

Sculpture Spaces

Sculptor Sachiko Akiyama expands her vision with a prestigious grant

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PHOTO BY TAMMY BYRON/NEW HAMPSHIRE CHARITABLE FOUNDATION.

A prestigious unrestricted grant will help sculptor Sachiko Akiyama expand her artistic vision — quite literally. Akiyama, an assistant professor of sculpture, will use the 2018 Piscataqua Region Artist Advancement Grant from the [New Hampshire Charitable Foundation](#) to place her nearly life-sized wood sculptures within installations that surround the viewer with art.

“I’m trying to think of my work more in terms of creating spaces instead of individual pieces. I’m combining sculptures with really large woodblock prints,” she says. The \$25,000 grant, one of the largest unrestricted grants awarded to a single artist in the country, will help her purchase materials and hire assistance for some of the more time-consuming aspects of her art.

“I’m trying to push my career further, and it’s really nice to have this financial freedom to do those things.”

Personally and professionally, the grant’s timing is ideal: After years of hewing figures from wood with chainsaws, chisels and mallets, [Akiyama](#) is exploring ways to create that are less physically taxing. “I’m starting to look at this grant as a way to pivot and transition the way I work,” she says. “I’m trying to push my career further, and it’s really nice to have this financial freedom to do those things.”

Akiyama, who credits teaching sculpture and drawing at UNH with making her a better artist, adds that the grant’s impact goes beyond financial. “You have to really love making art in order to pursue it in a very serious way,” she says. “It’s so encouraging to have people out there who support this.

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