

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Kidd Yellin is pleased to announce the opening of an exhibition of sculpture by Ledelle Moe, entitled *Relief*. The show will open with a reception for the artist on Friday, April 22nd and continue through May 27th, 2011.

Ledelle Moe creates haunting and poignant sculptures from concrete and steel which have tremendous meditative power. The sculpture which will be featured in Moe's exhibition at Kidd Yellin is *Relief*, a monumental, overturned animal and female form. *Relief* is part of the artist's series of overturned figures which were inspired by her examination of 19th century funerary monuments at Richmond's Hollywood Cemetery. *Erosion* is a study in contrasts: Moe achieves a strikingly organic effect, despite her harsh, industrial media, and she coaxes patina and melancholia from these raw materials. Furthermore, the figure's drapery seems to float and flutter in the air, though it is very solid. The sculpture projects an ancient identity such as that of a toppled ancient Greek caryatid sculpture, yet it was completed only last year. Moe stacks multiple layers of concrete on the steel armature and often leaves areas unfinished and raw to reveal the process. The history of the sculpture itself is visible just as the piece speaks to the history of humanity and poignant contrast of the permanence of funerary monuments and impermanence of human life.

Moe was born in Durban, South Africa in 1971. The personal experience of political turmoil and the struggle for human rights in South Africa influences and becomes part of the vocabulary of her work. The artist's work has previously examined the ideas of loss and decay, but in a slightly less literal manifestation than that of *Erosion*. The artist's series "Collapse" was composed of monumental concrete and steel heads—as if knocked off a Roman colossus. Loss, grief, and the collapsing of monuments and power structures are ever present in Moe's oeuvre. Without expressly addressing her personal history, her life experience is always somberly evident in Moe's work.

In addition to *Erosion*, wall-mounted relief sculptures will be included in the exhibition and are also made of concrete and steel. These relief sculptures have the patinaed effect of *Erosion* and share the weather-beaten, history-rich aesthetic. The format is a large slab of concrete in which ghostly figures emerge forward, fossil-like and subtle. The same melancholy mood takes over the relief sculptures, as the figures seem out of place or left behind.

### KIDD YELLIN GALLERY

133 Imlay street  
Red Hook, Brooklyn  
New York 11231

### GALLERY HOURS

Tuesday-Friday  
12-6pm  
[www.kiddyellin.org](http://www.kiddyellin.org)

## BIOGRAPHY

Ledelle Moe was born in Durban, South Africa in 1971. She studied sculpture there at Technikon Natal and graduated in 1993. Active in the local art community, Moe was one of the founding members of the FLAT Gallery, an artist initiative and alternative space in Durban. A travel grant in 1994 brought her to the United States where she embarked on a period of study at the Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) Sculpture Department Master's program. She completed her Master's Degree there in 1996 and soon after accepted an adjunct position in the Sculpture Department at the Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA) in Baltimore, Maryland. Later she taught at the Corcoran College of Art in Washington, DC, Virginia Commonwealth University and St. Mary's College of Maryland. Moe has exhibited in a number of venues including the Kulturhuset (Stockholm, Sweden) the NSA Gallery (Durban, South Africa), the International Sculpture Center (Washington, DC), The Washington Project for the Arts (Washington, DC) and American Academy of Arts and Letters, NY. Though Moe remains strongly connected to South Africa, returning to visit annually, she has continued to live and work in the United States. Based presently far from home, the perspective particular to her roots as a South African artist remains central to her work. Projects include large-scale concrete installations at Socrates Park and Pratt Institute in New York City, and Decatur Blue in Washington, DC. In 2002 Moe was the recipient of a Joan Mitchell Award which has allowed her time to work on new sculptures and travel back to South Africa where she has made and exhibited work. This year, Moe is the recipient of the 2008 Kreeger Museum Artist Award. Recent projects include installations in Salzburg, Austria, Brooklyn, NY, Boston MA, Baltimore MD and Washington DC. Presently based in Baltimore, Maryland, she continues to work on large-scale pieces and travels home annually to work and visit in South Africa.



above *Erosion* 2009, concrete, steel, Baltimore, MD

below *Relief* 2010, concrete, steel, Philadelphia, PA



## LEDELLE MOE *Relief*

April 14- May 27, 2011



## RELIEF

Though subtlety and fragility are among their most memorable attributes, Ledelle Moe's sculpture indubitably evokes strong responses that easily transcend our initial reaction to their often massive scale. Like the weathering of an animal skin, her technical prowess results in carefully distressed textural assemblages out of cast concrete finished with a highly versatile rubbed oil patina that has become one of the stylistic markers of the artist's work. Emerging from a strong figurative base that remains mysterious and refreshingly poetic, their impact on our senses is deeply psychological. It comes as no surprise that their lasting effect on the mind is almost arresting – scale, texture, form, light, ingrain themselves like the dislocated memories they represent.

