



Sarah Gilbert

Breaking & Bending

September 2–18, 2022

Opening reception with the artist:
Friday, September 2, 5–7 pm

Feldenheimer Gallery
Reed College

3203 SE Woodstock Blvd.
Portland, Oregon 97202

Curated by Stephanie Snyder
Director & Curator, Reed College Art Museum
Information & tours: cooley@reed.edu

Sarah Gilbert is an artist and educator based in Los Angeles. Her work explores craft and collectivity—how the sticky relationality of material transformation opens spaces for thinking and feeling in more-than-human worlds. Joining a wide range of materials and processes, her promiscuously interdisciplinary practice often moves between art and science, synthesizing traditional craft techniques with emerging technologies. Gilbert is interested in the ethical particularities of encounters with difference, and the radical potential of embodied attunement. She has exhibited widely both nationally and internationally. **Recent solo exhibitions include:** *Turnings*, Chrysler Museum of Art (Norfolk, VA); and *Goosebumps*, 7th Tallinn Applied Art Triennial (Tallinn, Estonia). Gilbert has been a Fellow at The Creative Glass Center of America (Millville, NJ) and resident artist at: Faro Tláhuac (Mexico City, Mexico); Glazenhuis (Lommel, Belgium); and Olustvere Mõis (Olustvere, Estonia). **Sarah Gilbert is assistant professor of sculpture, and affiliate faculty member in gender and feminist studies, Pitzer College, Claremont, CA.**

Sarah Gilbert

Breaking & Bending

The title of Los Angeles-based artist Sarah Gilbert's living—and dying—installation suggests an order of operations that contradicts normal expectations. What is capable of breaking, and then bending? Gilbert's linguistic equation is not intended to invoke a conventional progression of material interaction. Rather, it is designed to stimulate an awareness of the forces and properties that allow us to expand our understanding of materiality outside of scientific—and economic—paradigms. Capitalism demands that both natural and synthetic materials become objects, and that these objects remain stable enough to be exchanged and transported around the world. In this great global circus, change is the enemy. What “breaks” is cast away into the land of the discounted, which literally means (according to the OED): “unworthy of consideration because it has lost all credibility.” In other words, what breaks has lost its meaning, and its purpose. If you've ever been bedridden from injury or illness, this is exactly how you feel—discounted, useless. This was Gilbert's reality in 2018, when a near-fatal car accident crushed over ten bones in her body, and she was immobilized for a year. Adaptation was the only possible form of survival. *To adapt is to bend.* Meandering through the many seeds and symbols Gilbert has planted for us, we have the privilege of witnessing the genius of her adaptations and entanglements. In this world, all may be healed.

— Stephanie Snyder, Portland, OR 2022

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The title of Los Angeles-based artist Sarah Gilbert's living—and dying—installation, describes an order of operations that confuses the natural order—for what breaks, and then bends? Gilbert's language is not intended to invoke a conventional progression of material interaction. Rather, it is designed to stimulate an awareness of the forces and properties that expand our understanding of materiality outside of scientific, and economic, paradigms.

Capitalism demands that both natural and synthetic materials become objects, and that these objects remain stable enough to be exchanged and transported around the world. In this great global circus, change is the enemy. What “breaks” is cast away into the land of the discounted, literally meaning: “unworthy of consideration because it has lost all credibility” (OED). In other words, what breaks has lost its meaning, and its purpose. If you've ever been bedridden from injury or illness, this is exactly how you feel—discounted, dependent, and alone.

This was Gilbert's reality in 2018, when a near-fatal car accident crushed over ten bones in her body, ruptured her liver, and shattered her arm. Gilbert was immobilized for a year. Adaptation was the only possible form of survival. *To adapt was to bend.* Meandering through the many seeds and symbols Gilbert has planted, we have the privilege of witnessing the genius of her adaptations and survival strategies. In the world that Gilbert has created, edible life, sound, and resurrected objects evince the fragility of being, and the arduous, unpredictable nature of healing.

— Stephanie Snyder, John and Anne Hauberg Director and Curator, Douglas F. Cooley Memorial Art Gallery, Reed College

**BREAKING AND BENDING, SEPTEMBER 5-18, 2022
FELDENHEIMER GALLERY, REED COLLEGE**



























