

Name: Belinda Blignaut Date of birth: 24 July 1968

Address: 4 Dirkie Uys Street, Somerset West, Cape Town, South Africa

Telephone: +27 82 468 2223 Email: belinda@belinda.co.za web site: belinda.co.za

Short bio 2019

Emerging in the early 1990s, Belinda Blignaut (b.1968) was one of the group of young Johannesburg-based conceptual and experimental artists whose work served as a commentary on the social and political uncertainty of South Africa, often in challenging or, at the very least, critical terms. Belinda Blignaut's work suggests an urgency for protest and change.

Through varied series over decades, she has been processing issues around transformation, with the body at the centre of all. Through an engagement with readily available and everyday materials, processing immediate surroundings, she hopes to translate the ways we adapt, a quiet visceral investigation into life and the creative process.

Surfacing in all she does is an exploration into a more fluid world, to actively resist the effects of institutionalized culture. Her work of the past decade takes her interest in materiality as a metaphor for psychological transformation into an ongoing series of sculptural clay vessels, a love affair with earth and organic matter. There are purely intuitive hand-built shapes, often cut and joined, setting out to make 'an other' whole. Through these intuitive choices and tactile joining processes, intimacy with the material is experienced. In looking to create from a deeper source, Blignaut began digging her own wild clay from the earth, using it unprocessed to allow for chance, unknowns and the natural reactions between raw materials and minerals. She uses plant ash as glaze, combing and translating psychologies of people and place in each piece. She seeks complex surfaces, unpredictable texture and 'error'. Sometimes these unknowns alter the surface through small explosions, melting or breaking, celebrating imperfection through various transmutations in this honest and raw terrain.

Taking her interest in the relationship we form with clay out into the lives of others, she began facilitating expression for all through classes from her studio. She has registered a non profit organisation and works with people who have special needs, facilitating expression and documenting research with her team of psychologists. From these processes arose a series of forms called '*Working From The Inside*'. In '*Working From The Inside*' the artist works from the inside of her large scale vessels as she builds, shaping the clay as much as it shapes her, both artist and medium continually pushed and pulled to limits until the vessel breaks.

An important component is the audio track created collaboratively with experimental noise and sound artist Jacques Van Zyl, who plays live while Blignaut builds for the duration of the performance. Audio tracks of the making of the work have been recorded over a two year period, including audio recorders buried in the earth, nature, water, hand building and fire, right through to a live feeds at the public performance, incorporating audience sounds.

These immersive experiences are somewhere been wrestling and allowing object to find its own personality, working from the inside and outside simultaneously. A lot like dancing (in a mosh pit), a lot like life.

SHORT CV

Antibody, her first solo show, was held at Everard Read Contemporary, Johannesburg, South Africa in 1993. Subsequently, she exhibited at the 1994 Sao Paulo and 1995 Africus Johannesburg Biennales. After an hiatus of over a decade, Blignaut returned to the art world in 2009 and participated in a few local projects as well as two important international exhibitions, *No Government No Cry* (2011) and *Newtopia: The State of Human Rights* (2012). In 2010 the installation *Stealing the Words* slowly inhabited the Young Blackman space during the days leading up to the opening. In 2012 she curated the seminal group show, *A Shot To The Arse*, at the Michaelis Galleries, University of Cape Town. It examined what counter culture is to us as artists. Twenty years after her first, blank projects, Cape Town, hosted *BLOWN*, her second solo. Since deciding to work solely with earth, with clay, she has shown in many group exhibitions including *CLAY/GROUND 2016/2017* at Cavalli Estate, Cape Town, curated by Roelof Van Wyk. In 2017 she had various book works on 'Booknesses' at UJ Art Gallery, including books made from clay. In April 2017 she performed 'Working From The Inside' at Edge Of Wrong, Festival of Dangerous and Experimental Music with Jacques van Zyl playing live audio. In 2018 she had a solo exhibition of ceramic vessels and installations of conceptual works in clay, 'THROWN' at Blank Projects in Cape Town. Recently, she has performed at the prestigious Zeitz MOCAA in the Silos District in Cape Town (2018). In 2019 her performance 'Working From The Inside' was commissioned by a Spanish magazine, Dream Magazine. This video is still to be released. In March 2019 she was invited to perform and exhibit in Norway at the Oppland Art Centre. She currently has a solo exhibition at Smac, Stellenbosch, just outside Cape Town. Upcoming work includes a new curatorial project in which Blignaut will work closely with a group of select artists to create the show, along with the infrastructure of a Cape Town based gallery. The show will investigate and translate natural processes in both humans and the earth and will feature artists from all over Africa as well as other parts of the world.

Her team, 'ARTISAFIRE Clay Collective' have performed live and shown at various galleries and have been commissioned to create works for various corporate collections in South Africa