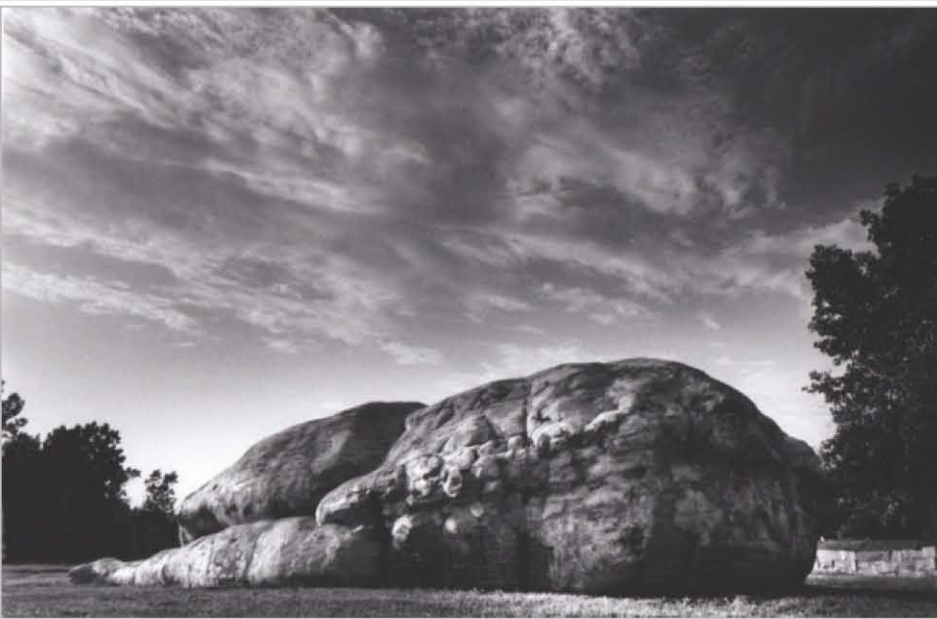


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August 27, 2014 1:22 pm Layla Leiman Art Featured no comments



"Collapse" Concrete and steel

Ledelle Moe's monumental concrete and steel sculptures are an ambiguous amalgam of somnolent organic figure and rolling landscape. She is fascinated by the contradictory 'permanence' of concrete juxtapose notions of transience, fluidity and change. Having recently returned to live in South Africa again after nineteen years in the States, Ledelle is exploring issues of belonging, ownership, displacement and memory in her work by using aggregates from different places in South Africa.

Please tell us about how you originally developed your characteristic style...

I studied Fine Art at Technikon Natal in the early 90s. It was here that I learnt how to work with metals and concrete. Our courses were intensive and created a wonderful platform for dialogue and discussion. Carol Becker was a very influential author at the time – as she articulated many of the complexities around the place of the artist and the process of creativity as it connects with our larger personal and political contexts. It was the link with Carol that led me to the United States where I continued my studies on a Masters level at Virginia Commonwealth University. The process of creating narrative and working in sculpture and installation has remained a constant in my work since then.

In what ways does scale communicate thematic concerns in your work?

I see scale as a tool, there is a way of "telling a story" where scale enables a certain perspective – a way of zooming in and out. With the large works the scale allows for an ambiguity to be formed

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where the representational nature of the work becomes abstracted in favour of the surface and volume. When the works take on a large scale – the shift of figure/landscape creates, for me, an interesting paradox of certainty and uncertainty, questioning what we are looking at – how much we can recognise and how much we recreate in our mind's eye. Location and the search for a sense of "place" is an ongoing investigation in my work. The seeming solidity of the larger work and its revealed cavities, speak for me, to issues of permanence and impermanence. Which in turn speak to issues of certainty and uncertainty. The use of scale in the smaller works allow for a more modular accumulation of form. The creation of them is more intimate and occurs on my lap. In this sense the processes – large and small – also reflect thematic ideas of reflection on the monumental and the intimate.



