

TRANSLATION OF CATALOGUE TO ENGLISH :

THE SPIRIT OF THE PLACE - Lindi Arbi

La Cabine, Tayrac

12440

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BIOGRAPHY :

Lindi Arbi began her professional life as a teacher in Botswana in 1981. She moved to South Africa in 2002, where she obtained a Master of Arts degree from Rhodes University. She received a 2010 Spier Contemporary Award and represented South Africa at an artist residency in South Korea. She then taught at Rhodes University until 2014.

In 2015, she bought an old hamlet and is restoring it with her French partner. Her current work is influenced by the materials found on the property. She is interested in the place of objects in a changing world, and their material effects on the environment.

She has a preference for art objects that themselves undergo change or transformation in the context of an exhibition. Her work often integrates an animated aspect, where spectators are encouraged to participate in a playful way in the exhibition space.

Lindi has worked extensively with mold-making and casting, particularly of the human body, using silicones, polyurethanes, resins, clay, cement, glass and mixed materials.

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1. MATERIAL MATTERS :

The excavations of an old hamlet that we are restoring in Aveyron reveal decaying treasures that bear witness to those who have worked here over the years: rotten clothes, shoes, rusty farm tools and unknown broken objects that I can only identify by researching the old rural ways of life.

These objects offer a sense of presence from a place where memory itself no longer exists, materialized by parentheses between past and present.

If memory is made from past events, then the things that root us in the present are made of material. In these materials there is a hint of Anima Loci, or the soul of this space, built by those who have gone before us.

For this exhibition, I investigate this elusive gap between past and present using materials such as earth, broken glass, linoleum and rust found on the property. I also use acrylic resin as a metaphorical antithesis of the earth, as it suspends in real time what decomposes naturally.

The soil, the thin skin of our planet without which we could not exist, is my main medium for this

exhibition. The soil of our hamlet is particularly fertile. Glass, made from silica sand, also has its origins in the soil. Just like the linoleum we have extracted from the soil.

We are only the guardians of this space, privileged to eat from the soil and to be sheltered by the stones placed one on top of the other by unknown hands to make solid walls.

2. SELF AND OTHERS - A SENSE OF BELONGING

The focus is on the individual becoming a necessary part of a particular space to complete the wholeness of the group.

Viewers are invited to remove a hot water bottle from the wall, take an instant-print Selfie in front of the display and place it in the space where the bottle was. The photograph becomes an individualised stand-in for the removed physical object.

The notion SELFIE is inverted since the photo is not being diffused via social media, but becomes installed as a permanent part of the artwork, multiplying the number of individuals previously represented by hot waterbottles whilst simultaneously building up new personalised layers.

As part of my Master's Degree titled "Unearthed" I had installed 600 clay hot water bottles titled 'One More Night With You', ineffectually standing in for the absent body of the loved one. Each bottle represented a night without the beloved, and the clay bottles were displayed in an endless continuum in a circular gallery, thus marking time.

These previously fetishised objects are now recontextualised to celebrate human diversity within a collective whole.

3. EMERGE

Two almost life-size kneeling clay figures, plinth made of wooden floorboards from the hamlet.

Our restoration project in France has brought us to our knees in every way. We emerge from old tattered skins, raw and uncomfortable. With each layer peeled off we are liberated, more able to absorb and be nourished by our environment.

4. IN SITU

Triptych: Linoleum, Indian ink, mounted on cardboard, acrylic paint.
230cm x 77cm.

Linoleum found in a bedroom has been reworked into vignettes of the hamlet.

5. URBAN DISSOLUTION - GLASS OBJECTS, CEMENT BASE

Glass objects (sizes vary), 500cm² cement plinth, light sources, found cloth from hamlet.

What will be left of us after human time?
Perhaps some traces of an urbanized nature...

6. CUL-DE-SAC

Cotton fabric found in hamlet, glass objects, light sources.

A corridor is created for the spectator to wander down. Against the wall, strange shadows are formed by glass and clay objects.

These objects, like unfinished thoughts, evoke something familiar through traces of what we can identify. In this sense, these objects are both ephemeral and present, liminal.

Like entering a train of familiar thoughts, fleeting memories come and go, and are changed by us being in the present.

Why not grab your phone and form your own shadow memories?

7. EXIT

Here, 18 glass birds fly in formation towards the exit. The fragility of the glass serves as a reminder of the precariousness of all living things.

8. IMPRESSIONS

4 cotton banners - 3.2 m x 75 cm

Abstracted images are rusted into cotton sheets. Handmade tools, kitchen utensils, farming equipment and hundreds of rusted nails leave strange but vaguely familiar traces.

The sheets were stained with three different color soils, and then washed in the small seasonal river running through the property.

The nails were retrieved from the ashes of rotted wood removed from the buildings, which we burned to keep warm during our first winter in the hamlet.

9 : DISPLACED – VIDEO

South Korea - 8 minute film, recontextualized.

What will become of those people who have been displaced from their homes?

How does the bombardment of information about an impending global environmental crisis complicate the dialectic between space and identity?

Have we become so desensitized by the 'static noise' of it that we feel powerless to make meaningful change?

For example, we are overwhelmed with images and information on the current refugee crisis. We watch swells of humanity caught in tides of mortality. Whilst we may find it incomprehensible that our personal boundaries could be flooded, the body of a Syrian-Kurdish refugee toddler is washed ashore on the beach of a European holiday resort. Where does this place us ?

Human beings themselves are far from being an endangered species and yet each loss of human life is felt, by the individual, as the end of the world.

The sculpture in this 8-minute film has been treated as a the unidentifiable 'Last One Standing' subjected to a hostile environment.

As an addendum, at the end of this catalogue: the publication on this work of art which gives the original story of the video, that of my tribute to the children who died in a concentration camp on Daebu Island, South Korea.

10: ON TIME

3 acrylic resin and soil clocks - 30cm x 25cm x 2,5cm

These resin clocks trap 3 different color soils from the hamlet, rendering it sterile. The clocks are cast from part of a tombstone inscribed with the words « Memory Of », found when digging in the garden of my previous home in South Africa.

11: VIVARE COLARE HORTUM EST - A LIVING TRIBUTE TO THE GARDEN

3 handmade clay vessels (milk glaze), cultivation lamp, live plants, soil. Sizes variable.

3 x triptychs, watercolour.

Heritage bean seeds have been grown indoors during winter with artificial light, inverting natural seasonal production. Plant growth has been documented by means of small watercolor paintings.

This is an ironic experiment, highlighting a desire for uncontaminated soil, sunlight and clean water.

12 : ANIMA LOCI - The soul of a place

6 black light UV torches
2 blocks of 6 cm x 3 cm,
photoluminescent paint

The viewer is invited to use the UV torches to hunt for clues within the exhibition. These clues express the unique qualities of the space from where the materials used to make the artwork originated.

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