



Bethany Krull, *Home*

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Buffalo Arts Studio

Our Boundless, Complicated Wild
Curatorial Essay by Bethany Krull and
Edward Y.J. Millar

Our relationship with the rest of the natural world is complicated, messy, and often contradictory. Even as we try to control the environment for power, profit, pleasure, or preservation, we seek separation from it. We build and maintain home spaces that physically cut us off from a world that feels increasingly less habitable. Then we try to bring pieces of that world inside through potted plants, domesticated animals, and artificial representations. We desire protection from and connection with nature. This paradox lies at the heart of Bethany Krull's newest exhibition, *Home*.

Bethany Krull's *Home* is an installation of ceramic and mixed-media sculptures that investigates our complex relationship with the untamed natural world and the domestic spaces we build within it. Each section of the exhibition imagines a home environment that wanders between our curated order and an ever-present wildness. Together, they invite reflection on the home as a space safe from the unpredictability of nature: a nature that inevitably takes up residence inside on its own terms.

Every tableau designed by Krull is a visual depiction of the tension between our sense of interior and exterior worlds. A living room chair sprouts grass in the echo of where someone once sat. A television lit with the crackling of wildfire flames is a portal to the volatile, unconstrained nature beyond the room. A dresser drawer shelters a litter of kittens resting in a pile of clothing. A soft, warm light shines through the honeycomb structure of a ceiling light built as a wasp creates its nest.

This blurring of boundaries between intentional objects and emergent nature reminds us of an undeniable fact: at the end of the day, we are inseparable from the natural world. The roads we drive on, cities we walk through, and homes we sleep in all exist within and are part of a wider, shared ecosystem. While this may be overlooked in our daily lives, when we are confronted with increasing natural disasters and loss of wild spaces, we are reminded of just how integrally connected and affected we are.

Beyond the visual imagery of each setting, Krull's choice of material also reflects our longing for a relationship with nature, albeit on our own terms. Ceramic sculptures in each room provide a sense of

physicality and presence. Working with clay mirrors the act of domestication: human hands molding something natural into a new version of itself. Artificial flora are manufactured to be perfect, permanent, and everlasting: the total opposite of how they exist in the wild. They do not grow, they do not drink, and they want for nothing. Nevertheless, these man-made representations appeal to us because they embody a sense of nature that we can control and make fit into our routine.

When we talk about 'home' in our everyday life, it is often about more than just the building or objects inside it. We think about what it represents: the sense of safety, comfort, and warmth we strive for. Bethany Krull's *Home* imagines a space where the non-physical becomes physical, laid out plainly for us to see and reckon with. Each tableau is filled with flora and fauna that asks us to consider our role in the loss, decay, and destruction of the environment—even as we attempt to preserve, curate, and replicate it within our domestic settings. To feel truly home, is to acknowledge our own vulnerability: that we are forever a part of a chaotic, natural world we cannot predict or control.



Above: Bethany Krull, *Vivarium*, 2026, aluminum and pins

Front Page: Bethany Krull, *She was made in a meadow*, ceramic, glaze, artificial flora, pins, bed (installation detail)

Facing Page: Bethany Krull *Home* installation image



Artist Statement

My work explores the complicated relationship between humans and the rest of the natural world, an ever-shifting negotiation between longing and fear, control and vulnerability. Through sculptural tableaux that merge domestic interiors with encroaching flora and fauna, I examine how “the wild” persists even within the spaces we build to shelter and protect ourselves.

Clay is the foundation of my practice, but I work across mixed media to create pieces that range from intimate to immersive, echoing the improvisational and adaptive qualities of nature itself. A full-length mirror sandblasted into a cage-like pattern makes the viewer part of the work as their reflection is fragmented, raising questions about how the home both protects and confines us, and how those boundaries shape, limit and define our relationship to the environment. Meanwhile, various ceramic animal anomalies perched on potted plants express their own adaptations, leaving the viewer to wonder about the origins of their extra eyes or double heads. Are these mutations the result of environmental pressures and toxic habitats or the curatorial hand of selective

breeding, a practice through which humans sculpt the living world to suit their desires.

I am deeply interested in formal aesthetics, drawing inspiration from close observation of nature, the cultural histories of domestication, and the ecological realities that shape contemporary life. Recently, my work has become more directly self-referential as I revisit the landscape and animals of my childhood home, and the intimate, complicated relationships I shared with my parents. Themes of memory, absence, and resilience have deepened my work, revealing how loss can leave a lasting imprint and how growth can emerge from disruption.

This work asks questions about the comfort and tension inherent in our connection to nature and considers how we cultivate sanctuary. How do we restrain, preserve, and coexist with the rest of the natural world? It reflects on the ways nature often disregards the boundaries we construct and slips in through the cracks, revealing how deeply intertwined we remain with the ecosystems that sustain us.



Artist Bio

Bethany Krull is a Buffalo, New York-based sculptor whose porcelain and mixed media animal sculptures aim to illustrate the complex and often complicated relationship humans maintain with the rest of the natural world. She is a recipient of the NYSCA 2026 Support for Artists grant. She received her MFA from the School for American Crafts at RIT and went on to residencies at Genesee Pottery, The Armory Art Center, Goggleworks Center for the Arts, and the Archie Bray Foundation. Her work has been included in many regional, national, and international exhibitions including *Eureka!* at the Blue Leaf Gallery in Dublin, Ireland, *The Ceramics Biennial* at the New Hampshire Institute of Art in Manchester, New Hampshire, and *Hot Rookies* at the Gyeonggi International Ceramics Biennial in Seoul, South Korea. Krull's sculpture explores the complex and often contradictory relationships humans maintain with other animals. Her work reflects on the ways we have worked to control and contain nature—keeping its wild, unpredictable elements at a distance—while simultaneously seeking connection to the very world from which we came.

Bethany Krull, 2026

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