"Collapse" Concrete and steel



"Collapse" Concrete and steel

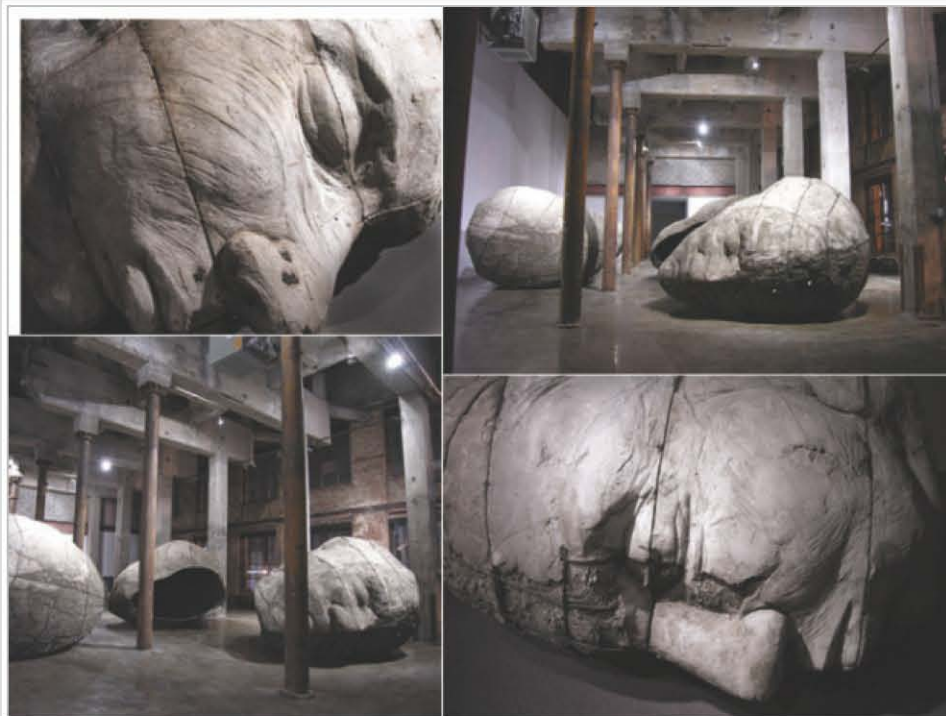
Please can you tell us about the pervasive forms that recur in your work.

The forms I research for each sculpture range from human, animal to landscape (water and land). The figures and forms merge with material volume to speak about weight, weightlessness, presence and absence.

Your sculptures have a sombre, contemplative quality to them, ambiguously frozen between sleep and death. What fascinates you about this somnolent space?

The part of this space that fascinates me is the ambiguity of it. Similar to the sense of waking up and

not being sure of where you are. I have recently moved back to South Africa and am often aware of how my 'internal landscape' is linked and unlinked to my external landscape. The space between these worlds is an interesting area in mythology and neuroscience. How we navigate that space and locate ourselves in it, to me, is fascinating. In this recent series of work I have used the local aggregate in the concrete mix. This literal mixing in of the dirt and sand into the work, allows for the work to reflect elements of an actual space and yet map an imaginary space.



"Collapse V", concrete and steel

Please tell us about the themes of excavation, history, erosion and ruins that are present in your work...

The aggregate that is used with the cement tells a story through its tone and texture. I find it fascinating that in using aggregate from different regions, the history of that place is revealed. When I was working in India, Botswana and South Africa the history of the local sand revealed stories of migration, displacement and transience.

There's a beautiful incongruity between the organic forms of your sculptures and the man-made material they are constructed from. What appeals to you about working in concrete?

Concrete as an industrial material allows for a secular nature to permeate the imagined or real narrative in the work. Its 'make up' describes a certain solidity and permanence, which paradoxically embodies the ideas that I am tackling – those of transience, fluidity and change.



"Congregation", concrete, room



"Congregation", concrete, detail



"Erosion", Installation view, concrete and steel

The surface texture and detail of your sculptures seems to embody the passage of time on a grand scale. Do notion of history, time and memory factor in your work?

Yes, very often these images are drawn from moments in history, political and personal. Portraits, people and the implied power structures they embody are found in the forms and in the dual act of constructing and reducing the forms and surfaces.

Please tell us about your creative process – from sketches, maquettes, to construction of the massive final works...

I collect images and draw from them to create prints, sketches and maquettes. From these maquettes (and in response to certain spaces) I build larger sculptures. I see the space as a "page" upon which the sculpture can function as a "drawing". In this way the sculpture installations go full circle back to the origin of the drawing – but more like a drawing you can walk through.





"Displacements", Concrete and Steel



"Relief", Concrete and Steel



"Relief", Concrete and Steel

Although you live in the States, can you tell us about your relationship with South Africa and how this influences and/or informs your work?

I lived in the States for nineteen years, returning home annually to work and exhibit and visit family. This distance allowed for a certain perspective on SA. I have recently returned to live in South Africa, to embrace the process of living and working out of the context of SA rather than from abroad. I have found this to be intriguing and enriching in the last year of being here.

What are you currently working on?

I am continuing with work created on site in various regions in SA – namely the cradle of Humankind in Sterkfontein, the Karoo, Cape Town (where I am living now) and soon the Drakensberg, KZN area. This way of working allows me to be in a place for a period of time and be still in that space. It also asks the question of what it means to take the land and the dirt from that place and use it in my work. Even though the amount of dirt I am using is very small (these are small carvings) – it brings up for me, issues of belonging, ownership, displacement and memory.

