



Buffalo Arts Studio

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**Contact:**

Buffalo Arts Studio

[sydney@buffaloartsstudio.org](mailto:sydney@buffaloartsstudio.org)

(716) 833-4450 x 114

[www.buffaloartsstudio.org](http://www.buffaloartsstudio.org)



Deborah Stewart, *untitled*, 2026, clay and steel (detail)

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**Buffalo Arts Studio presents *Propagation and Endurance* by Deborah Stewart**

**On View June 26 – August 1, 2026**

**Opening Reception: Friday, June 26, 2026, 5:00 – 8:00 pm**

**Part of M&T Fourth Friday at Tri-Main**

Buffalo, NY — Buffalo Arts Studio is excited to present *Propagation and Endurance*, a new body of work by ceramic artist and sculptor Deborah Stewart that highlights the strength in fragility through clay and metal seed pod ceramic sculptures. The exhibition is on view from June 26 through August 1, 2026. An opening reception will be held on Friday, June 26, from 5:00 to 8:00 pm as part of M&T Fourth Friday at Tri-Main.

Seed pods are the protective casing on plants that enable natural propagation: the protecting, maturing, and dispersing of seeds that can grow into new plants. This structure allows delicate flora to reproduce, endure, and continue into the future despite intense environmental, climate, and other external forces. For *Propagation and Endurance*, robust clay seed pods are complemented by minimal steel and wire structural forms, blurring the line between what appears fragile and what appears formidable. By pairing the vulnerability of clay with the rigid strength of metal, Stewart encourages respect and acknowledgement of the enduring power of fragile things.

Stewart's interest in seed pods is rooted in the problem-solving ability of plants, which have devised a great variety of different solutions to one core question: how do we survive? Whether a hard outer shell, a multi-chamber structure, delicate winged pods, or innumerable other forms, the natural world is filled with different strategies for propagation. Stewart finds great beauty not only in the diverse forms of their protective casing, but in their embodiment of the dual nature of plants: simultaneously vulnerable and resilient.

Beyond their biological purpose, Stewart sees in them a reminder for our daily lives. The sheer diversity of approaches to survival reminds us that there are always multiple solutions to every problem. And while protecting and nurturing our offspring might vary from family to family, we are connected to one another through the shared hope our children will find a place to land—and grow.

Work in this series first began ten to fifteen years ago as Stewart began gathering seed pods for careful, close study while working on other projects. Stewart started exploring their structure, composition, and lifecycle to develop press mold forms inspired by specific seed pods like Sweetgum, Eucalyptus, Turk's cap lily, Pinesap, and more.

Nature, movement, and form have long inspired Stewart. Her lifelong engagement with hiking, camping, and gardening informs a deep physical and sensory relationship to the natural world, while her background as a modern dancer shapes her understanding of movement, energy, and breath. These influences converge in her ceramic practice, where she approaches clay as both a responsive partner and an expressive medium.

*Propagation and Endurance* draws on this passion to carve out a pathway and a suggestion of movement. Metal and ceramic structural forms act as wayfinding, guiding visitors throughout the space as seeds might find themselves wandering out in the world, searching for a soft place to land.

### **About the Artist**

Deborah Stewart is a sculptor primarily working in clay. Her main interests are the experience of nature and movement, and their transformation into clay forms. As a sculptor who has also been a studio potter, a biologist, a modern dancer, and a choreographer, she interweaves sensibilities from each of these areas into her work. She has a BFA in Ceramics and an MFA in Visual Art/ Sculpture. Stewart's work has been exhibited locally and nationally and is in public and private collections.

### **About Buffalo Arts Studio**

Buffalo Arts Studio (BAS) connects diverse communities through visual arts, offering inclusive exhibitions, educational programs, mentorships, and public art initiatives. BAS provides vital resources for visual artists, including affordable studio space and paid opportunities. Through its programs, BAS serves as a catalyst for self-empowerment, innovation, and regional enhancement.

This exhibition is generously supported by The Cameron and Jane Baird Foundation, Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo, DownRoot Fund, part of the Crossroads Community Fund, Erie County Cultural Funds, M&T Bank, and through the New York State Council for the Arts with the support of Governor Kathy Hochul and the New York State Legislature.

Buffalo Arts Studio is located in Suite 500 of the Tri-Main Center at 2495 Main Street, Buffalo, NY 14214. For media inquiries, interview requests, or high-resolution images, please contact Sydney O'Shei at [sydney@buffaloartsstudio.org](mailto:sydney@buffaloartsstudio.org) or 716-833-4450 x 114.