

Disquiet in the Sand

LILY COX-RICHARD

August 15, 2025 - February 22, 2026



Miracle Fish

Ada Limón

I used to pretend to believe in God. Mainly, I liked so much to talk to someone in the dark. Think of how far a voice must have to travel to go beyond the universe. How powerful that voice must be to get there. Once in a small chapel in Chimayo, New Mexico, I knelt in the dirt because I thought that's what you were supposed to do. That was before I learned to harness that upward motion inside me, before I nested my head in the blood of my body. There was a sign and it said, *This earth is blessed. Do not play in it.* But I swear I will play on this blessed earth until I die. I relied on a Miracle Fish, once, in New York City, to tell me my fortune. That was before I knew it was my body's water that moved it, that the massive ocean inside me was what made the fish swim.

Ada Limón is an award-winning American poet and the 24th U.S. Poet Laureate, known for her lyrical explorations of nature, grief, and resilience.

Ada Limón, "Miracle Fish" from *Bright Dead Things*. Copyright © 2015 by Ada Limón. Reprinted with the permission of The Permissions Company, LLC on behalf of Milkweed Editions.

Omens and divination tools—symbols of curiosity, hope, and wonder—are central to Lily Cox-Richard's *Disquiet in the Sand*. One such symbol, the novelty fortune-telling toy known as a miracle fish, is also the focus of Ada Limón's poem "Miracle Fish," which resonates with the exhibition's themes.

In both the poem and the exhibition, objects that seem trivial or playful become vessels for grief, healing, and revelation. Imbued with magic and understanding through connection to the earth, the human body becomes an oracle—tender, intuitive, and resilient. Together, Limón's and Cox-Richard's works suggest that the answers we seek lie within us and that even the smallest acts of searching can hold transformative power.

Visitors are invited to take a miracle fish—featuring prompts created by Cox-Richard specifically for this exhibition—as a keepsake and tool for reflection.

Scan here to listen to the artist



IMAGE

Front cover: Lily Cox-Richard, *Process Image*, 2025, White Sands, NM. (photograph by Lily Cox-Richard)

SAVE THE DATE

Lily Cox-Richard Artist Talk

Friday, Oct 3 | 6 p.m.

ICA auditorium

On First Friday in October, sculptor Lily Cox-Richard will describe the process behind *Disquiet in the Sand* and their upcoming participation in Richmond's InLight Festival on Oct 17-18.

VCUarts Lecture Series: Lily Cox-Richard

Tuesday, Feb 3 | 5:30 p.m.

ICA auditorium

The VCUarts Lecture Series, a forum for showcasing the talents and expertise of the school's faculty and alumni, proudly invites Lily Cox-Richard, associate professor with Sculpture + Extended Media, to talk about their practice.

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