



ANIMANIMUSMUNDUS

Claudia von Boch

Working with clay represents a continuity with all those who have worked this material since ancient times...gestures, techniques and firings are similar, while keeping the freedom of my own expression, passion and fascination for the creation of sculptures and objects that have their own meaning.





Pierres...
dans le temps et par les temps.

Terre...
ma trace et mon temps.

Pierres et terre...
témoins de hier, et d'aujourd'hui
et de demain.

Pierres et terre...
parlent de la noblesse du matériau:
taillées, modelées et posées,
ils marquent le lieu
et défient le temps.



"The geological strata contain the history of the Earth, which is recorded chronologically through the successive deposits and accumulation of minerals. The strata tell us its history..."

Trinh Xuan Thuan



ARTIST STATEMENT

ANIMANIMUSMUNDUS

Over billions of years the action of geology has transformed our planet through erosion, sedimentation, pressure and heat. Today we study and understand (to a certain extent!) the evolution, accumulation and transformation of the living matter (bacteria, plants, animals) and of the mineral matter composing the geological strata. It tells the story of our Earth that reads like a book.

Using this as a source of inspiration, my work in general, whether sculptural or one-of-a-kind objects, replicates the phenomena of stratification. In a shortened order of time in relation to that of nature, my ceramics, manifest the same occurrences of erosion, sedimentation, pressure and heat. Within this process, kiln firing represents a partially controlled hazard resulting in surprising fusions, deformations, colors, flows, fissures and textures. These could be considered in the ceramic world as defects but for me they are acceptable as part of the work as well as they are part of the rocks, minerals and mountains.

Thus, for over 25 years of working and teaching in my studio, leftover of clays, stoneware, porcelain, colored engobes, glazes and even cleaning-up water have been recovered and accumulated in layers. It was also the way I found to ecologically recycle and reuse waste materials. Similarly to geological formations, these stratified clays also tell a story... it's the story of my work and that of my students passing through my studio. Each piece contains a little of us all. Like a skin, the stages of life and time are conserved within the strata. Layer upon layer, humans are built... each layer added to an older one... each having an incidence on the whole being which is delicately and intimately linked to the terrestrial world, to the world of Gaia.



The sculpture "Animanimumundus" is like a Tower of Babel. It was built as a human-scaled space with an exterior and an interior, composed of 68 blocks stacked like bricks. The outside reproduces the geological strata that contains the story of the formation of mountains, rocks and minerals. Consequently, the inside is lined with 1536 faces... all one and the same in a "melting pot" of humanity in correlation to the Earth which acts as a container. It highlights the fact that living organisms and the material world are so closely interwoven that they belong to a single and indivisible process. As humans we are reminded that we are not above nature but in an intimate connection with and within it. Like in the mineral world, evolution is a process of sedimentary accumulation that contains the memory of the past, that manifests itself in the present, but is also the seed of the future. This is applicable to each individual but also to humanity as a whole. For we are the faces of Gaia, and every day our mother Earth pushes us towards a destiny, a common society, where even if the languages are different, the words are similar. This "melting pot" is not always recognized as necessary and remains as a fragile link in an uncertain balance called life.

Production year : 2022







TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Material : Unglazed black stoneware - Recuperated clays, porcelains, stoneware, colored engobes and glazes

Firing : 1200°C / oxidation

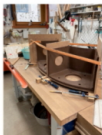
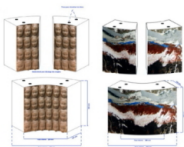
Dimensions : height 220 cm x diameter 140 cm

Weight: 700 kg

Production year: 2022

Sculpture presented at the
NATIONAL SWISSCERAMICS EXHIBITION 2022
Musée du Château de Nyon, Switzerland

MAKING OF



BIOGRAPHY



Born in Canada in 1957, I discovered ceramics in Argentina where I lived for 23 years. It is a country with a strong tradition of clays and ceramics. My first contact with this material was when I visited the studio of an Argentine ceramicist. I was only 10 years old but immediately a connection and love for this media was established. My family has been in the industrial manufacture of ceramics (Villeroÿ&Boch) for more than eight generations. This was perhaps also decisive in influencing my choice for clay and hereafter becoming my most faithful companion.

Throughout my youth I followed ceramic courses in various studios. Basically self-taught I later continued to develop my skills in modelling, wheel throwing and technology through courses, workshops and apprenticeships with Argentinean ceramicists (Guillermo Mané and Jorge Basile). This led the way to my first studio and while my family grew with the arrival of three children, I pursued my work with clay. In 1990 I moved to Lausanne, Switzerland. This is the moment when ceramics took a real professional turn for me.

A year at Céruleum, School of Visual Arts in Lausanne (1994-95) was followed by four years of ceramics at the School of Visual Arts in Vevey (1995-99) under the direction of ceramicist Jacques Kauffman. In 1999, with a diploma in ceramics, I inaugurated the Atelier Gaïa in Pully, the Mother Earth of the Greeks, alluding to the earth from which we come and which we use as ceramicists.

For the next 25 years I shared my time between my personal work (sculptural and non-functional objects) and the transmission of ceramics through teaching to adults and children. I have exhibited my work in galleries, salons, museums and competitions in Switzerland, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Canada, U.S.A., Dominican Republic, and Croatia. Although today I still occasionally hold workshops (raku, mould-making, Kintsugi), in 2018 I stopped teaching and transferred my studio to Orcesco, a picturesque little village, in the Piemonte, Italy. Here, in this inspiring area surrounded by mountains, I spend a good part of the year and continue my personal work.

Over the years I have continued with further training: mould-making (Sasha Wardel, Emery-Jacquier, Jean François Lemaire) - paper-clay (Barbara Wagner) - porcelain (Jingdezhen, China) - calligraphy (Claire Mosnier, Denise Lach). These techniques have been integrated into my work and increase my freedom to express my ideas.





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