

**RAMAPO COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY**  
**Office of Communications and Public Affairs**  
**Press Release**  
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**Exhibition of Works in Various Sculptural Media by Five Female Artists to Open at  
Ramapo College September 18**

(MAHWAH, NJ) - An art exhibition exploring the work of five women artists who make sculpture in a variety of media for imagining the body in the contemporary world, *The Body is Present: Women at Work*, will open at Ramapo College on Sept. 18 in the Kresge Gallery in the Berrie Center. There will be an opening reception on Sept. 18 from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. Artists' and curator's talks will begin at 6 p.m. The exhibition will continue through Nov. 20. There will be an artists' panel discussion with the curator on Nov. 19 at 6 p.m., and a closing party will immediately follow the panel. Additional programs will be announced.

*The Body is Present: Women at Work* will feature works by Samira Abbassy, Maria Brito, Kate Gilmore, Julia Kunin and Anahita Vossoughi. The curator for the exhibition is Deborah Frizzell, Ph.D., professor of Modern and Contemporary Art History and Theory at William Paterson University.

*The Body is Present: Women at Work* takes as its premise distinctive aspects of female embodiment that yield particular ways of being in the world and perceiving the world, informing subjectivity and identity as well as the creative process and approaches to art-making. The exhibition provides a platform to explore sculpture in a variety of media for imagining the body as gendered, sexed, raced or living within specific cultural situations and environments.

"*The Body is Present* and its five artists offer a diversity of personal experiences, deep relationships with multiple cultures and art historical perspectives," explained Frizzell. "Born between 1947 and 1975, each woman brings a fresh interpretation to her chosen medium, mingling animate with inanimate, animal with human, the abstract with the literal, where old distinctions become irrelevant and new sci-fi, hybrid realities emerge."

Samira Abbassy was born in Iran in 1965. Her sculptures are constructed from a variety of found objects and combined with elementary materials such as clay, wood, fabric, hair, beads, pins and glue. The result of her low-tech approach creates an impression of eerily animated creatures culled from multiple traditions. Abbassy's sculptural "crowds" of historical archetypes range from characters found in mythology and sacred texts gleaned from many cultures to the hottest contemporary icons.

Maria Brito, born in Cuba in 1947, works in mixed-media and ceramic, constructing assemblages and installations depicting mysterious figures and environments. Brito endows simple, familiar objects with complex symbolism drawn from her life experiences as an exile. Her multi-media works embody issues of loss and identity, as existential theater: theaters of collective and individual memory with highly symbolic overtones, layered and open-ended.

Kate Gilmore, born in 1975, creates a mix of performance, video, sculpture and installation, which suggest narratives that explore the symbols, behaviors, and sentiments associated with the archetypes of “female” ambition and struggle. Using iconography from the domestic, corporate and social worlds, she plays hyper-obsessive, tragic-comic characters that interact with environments, referencing dilapidated construction sites or twisted domestic spaces.

Julia Kunin, born in 1961, explores the porous boundaries among humans, flora, fauna, and geology, evoking in her fantastical glazed porcelain sculpture a ripe sensuality and baroque excess. She emphasizes the qualities of ornamentation, decoration, craft media and gendered sexuality. Her ceramics court the grotesque and scatological, decay and distortion, which she evokes with the sheer beauty of glazes and animated biological forms.

Anahita Vossoughi, born in Canada, 1975, creates sculpture emerging from walls and floors in an amalgam of polymer, clay, paint, and found objects. Enticing and unsettling, masterly and ungainly, her sculptural forms may seduce while suggesting shape-shifting life merging from prosthetic devices. Vossoughi’s eccentric, half-alien hybrid sculptures allude to truncated bodies, sci-fi prosthetics, and weird morphologies in order to represent our nascent, unnamable condition as “post-human” cyborgs.

The curator, Dr. Frizzell, is a professor of Modern and Contemporary Art History and Theory at William Paterson University, where she has taught since 2004. From 1990 to 1994, Frizzell was Curator of Exhibitions and Education at the New Britain Museum of American Art in Connecticut. She is writing a biography on the activist/feminist artist Nancy Spero (1926-2009), and she is the author of multiple books and articles. Frizzell writes articles regularly for *New York Arts Magazine*, *Woman's Art Journal*, and *Cultural Politics*.

This program is made possible in part by funds from the Joan Mitchell Foundation, New York, and New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State, a Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts.

The Kresge Gallery is located in the Berrie Center for Performing and Visual Arts at Ramapo College. Hours are Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. and Wednesday from 1 p.m. to 7 p.m. For more information call (201) 684-7147.

Photo: [http://www.ramapo.edu/news/files/2013/08/04\\_Gilmore\\_Built-to-Burst.jpg](http://www.ramapo.edu/news/files/2013/08/04_Gilmore_Built-to-Burst.jpg)

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Ranked by *U.S. News & World Report* as sixth in the Best Regional Universities North category for public institutions, Ramapo College of New Jersey is sometimes mistaken for a private college. This is, in part, due to its unique interdisciplinary academic structure, its size of approximately 6,008 students and its pastoral setting in the foothills of the Ramapo Mountains on the New Jersey/New York border.

Established in 1969, Ramapo College offers bachelor's degrees in the arts, business, humanities, social sciences and the sciences, as well as in professional studies, which include nursing and social work. In addition, Ramapo College offers courses leading to teacher certification at the elementary and secondary levels. The College also offers six graduate programs as well as articulated programs with Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, New York Chiropractic College, New York University College of Dentistry, SUNY State College of Optometry and New York College of Podiatric Medicine.