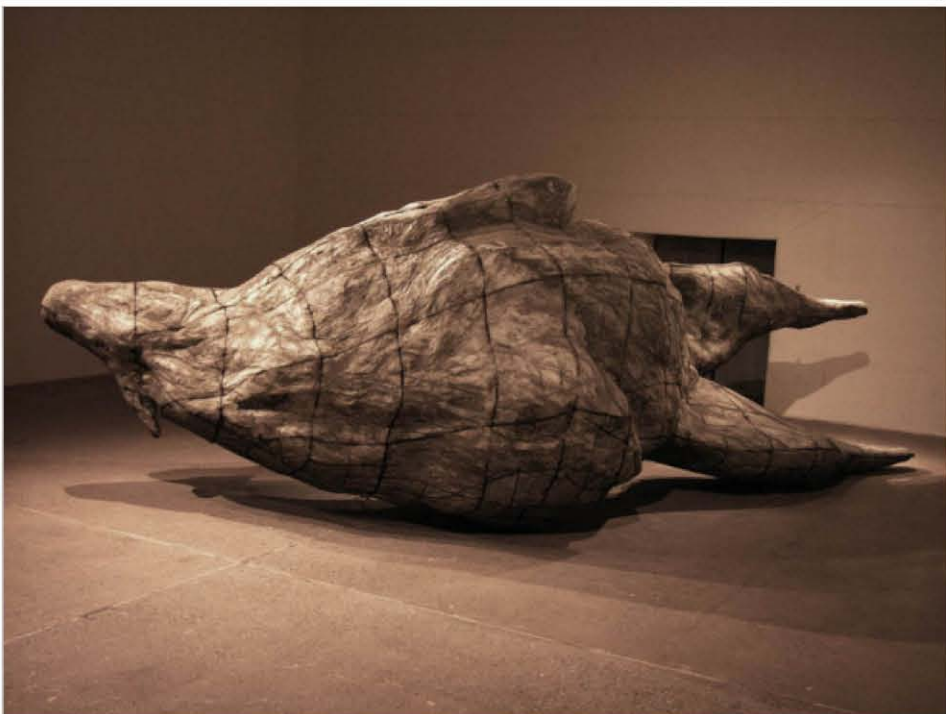
What are you reading/ looking at /watching at the moment?

I am currently reading 'Into the Past', by Phillip Tobias, Susan Sontag's 'The Anthropologist As Hero', and 'Metals in the Service of Man' by Arthur Street and William Alexander, and Oliver Sacks' 'The Mind's Eye'.

[See more of Ledelle's work online.](#)



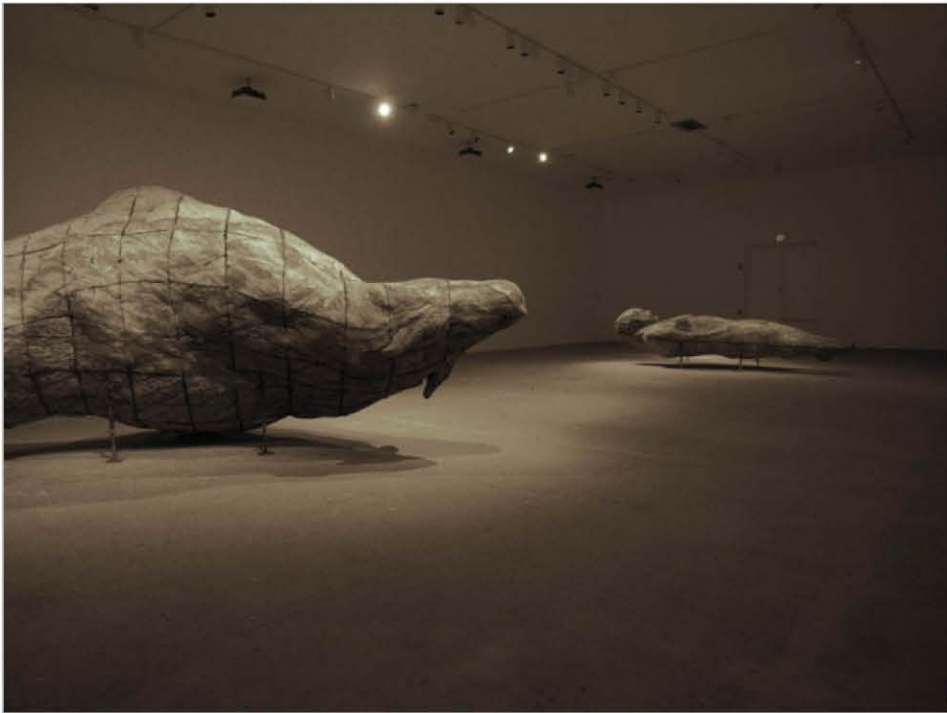
"Relief", Concrete and Steel



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