval indirectly asks us to look at nature and how our built environment integrates with it. Are we building a future? Or are we building more of the present—more industrialization, more extraction, more waste, which ultimately promises no future. Future Retrieval's response to this depressing question is one of hope: to meet the functional and aesthetic needs of today while securing the future against calamity, we must reintegrate utility, beauty, mindful consumption, and thoughtful design back into our objects, lived spaces, communities, and society at large. Perhaps thus we can regain possession of our future.

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For press, image, or video inquiries, please contact Spencer Linford at spencer@formandconcept.center.

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About the Artist

Guy Michael Davis and Katie Parker of Future Retrieval (founded in 2008) currently reside in Scottsdale, AZ, where Parker is a Professor in the School of Art at Arizona State University. Their most recent solo exhibitions include *Crystal-Walled Seas* at Denny Gallery in New York and *Close Parallel* at the Cincinnati Art Museum in 2021. Their work is held in numerous collections, such as Arizona State University Ceramics Research Center (AZ), Cincinnati Art Museum (OH), 21C Museum/Hotel (NC), Society of Dresden Porcelain Art (Germany), and Jingdezhen International Studio (China). They have exhibited both nationally and internationally and received prestigious awards and residencies, such as the Bemis Center Arts Residency, the Swedish IASPIS International Programme for Visual and Applied Arts, Smithsonian Artist Research Fellowship, and Taliesin West. Their work has been reviewed and featured in *AEQAI Magazine*, *Artforum*, *Ceramics Monthly*, *Hyperallergic*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Sculpture Magazine*, and *Vogue*. Davis and Parker both received their BFA from the Kansas City Art Institute and MFA from the Ohio State University.

Artist Statement

Underground World Experience extends our ongoing study around the idea of the home as a self-sustaining microcosm through research into architecture, mycology, marbled paper, and desert masonry. Over the last year as artists in residence at Taliesin West, Frank Lloyd Wright's desert laboratory based in Scottsdale, AZ, we have been developing new systems of pattern and surface that respond to the architectural stonework, geological strata, and the dotted landscape of the Sonoran Desert. We are inspired by desert masonry, the construction process that Wright and his fellowship pioneered in the late 1930's pulling up rock from the landscape to build fortified walls using concrete as a new material. Our garden pots and sculptures bring the outdoors in, translating the process of desert masonry into appliqué using ceramic materials as the rock and concrete. These pots are surrounded by hand-cut paper versions of ca. 1800s marbled papers that mimic stone surfaces. Sourced from books that speak to the connections between art and science, they illustrate an overlapping world where complex and intricate processes thrive underground.

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