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Mariposa Naturally Inclined

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Mariposa Naturally Inclined

JESSICA LAZARUS

Artist's Statement

As an art teacher and designer, I am interested in the intimate relationships people have with objects, be it through a nostalgic, commemorative, or formal connection. Following a Bachelor's of Fine Arts degree in Small Sculpture and Metalsmithing, I found myself continuing to push the boundaries of ceramics. My appreciation for clay quickly grew as I was able to suggest a sense of weight and movement and replicate inspirational textures through this medium. In my graduate classes, my ceramic work began to reflect the study of climate change and environmental concern, influenced by the high school club I advise, the Youth Environmental and Social Society (YESS) at Bridgewater-Raynham Regional High School. My drive to express this awareness carried me from a study of memorabilia to one of the fragility of the local, natural environment. While my work changed in topic, the focus on creating a dialogue between the work and the viewer remained. In *Mariposa Naturally Inclined*, I use the amazing grandeur of the sequoia trees in the southernmost part of the Yellowstone National Forest to suggest the power of nature. The three clay trees surround a suspended hollow clay nest as though they are equally supporting and protecting it. As the trees manifest their own natural movement, I envision them embodying the beauty, creativity, and charm of the three Graces from classical Greek mythology. The suspended nest is formed from a variety of earthly materials recreated in clay, including pine needles, leaves, bark, and other textural elements. A cover for the nest detaches, revealing a rough brown interior. In the middle, sit two leaf shapes and a swirling vine that surrounds a few vibrant pink seeds. It is with these fragile seeds that I see life's beginnings. In order to show these ideas clearly, my vocabulary in clay has evolved to reflect the warm and muted colors in nature, the contrasting rough and smooth textures and implied sounds of the rustling leaves on the forest floor. My sculptural works remind me of nature's cyclical energy of growth, decay, and renewal, alluding to its power and delicate balance.



ABOUT THE ARTIST

Jessica Lazarus

As a teacher, craftsperson, and designer, Jessica Lazarus began exploring the world of handheld sculpture in her youth. She pursued this passion through an undergraduate degree at the Massachusetts College of Art and Design in 2003 in Boston, Mass. Following a dual degree in Art Education and Metalsmithing, she continued exploring a variety of materials and art-making techniques to further her teaching abilities and artistic strengths for her students. She is currently enrolled in the MAT program at Bridgewater State University in Bridgewater, Mass. As a visual arts teacher at the Bridgewater-Raynham Regional High School, Jessica looks to share in her views in art and the environment with the community at large.