Loss has often been a topic of discussion around Moe's recumbent "fallen monument"-like works and smaller format sculptural arrays, and yet the very same ambiguity of their apparent cathartic slumber also indexes the potential for and presence of submerged currents of meaning – of deeper histories and the strategy of a sophisticated cultural synthesis grounded on displacement and change. Their slumbering

postures project a heightened sense of drama stemming from their sheer scale and materiality, imparting them with a certain intensity that is almost overwhelming yet controlled. Skeletal armatures speak of vulnerability and an oxymoronic fragility.

The larger than life works created by Ledelle Moe ambitiously synthesize contradictory qualities: on the one hand their pierced construction reminds one of crafted material culture like quilts and lace, on the other the "plaques" that compose both pieces function as an almost organic armor. This combined effect is in fact one of the most intriguing attributes of Moe's work – her ability to bring together seemingly disparate characteristics into a harmonious dynamism is what both delights and arrests our senses, rendering us a bit helpless and awestruck with wonder.

Slumbering females and animals become gently engulfed by the relatively vast expanse of the white and grey project space, an apt receptacle for elements of an ongoing series that has in fact managed to effectively displace various gallery spaces. Visitors tend to pace back and forth, carefully exploring expansive surfaces from a distance and up close. Almost always

**Relief** 2010, concrete, steel, Philadelphia, PA



**Relief** 2010, concrete, steel, Philadelphia, PA

they linger and seem to become almost lulled into a state of transfixed contemplation. The combined effect is elegant serenity, pathos, and ponderous stillness, in opposition to the dynamic over fill described by Paula Crawford in her essay for Memorial (Collapse) George Mason University (2006).

The size of the recumbent figures, their "concreteness" imbued with hybrid animal qualities in combination with the almost sartorial patchwork approach to their construction, work as an effective combination. The unexpected beauty found beneath the surface of Moe's larger works imparts an aura of ethereality based on its interaction with light. From the most basic formal approach, structure, and construction, all the way to the conceptual investigations they embody, Moe's sculptures exude a peculiar vibration of resonant timelessness that is both deceitful in its apparent facility and poignant in its masterful execution.

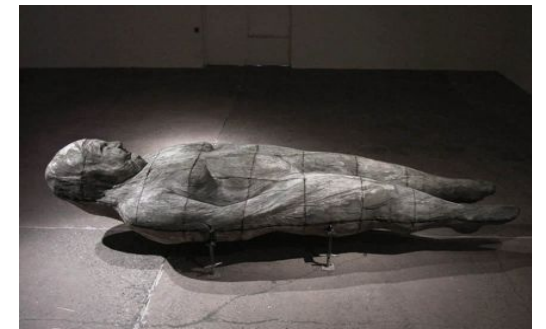
Contours of the mammoth slumbering figures are cetaceous in quality – postures read as though they were decomposing or peacefully floating on water. Limbs dissolve into the mass

of bodies, heightening even further a seal-like demeanor in similarity to the once tortured Inuit guardian spirit Sedna, mother of all sea mammals. A large female's mouth hangs a bit slack, her facial expression is slightly hypnotic in the same way a granite bodhisattva conveys the power of stilled mindfulness. And yet, something restless lurks within her features, reminding us that this is not the slumber of the dead but reflections of existential relief. The overburdened, the politically fraught, cultural deprecation, emotional desolation, long-standing streaks of violence – the long list of tirades against the human condition Ledelle Moe has lived in the flesh and now refers to from a distance that may be physical and geographical but immediate like vestigial memories, emotions of the heart and experiences in the flesh not elided by space or time.

Anabelle Rodriguez-Lawton  
Future Faculty Fellow in Visual Anthropology  
Department of Anthropology  
Temple University

Adjunct Professor of Art History and Liberal Arts  
The University of the Arts + Moore  
College of Art & Design  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Latino Museum Studies Fellow  
Smithsonian Institution  
Washington, DC



**Relief** 2010, concrete, steel, Philadelphia, PA

**Relief** 2010, concrete, steel, Philadelphia, PA

**Relief** 2010, concrete, steel, Philadelphia, PA