

## Maddy Inez Leeser *Damp Earth*



Maddy Leeser is a Los Angeles based artist working in ceramics. She is also an educator, animal caretaker, committed family member, daughter and granddaughter, faith keeper, investigator, magical practitioner, witness and friend.

The subsequent writing intends to bring forth certain important words, key concepts, and thought-ways that illuminate and exist within the affective realm of Leeser's latest body of work:

Damp Earth,  
That is: Potential.  
Fecundity.  
— worked with, coerced,  
Finer, closer:  
Asked, listened to, acted with — certainly upon.  
Asked to represent the true shape of hard-won loves  
that come easy — like the wind — but similarly  
can be mistaken for nuisance  
madness or noise;  
are instead the natural miracle  
of a quiet constant order that abides at the heart of disorder.

Fired, baked, de-wetted to become Testament, Symbol, Record.

this process, of allowing earth to take the shape of the desires of  
the past  
then sealing this achievement (always fleeting, just one corner)  
with heat and mineral  
is the making of a votive:  
*an object offered in the fulfillment of a vow.*

Intuition:  
*Did you know?*  
becomes here,  
Prepare for wonder.

    this pile of loose threads, all blue.  
A slug, a friend's knowledge, magic, the curl of a shell,  
make an organic, casual grid that supports gentle movement.  
Meaning is allowed, given the space, to present its wet head  
from out the whole gathering of leaves —  
small facts about the Mantis, a resonance caught from a hardened  
pile, the inexplicable arranged and from the arising sense of their  
camaraderie made sensible.

It is particularly American to believe we exist without precedent.  
to believe ancestry is handicap.

How much more powerful to move with the arms of the past,  
with old bones and knowings, with eyes that do the double work  
of seeing what is and what was seen before. In this way one is  
always prepared for, by wonder. In this way, guided by voices, one  
can act in chorus.

Silent intense contemplation (the eyes over the pile at the flea or  
thrift is the magic work of assembling identity anew again from  
what history has to offer. here, the world's images refined to the

smaller infinity of the family's world, leafed through, held up,  
turned like sucking stones and offered back to the mud the pots,  
like slugs from their holes, emerge.

Ghosts, resonances, lessons: fashionably avoided, here carefully  
allowed entrance. Given lattice, or curly-cue to grow upon, to  
take their character from *all the better to produce fruit upon* — the  
fairy-tale glistens. These wet bodies and arms and networks are  
a respect, a care, and an understanding of timeline: that which  
comes before becomes the the earth from which the present  
sprouts: look close and memory (like the foam) has left its mark,  
seeds have their own will and will grow different in the divet of a  
hip than the mound of a back's small.

Here, friendly objects with soul  
(presence, aura) and the magic of approachability congregate.  
what designers call: "intuitive user interface"  
what people call "love" — *not* a challenge, fearfully made to resist  
that ultimate threat: recognition.

Menace is not absent, those tendrils and structures that gird,  
sprout and support feats of scale and cracks and sheens.

Impressively, these made-molten and desiccated stones are cool,  
too, inviting but aloof: again, the sacred vessel.

Alien amphoras, graceful viral bodies, caged lanterns, submersible  
octopus hooks, vintage radio towers or microphones, competition  
hair pieces, multidimensional ladders — lacework lattices threat-  
eningly delicate (as is clay's right) but with obvious strength, resis-  
tance, thickness, viscosity (somehow retained through the firing)

These pots and cages, and fountains and slugs  
throw geometric superstructures like auras off and out,  
remind us of old sayings, new poems; the human's place in the  
world: to carefully consort with material and moisture and heat,  
to be the conduit that allows for the world and its patterns  
to reveal themselves again with joy and terror.

- Jacob Sorkin