

ALLISON WADE

am is are was were

December 7 - January 10, 2026

# Devening Projects



am is are was were (mint with walnut)  
2025  
papier-mâché, Aqua-Resin, acrylic  
paint, paste, wood  
32 x 14.5 x 2.5 inches



am is are was were (cobalt blue), 2025  
papier-mâché, Aqua-Resin, Flashe, pig-  
ment, acrylic paint  
28 x 23 x 2 inches



am is are was were (purple), 2025  
papier-mâché, Aqua-Resin, concrete  
patching compound, pumice medium,  
hand-woven fabric, fabric, acrylic  
paint, wood  
67 x 42 x 7 inches  
sold



am is are was were (graphite), 2025  
papier-mâché, Aqua-Resin, acrylic  
paint, graphite, gesso, steel, wood  
70 x 12 x 12 inches



am is are was were (red oxide), 2025  
papier-mâché, Aqua-Resin, acrylic  
paint, paste  
39 x 34 x 2 inches



am is are was were (turquoise blue)  
2025  
papier-mâché, Aqua-Resin, concrete  
patching compound, acrylic paint  
21 x 17 x 6 inches



am is are was were (violet blue), 2025  
papier-mâché, Aqua-Resin, concrete  
patching compound, acrylic paint, steel  
74 x 38 x 19 inches



am is are was were (ultramarine blue)  
2025  
papier-mâché, Aqua-Resin, concrete  
patching compound, acrylic paint  
22 x 15.5 x 2.5 inches



am is are was were (turquoise green)  
2025  
papier-mâché, Aqua-Resin, concrete  
patching compound, acrylic paint  
30 x 27 x 2 inches



Framework for Offerings #6 (circle  
drawing), 2025  
crayon on paper mounted on steel, mag-  
net, steel, paint  
19 x 14.5 x 3.5 inches



am is are was were (mauve), 2025  
papier-mâché, Aqua-Resin, concrete  
patching compound, paste, pumice medi-  
um, acrylic paint, steel, wood  
67 x 42 x 7 inches

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Devening Projects is proud to present *am is are was were*, Allison Wade's fourth solo show with the gallery. The exhibition opens with a reception for the artist on Sunday, December 7th from 3 - 5pm. The exhibition will continue then until January 10, 2026.

"In fourth grade I memorized the list of twenty-three "being" and "helping" verbs. My classmates and I practiced for weeks, timing ourselves to see who could recite them the fastest. As a result, the most irregular of verbs—and the least sexy, but most useful, of conjugates – are permanently embedded in my brain.

They pop up at unexpected times. I started thinking about how the first five words of the series, *am is are was were*, might relate to my recent work. It came to me while driving home from the studio: each of these sculptures contains the present and past tenses of the verb to be. In their short but dynamic lifespans, they have undergone multiple transformations, iteration upon iteration of *was* to arrive at *is*.

The pieces assert themselves with concise confidence, but their origins are anything but efficient. Accumulated layers of not-quite-right lie beneath their exteriors. The monochromatic palette wasn't the plan; however, the objects emerged as individual gestures, insisting on singular hues. Cutting into these shapes reveals rings of rejected attempts at color and texture.

These sculptures also operate as "helping" verbs, verbs linking a subject to a noun or a description. Like the words in the show's title, the works purposefully point to others in the room, and to the room itself. In this way the pieces slip between verb, subject, object, singular and plural. Modest but multifaceted.

I find it funny that the goal of memorizing these words was to avoid them. (Mrs. Eldridge was teaching us to use action verbs in our essays.) I now see their profound metaphorical power. The verbs *am is are was were are* succinct, substantial and seemingly simple. Precisely what I want my sculpture to be." – Allison Wade, November 2026

Allison Wade (b. 1973, Dallas, TX) is a visual artist and educator whose practice is material-based, intuitive, and formally focused. She combines ceramics, textiles, wood, metal and papier-mâché into unexpected arrangements that explore the intersection of flatness and form. Wade's process, which she likens to syntax, is closely aligned with writing. Deploying an idiosyncratic visual language, she explores the structural and formal contingencies of her materials and sculptures.

Wade received an MFA from the Fiber and Material Studies Department at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and holds a BA in English literature from Stanford University. She has been a visiting artist/lecturer at Cranbrook Academy of Art's Ceramics Department, Kansas City Art Institute, Nebraska Wesleyan University, and Miami University, among others. Residencies include Ragdale, Loghaven, Ox-Bow, ACRE, and the Vermont Studio Center, where she was supported by a John Mitchell Foundation Fellowship. Wade's work has been shown internationally and nationally, notably at the John Michael Kohler Arts Center, and she is represented by Devening Projects. She currently resides in Chicago, where she is Assistant Professor of Instruction in the Department of Art Theory & Practice at Northwestern University.

*The artist would like to thank Leslie Baum, Josh Ippel, Carol and Dave Pierce, and Cole Pierce for help realizing this work.*