

Tracye Wear

From the Garden

May 4 – June 15, 2024

Reception for the Artist on Saturday, May 4 from 3-5 pm, Artist Talk at 4 pm

Tracye Wear: *from the garden*

“With her latest series, Tracye Wear pushes the scale limitations of the ceramic arts while reveling in the life-affirming forms of nature. Not thrown on a potter’s wheel, these contours are molded, shaped, and coil-built, but become organic beings. Decidedly of the hand, these vessels’ surfaces are smoothed and rounded yet often animated by the controlled indentations of human fingers.

Transferring her real-life skills with plants, soil, water, and sunlight from her home’s backyard, she enters a related studio terrain of pliable clay, moisture, the alchemy of glazes, and finally intense heat. By reenacting the mysteries of how vegetation sprouts and thrives as transformed by photosynthesis, Wear introduces a verdant vocabulary of seeds, tendrils, leaves, and blossoms to spiraling, bulbous, and seemingly pregnant vessels.

The artist resists the allure of boldly colored and glossy glazes, for the most part, instead seeking the subtleties inherent in transition and gradation. Her experimentation with the layer upon layer of colored glazes—when applied to protruding ribs and sinking recesses—embraces the chemical interactions and revelations that result from the extreme temperatures of high-firing. The transformative heat of the kiln itself provides a final chance interpretation of Wear’s otherwise intentioned deployment of palette and light.

Along the way, viewers may recognize allusions to the *Venus of Willendorf*, Hieronymous Bosch’s *Garden of Earthly Delights*, Pieter Bruegel the Elder’s *Tower of Babel*, or the shadow and light of Dutch floral still lifes. At this exhibition, Wear invites us to wander—and to linger and wonder—in her secret garden, surreal but familiar, teeming with the affirmations of growth and transformation.”

—Don Quaintance, Public Address Design

Tracye Wear: *from my garden*

“As a child, I started working with my grandmother in the vegetable garden on our family farm in Missouri. As a teenager in Ohio, I spent “family time” weeding in the garden with my dad. Later in Arkansas, I grew parsley and tomatoes in flower beds around my house.

Now in Houston, I have a vegetable garden that I have tended for thirty years. My entire life, I have planted something in the ground—nurtured it, protected it, and with luck, harvested the results. Each year brings challenges as the region’s climate changes. More heat, more days of freezing temperatures, more rain, or less rain and drought. The cycle is familiar and demanding, yet filled with hope and joy.

As I work with plants in my garden, I watch closely for disease, bugs, and weeds, in order to encourage growth. I observe sprout shapes, stalks and stems, leaves, blooms, and fruit. I fight the weeds, pulling them up the moment I see their flowers ready to produce and drop their seeds. My relationship to the plants in my small plot of earth informs this new body of ceramic work. Different plant characteristics are referenced in each piece. For example, not only have I eaten gumbo with its okra seeds, but I have dried and replanted them. When I cook with tomatoes, I sometimes save and replant the seeds embedded in the pulp. My clay pieces give hints of similar processing. Glazed clay “seeds” appear everywhere, ready to drop to the earth and germinate—all over again.

Sometimes interior aspects are brought to the surface. Other plant structures are even shown upside down, revealing their roots, but reaching upward. Using my hands and fingers to dig in the garden’s dirt has obvious connections to the studio process of handling and shaping clay. The works in this exhibition are the successes of another making season.”

—Tracye Wear

Tracye Wear | *From the Garden* can be viewed online at www.moodygallery.com. For more information, please call or email the gallery at 713-526-9911 or info@moodygallery.com. Moody Gallery is open Tuesday - Friday 10:30 am – 5:00 pm and Saturday 11:00 am – 5:00 pm.