

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is with great pleasure that the Contemporary Art Gallery is able to mount and exhibition of Ledelle Moe's sculptures. I have been following the developments of her artwork for a number of years. Her monumental figurative sculptures demand attention and speak to issues of the human condition. We are fortunate to be able to bring this artwork to Louisiana and for this I would like to thank the students of Southeastern Louisiana University who have provided the financial support for the exhibition. I would also like to thank Ledelle Moe for this powerful artwork and the faculty of the department of Visual Arts for their ongoing support. To my student workers, who make up the staff of the gallery, I would like to give a big thank you, for the exhibitions would not happen without their hard work.

Dale Newkirk, Director

SOUTHEASTERN CONTEMPORARY ART GALLERY

Southeastern Louisiana University
100 East Stadium
Hammond, LA 70402
(985) 549-5080
www.selu.edu

GALLERY HOURS

Monday - Friday 8AM - 4:30PM
Open late Wednesday until 8PM

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 **Collapse V**, 2007, concrete, steel, Brooklyn, New York, NY

below **Erosion**, 2008, concrete, steel, Area 405, Baltimore, MD



LEDELLE MOE *Erosion*

March 4 - March 27, 2009



EROSION

Since 2000, Ledelle Moe's *Collapse* series has investigated notions of deep history and its erosion. This body of work speaks to the destruction of monuments, sculptures often of massive proportions intended to weather the course of time and history. In her most recent work, Moe looks to more personal monuments—mortuary figures and grave-stones—to inform her investigations of memory, commemoration, and the passage of time.

Erosion features this new work by the artist, originally from Durban, South Africa, whose large-scale, concrete and steel sculptures depend on weighty materials to anchor them—physically, in their exhibition sites; conceptually, in the ongoing development of contemporary art practice and history writ large. While her work is intimately informed by South African history, the distance of time and space afforded by her American residency frames her work within a larger historical, regional, and individualized context. The artist's language is one of monumental proportions, her vocabulary that of the figurative form; and her work the semantics of endurance and memory amid willful destruction and deliberate collapse.

Erosion, 2008, concrete, steel, Area 405, Baltimore, MD



If Moe's work in the past has reflected the impact of populations on their own historical fates, in *Erosion* she confronts humanity and mortality at a more intimate level and in full form: Having worked in fragments in the past—whether human, animal or hybrid—*Erosion* marks a new démarche in her body of work, each figure presented from head to toe; wholly human and clothed rather than ambiguously hybrid and bare. The figures, suggestive of personal monuments or mortuary figures, appear to have fallen, perhaps subjected to the harsh hand of humans or nature.

Though Moe's anthropomorphic figures evoke an undeniable human element evolving out of an age-old tradition of figurative sculpture, they are also distinctly structural. Composed of concrete and steel, they stand firmly rooted in the present, though she notes that her essential medium, concrete, is equally an historical and industrial idiom. It is appropriate, then, for exploring innumerable paradoxes: monumentality and fragility, permanence and impermanence, as well as tenuous personal and political mythologies.

A study in contrasts, the sculptures that comprise the exhibition *Erosion*, like others in the larger series *Collapse*, are constructions of decay and loss, though



Erosion, 2008, concrete, steel, Area 405, Baltimore, MD

their industrial, austere, and impersonal elements are rendered organic, human and warm by the hand of their creator. The levity, if not levitation, of the gowns' gentle folds temper the materials from which they are created. The open hem of the gown betrays the semblance of weight one expects from concrete, and bestows a surprising sense of fragility to such substantial, elemental substances. While on a practical level the open hem indulges the viewer's curiosity about the logistics of construction, it also lends an aura of vulnerability within a structure one might otherwise perceive as impenetrable—after all, until recent years, few would have thought concrete and steel could prove so vulnerable and ephemeral.

Erosion need not merely signify decay and impermanence, however. Here, for example, the seemingly weightless cloth and open hem lend a sense of revelation, literally and figuratively, while metaphorically suggesting new beginnings and futures rising from what came before—with death and destruction comes rebirth and regeneration. These are particularly salient elements in the context of southern Louisiana, a region not only complicated and enriched by varied cultural traditions,

but also traumatized by monumental destruction wrought by natural disaster and its aftermath. The figures of *Erosion* resonate profoundly here, invoking the wrath of nature on the history and reality of humankind as lived from day to day, with all the inevitability and possibility that follow.

Kinsey Katchka, Ph D.
Associate Curator of Modern &
Contemporary Art
North Carolina Museum of Art



Congregation, 2006, concrete, motor-oil

Congregation, 2006-08, concrete, motor-oil

Congregation, 2006, concrete, motor-oil