

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BRIE RUAIS: SOME THINGS I KNOW ABOUT BEING IN A BODY
DECEMBER 9, 2021 - JANUARY 22, 2022
ALBERTZ BENDA, NEW YORK



Left: Portrait of the artist. Photo by Nicholas Calcott | Right: *Letting the Fire In*, 130lbs, 2021
Pit fired stoneware, hardware. 67 x 67 x 3 inches, 170 x 170 x 7.5 cm. Photo by Pierre Le Hors

"The performative actions that generate the sculptures tap into the body's knowledge as opposed to the mind. I let the body and clay lead."

- Brie Ruais

NEW YORK, NY - It is said that the body holds experiences and memories in ways that the mind does not. In Brie Ruais's second solo exhibition at albertz benda, *Some Things I Know About Being in a Body*, the body is transmuted in clay, and forms emerge through material confrontation and collaboration. In exploring themes of embodiment, Ruais' work further reflects upon the relationship between an individual's psychical interior world and the corporeal exterior world.

Each sculpture begins with 130 pounds of clay - the artists' body weight - that is shaped by and embedded with Ruais's movements: spreading out, pushing, tearing open, and scraping away. The work is created by performing a foundational movement Ruais began working with 10 years ago: "Spreading Outward from Center," which was cultivated from the idea that the individual's

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experience of the world is centered in the body. The forms that emerge from these gestures are circular and call to mind emanations, geological terrains, and “central core” imagery.

In August 2021, Ruais visited a small New Mexican clay quarry to harvest wild clay for the first time. Collecting only with her hands, Ruais peeled the skin of drying clay from the muddy basin, and crumbled clay from the cliff face. After filling up a truck bed with hundreds of pounds of clay, she set up her drone camera, descended into the pond of clay at the base of the mine, and developed a set of performative gestures relating to the place.

In this new body of work, Ruais brings the gestures developed in the quarry into the works made in her Brooklyn studio and adds one more movement to the score: "Making Space in the Center." The voids created by this gesture are legible as passageways, portals, and wounds. Also on view is *Digging In, Digging Out*, 2021, an aerial video of the artist's performance in the clay quarry, where she engages, embeds, and emerges from the wet clay. The mining gestures are further implemented in the gallery's architecture by gouging holes into the walls through the sculptures.

In an ongoing search for understanding the depth of the self, others, and the world, these voids reveal the struggle and pleasure of this search; for the work begins as raw, guttural expression, then transforms, through fire, into powerfully beautiful objects.

The artist would like to thank the Virginia A. Groot Foundation, Studio Scala, New Mexico, Denise Lynch, the Ruais family and Gaia for making this work possible.

ABOUT ALBERTZ BENDA

Founded in 2015, albertz benda is a contemporary art gallery with an international program exploring material and textility as well as cultural and social dialogues. Our Chelsea space is host to rotating exhibitions with an emphasis on solo presentations of emerging artists, new research into historic figures, and thematic group exhibitions. In 2021, the gallery expanded to a second location in Los Angeles. Featuring an evolving identity separate from our New York program, the LA space is realized within the context of a domestic setting, advancing new connections between visual arts, craft, and design.

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