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ENTANGLED

by

Katherine Cox

A THESIS

Presented to the Faculty of

The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements

For the Degree of Master of Fine Arts

Major: Art

Under the Supervision of Professor Peter Pinnell

Lincoln, Nebraska

April 2019

Entangled

Katherine Cox MFA

University of Nebraska, 2019

Advisor: Peter Pinnell

I create objects to incite wonder through their exuberance, inviting one to explore the beauty found in the strange and offering the viewer a way to interact with the discomfort of the unknown. My sculptures are an assembly of engaging surfaces and forms revealing varying textures and vibrant colors referencing natural and fabricated worlds. Each sculpture is entangled within its own environment or narrative and each is adorned for its own role, finding a balance between discord and harmony, captivation and repulsion.

Each is an individual exploration of the distinct qualities inherent within each object. They are precious in scale and stimulate one's curiosity about the unfamiliar. Layers of color simultaneously accumulate and erode; glaze obscures and reveals. My use of color comes from my desire to evoke an emotional response through the element of surprise as well as the remembrance of moments in which joy is found. A feeling of visual overload is created by the abundance of colors and variety of forms which initiate exploration of the uncertain. Unfamiliar yet familiar forms emerge, blurring the divide between anatomical, botanical and the manufactured.

Integrating the traditional craft materials of clay and fiber begins to recontextualize their implications. My use of traditional needle felting, handweaving, appliques, and sprigging originates from my desire to celebrate these techniques. My sculptures are evidence of the vast possibilities of these materials, which have always held a considerable value to me. In contrast, I am influenced by the unconventional forms and irreverence of the California Clay Movement. Additionally, I am captivated by the peculiarity of imagery in paintings such as Hieronymus Bosch's *Garden of Earthly Delights*. This peculiarity pulls one in and has become an element I strive to communicate within my own work. I use the dualities of these influences simultaneously to build upon traditional elements and to break conventional thought.

The hardness of fired porcelain is placed in contrast with the inclusion of actual felted or woven wool that is integrated in and around the ceramic forms. The soft materiality of fibers is mimicked by clay through the use of ceramic ruffles, ropes, and appliqués. Each is created as a reflection of the other; fired clay imitating the soft malleability of fiber, felted wool imitating the texture and shapes found in the ceramic forms. Fiber provides an expectation of softness and vulnerability, emanating a sense of warmth, pulling one in and providing comfort. This is offset by the unexpected coldness of the durable porcelain effecting a sense of distance and fragility. Therefore, an uncertainty exists as to how to handle the forms or how to interact physically with them. The distinct

qualities of both wool and porcelain allow for the ambiguity of each material to be blended yet contrasted with their invented counterparts.

By creating relationships between various elements, I explore my fascination of material qualities and processes. The resulting works are compositions of material, color and form which become entangled in process, thought, tactility and emotion.

Images: Katherine Cox



Installation of *Entangled* 2019



Installation of *Entangled* 2019



Installation of *Entangled* 2019



Installation of *Entangled* 2019



Settling In

Ceramic, layered porcelain slip, colored porcelain, needle felted wool

H 7" x W 14" x D 6.5"

2019



Still Standing

Ceramic, colored porcelain, needle felted wool

H 8" x W 8" x D 8"

2018



Diploid

Ceramic, layered porcelain slip, colored porcelain, felted wool, foam

H 24" x W 14" x D 10"

2019



Pull

Ceramic, colored porcelain, wood

H 4" x W 4.5" x D 7"

2019



Flagella
Ceramic, colored porcelain, needle felted wool, foam
H 6" x W 8" x D 6"
2019



Colored Plateau
Ceramic, colored porcelain, encaustic wax
H 4" x W 4.5" x D 7"
2019



Bend
Ceramic, colored porcelain, needle felted wool
H 4" x W 4" x D 4"
2019



Layered Desert
Ceramic, colored porcelain, needle felted wool, foam
H 6" x W 6.5" x D 10.5"
2019



Spiny Urchin
Ceramic, colored porcelain, needle felted wool
H 4" x W 4" x D 4"
2019



Klokken
Ceramic, layered porcelain slip, colored porcelain, felted wool
H 5" x W 3.5" x D 5"
2018



Bloom
Ceramic, colored porcelain, needle felted wool
H 6" x W 7" x D 7"
2019



Entrap
Ceramic, colored porcelain
H 6" x W 4" x D 4"
2018