

Artist Statement

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The Woolsey fire of 2019 caught us all. Caught us and taught us.

We knew as a community that we were due for a fire, but never imagined one of this magnitude and ferocity. And we never imagined that we would be left to fend it off with no support from the fire department. But they were caught off guard as well. And so it was. A disaster of epic proportions. The cause pointed to man-made errors stemming from our outdated power-grid.

In the the days following the fire, we tried to make sense of it all. My husband and I were in a daze, walking our dogs on the the beaches transformed to apocalyptic seascapes, the ocean so thick with ashen debris that the waves moved like a molten lava stew. The Santa Monica mountains unrecognizable, just a wash of blackness where there had once been verdant chaparral. and just sadness at so many homes lost, so many lives uprooted, the stench.

Then the rains came, and the tides brought in more charred remains. The detritus of peoples homes, incinerated animal carcasses, and the dense blackened burls, the root balls of the manzanita trees that had burnt underground and were unearthed in the flooding and mud-flows.

I began to collect the burls, not sure what I would do with them but vaguely certain they would become some sort of 'art-project'. Some days I would find a slew of them, and put them in a pile to come back with bags and friends to help me carry them back home. Other days, I would find just one, and walk with it, looking at its shapes, thinking of what it had once been, and what it had been through to transform to this hardened mass now in my hand. Each burl found holds a memory of what transpired here and in other fires along our coast.

The idea emerged that these would become totems, proud statements of remembrance of what had come to pass. And standing tall, they became beautiful, bold beacons to the resilience that we found as individuals and as a community.

I create the pieces with the help of my husband Rob. He commands the actual drilling of the burls as they are very dense, difficult and tricky. I'm incredibly grateful for his support.

With welded steel bases, I assemble the burls onto them, finding the fit and ratio that makes the most sense. These are interspersed with ceramic rings, almost like crude handmade jewelry. The simple act of creating ceramic rings, giving them patterns and inscribing words, phrases and quotes that relate to the emotions I felt immediately after the fires is my way of marking my place in the history of the event, and indeed part of my own personal healing. Working with the most earthly element of clay, either by my hand and on the wheel grounds me, connects me and simply brings me serene pleasure.

It's been extremely gratifying to have the work well received. First exhibited at TRACY PARK GALLERY in Malibu as part of a group show, next MALIBU RISING, an exhibit of Woolsey inspired art from the Malibu community of artists presented at Malibu City Hall. Two commissions followed the show, and I'm honored to have the work in the collections of Jennifer Nicholson, Joshua Tree, and Steve and Vanessa Alexander, Malibu.

Upcoming in October, I've been invited to show in NATURE REFRACT at GUALALA ART CENTER.

The invitation to do an installation at ACE is an opportunity to create a family in this series, with some variations in assemblage that come from learning and changing as one does with the passage of time.

Now, a year after the fire, they are harder to come by. My usual haunts have been exhausted and we must walk to farther beaches to find them. That process of collecting is a less a hunt than a meditation.

In just one year, the earth scarred by Woolsey is rebounding strong with the hills again bursting with beauty and wildlife returning. Charred Oaks are resilient and refuse to give up. The coyotes are back, perhaps the most resilient and adaptable of creatures.

Clearly, the world is seeing the signs of climate change in the now, present moment. The increase in amount and strength fires is one part of the alarming global weather shift.

what is mans role? What is our response? What is the artist's role?

Many questions, Many riddles.

This show is benifitting Climate Emergency Fund as thieir work supports the grassroot campaigns addressing the source of carbon pollution and it's fallout.
www.climateemergencyfund.org

NEED TO ATTACH PHOTOS FOR DESCRIPTION

process

process of collecting
searching the shorelines, riverbeds and washes
remembering

healing
ceramics a very big part of my own grounding after being awash in the traumatic events that swept over our community