

Alexandra Engelfriet



“The essence of my work is that it emerges from my involvement with the material (...) The total involvement, body and soul, I seek with the clay, occurs before thinking, on the level of experiencing and is about presence, presence as opposed to, or maybe more coming before, representation. It takes place at a fundamental, existential level, where boundaries between subject and object fall away. It is, doesn't represent anything. “

- Alexandra Engelfriet

Alexandra is an award-winning artist and performer with boundless talent and skill. Her projects, solo exhibitions and performances are featured internationally in museums, galleries and private collections. Her earth art and earth works explore the essence and physical of being our place in the world.

Alexandra is a skilled lecturer, workshop and masterclass teacher. Her performances and sculptures have inspired authors and filmmakers. She is even more than a sculptor and performance artist. Alexandra inspires other artists like a symbiotic, powerful and ethereal muse.

The physical and intangible beauty of her dance with earth and clay is primal, rough yet delicate and fluid. Both she and the audience are entranced. It is intimate, transmuting; transforming of space and earth. Alexandra seems to be channeling art through her movement and a metaphor of existence emerges with rhythmic touch and manipulation. Alexandra's performances are Mesmerizing, freeing, at times overwhelming, immersive and like a voyeur, we watch, beguiled, as she creates with gentle forcefulness and intensity and she and we are consumed by the experience together.



Mixed Blood: The Making, 2017 (Star, NC, USA)

Twenty tons of local kaolin clay have been dropped down a slope just outside the clay factory. The rough kaolin clay, straight from the quarry in nearby Cameron, was full of violet and yellow minerals. Artist David Freeman and some of the other residents helped me to transform the rough lumps into a luscious, soft clay. After shaping it, Engelfriet overflowed the sculpture with a red slip made of Okeewmee clay, which came from the next village. The red slip formed a new skin over the white clay.

Performance, 2018 (Tbilisi, Georgia)

The 3 day performance was part of the exhibition “A Mad Tea Party” by Lia Bagrationi at the Contemporary Art Gallery of the Georgian National Museum. Each day a different colour clay slip was used: Day 1: plain clay slip. Day 2: five kilos of black iron oxide was added to the slip. Day 3: five kilos of red iron oxide was added to the slip.



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Immerse Impress Imprint, 2020 (Groede, Netherlands)

Eight tons of Zeeland clay was dumped on the floor. During Engelfriet's working period, she immersed herself in the clay again and again, transforming it with her body into an improvised choreography. These impressions bears witness to an event that took place at a specific time in this shape-shifting process.

The clay floor itself is seen and experienced in two ways, up close and from above.

Tranchée, 2013 (Le Vent des Forêts, Lorraine, France)

Le Vent des Forêts is a vast sculpture park which consists of more than 5000 hectares of forest and is situated in the heart of the area La Meuse in the Lorraine in France. With 20 tons of clay I have sculpted the walls of the middle 10 meters of a 50 meter long trench, dug out in the limestone ground on a hilltop in the forest near the village of Pierrefitte-sur-Aire. A kiln has been constructed enclosing this work and it has been fired day and night during a week. The finished work is now part of Le Vent des Forêts sculpture park which is open to the public from March through September. This sculpture inspired a film by Estelle Chrétien



“You discover the world inside of your body. It's a big part of the research. I wasn't even concerned with the end result.”

- Alexandra Engelfriet

Awards

Bronze Prize at the Gyeonggi International Ceramic Biennale 2015, South Korea.

Artist-in-Residence Award, Guldagergaard, International Ceramic Research Center – Denmark, 2008.

Grants from the Mondriaan Fund in 1993, 1994, 1995, 1997, 2000, 2002, 2012 and 2017, 2020.

Grant from the Stokroos Foundation, 2016.

Grant from the Wim de Haan Foundation, The Netherlands, 2015

Grant from the Lighton International Artists Exchange Program, 2017.

Grant from the Tijffonds – Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds, 2017.

Recent Publications

2020: Mastering Kilns & Firing, Lindsay Oesterritter, Quarto Publishing Group USA Inc.

2019: Delirious Lustwarande, Excursions in Contemporary Sculpture III, edited by Lustwarade, Platform for Contemporary Sculpture.

2018: LER!/CLAY!, published by Museum Jorn, Denmark, for the exhibition with the same name.

2018: On the cover of: Craft, edited by Tanya Harrod, published by Whitechapel Gallery, London, England.

2018: Traces et empreintes, by Joël Riff, Revue de la céramique et du verre, issue 220, Mai-June 2018.

2017: Vitamin C – Clay and Ceramic in Contemporary Art, published by aa Phaidon Press.