

2015 | COLLEGE OF THE ARTS

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UF UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA



ART AS STORYTELLING

SIX ARTISTS. FOUR TALES OF ART'S POWER TO BRING AWARENESS, NOSTALGIA AND HEALING.

BY JESSIE WARD

CREATING AWARENESS

School of Art + Art History Ceramics Professor Nan Smith's recent work, *Mercury*, tells the story of how methylmercury travels through the environment, specifically in the U.S., and its effect on seafood. Constructing what she calls "social narratives," her work since 2010 has centered on environmental impacts on food and how it effects human health.

Smith first became interested in this topic when a friend fell ill from mercury overload. "Health is a commodity we can't regain," says Smith.

Her large-scale installation, which was featured in the *Solo/Together: 50th Annual UF Art Faculty Exhibition* at the Harn Museum of Art in Gainesville, Florida, required a great amount of work and a huge investment, but Smith felt it was important to follow the research thread and do what her heart told her.

"I want to contribute to social betterment as an artist," says Smith. "I have always been looking at society and seeing areas that might need help, and, hopefully, making people in society more aware of things around us."

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