

## Faithful: Tammie Rubin at Grayduck Gallery



Tammie Rubin's solo show "Faithful" at Grayduck Gallery, debuts new work by the Austin artist. Courtesy Grayduck Gallery

By Jeanne Claire van Ryzin - December 10, 2022

Tammie Rubin is well known for her ongoing series "Always & Forever (forever, ever)," conical porcelain sculptures that allude to, among other things, hoods worn by groups such as the Ku Klux Klan – and also the headwear of wizards and witches, dunce caps, Mardi gras costumes, African headdresses.

The Austin-based artist covers these visually arresting sculptures with symbols, markings, and various patterns. Some represent constellations, other Underground Railroad symbols. Still others reveal maps representing journeys of Black Americans, either via the Underground Railroad or the 20th-century's Great Migration.



Rubin's potent series of porcelain sculpture, "Always & Forever (forever, ever)." Courtesy Grayduck Gallery

"Always & Forever (forever, ever)" is a stunning and potent series, and with it Rubin celebrates her family history as well as spotlights the complex story of Black American migration.

At Grayduck Gallery, Rubin's solo show "Faithful" features the most recent iteration of "Always & Forever (forever, ever)" as well as an intriguing new body of mostly two-dimensional work that continues her practice of defying the erasure of Black Americans from American history.

As she says in a podcast interview with Grayduck gallerist Jill Schroeder, with this new work, Rubin was looking for ways to bring the imagery and symbols drawn onto the surface "Always & Forever" series and "bring them into the foreground."

Rubins mines her family photographs, and images of relatives echo through a series of plotted drawings filled with delicate lines and a set of Masonite prayer fans that remind of faded photo album pages. The family images are layered with images of contemporaneous historical events such as the 1968 Memphis sanitation workers strike where Martin Luther King Jr. gave his "I've Been to the Mountaintop" speech a day before his assassination.

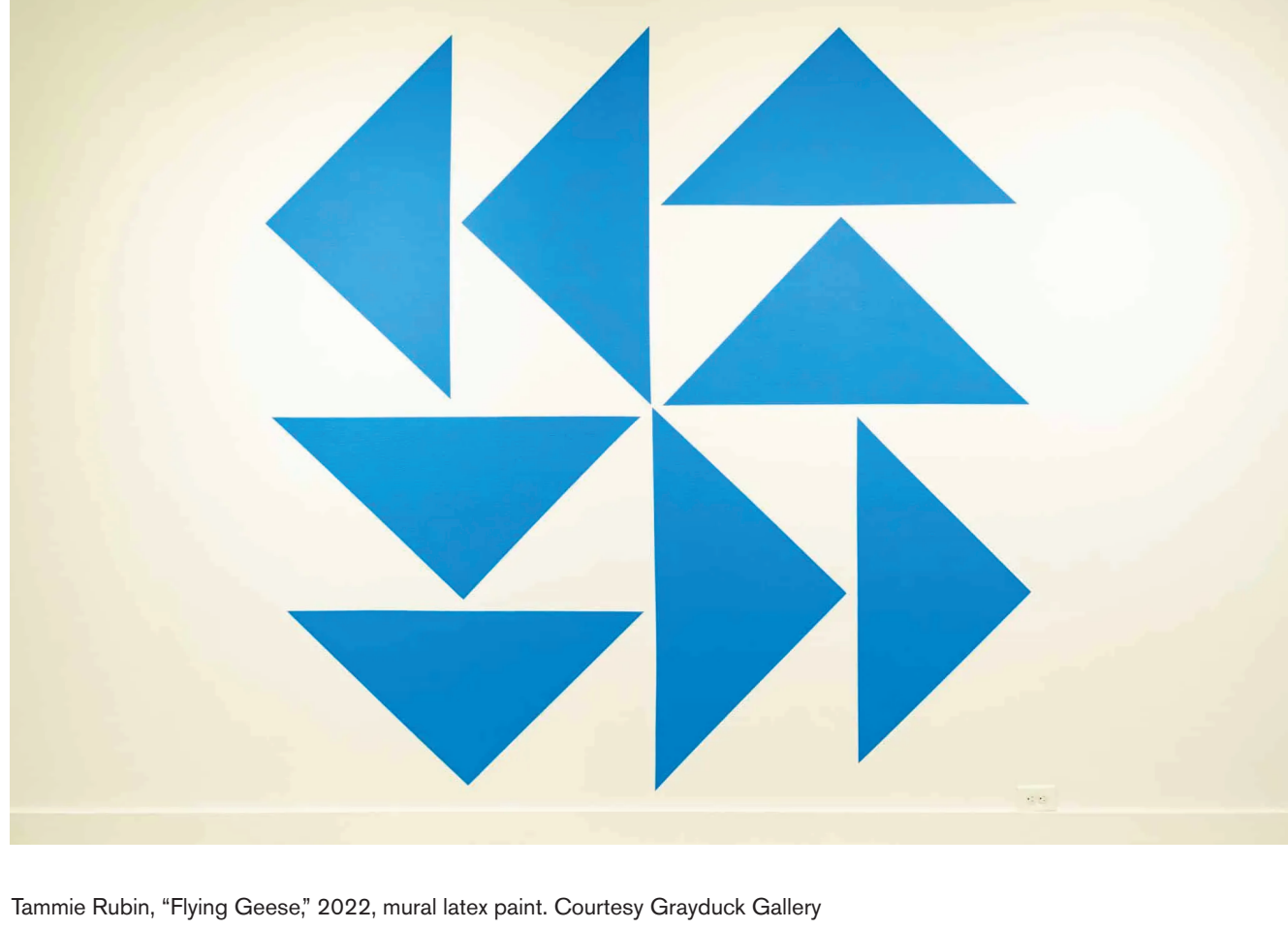


Rubin mined her collection family photographs for images to collage on to prayer fans cut from Masonite. Courtesy Grayduck Gallery

Rubin has also painted large scale murals featuring geometric shapes in bright blue. The patterns are based Underground Railroad quilts, the motifs a code. Quilts hung on a clothesline or from a window relaying information marking a safehouse or where to head next.

Nearby in the back gallery are a pair of large totemic-like ceramic sculptures, larger than the table-top pieces in "Always and Forever" yet also with the same enigmatic headdress bearing at a full-size human scale. They are adorned with materials and ornaments. Talismans? Perhaps.

Like other work in this rewarding show, these ritual masks offer their own code to describe the Black American history and experience.



Tammie Rubin, "Flying Geese," 2022, mural latex paint. Courtesy Grayduck Gallery



Rubin's "Untitled Ritual Mask," (2022) is a large ceramic sculpture adorned with enigmatic elements. Courtesy Grayduck Gallery.

"Tammie Rubin: Faithful" is on view through Dec. 18 at Grayduck Gallery, 2213 E. Cesar Chavez St. Noon to 6 p.m. Saturday-Sunday, 6 to 9 p.m. Dec. 15/Third Thursday. [grayduckgallery.com](http://grayduckgallery.com)