

NK

NICOLE KLAGSBRUN



X O

BRIE RUAIS

NOVEMBER 8 - DECEMBER 21, 2013

AT 511 WEST 25TH STREET ROOM 502 NEW YORK 10001

Nicole Klagsbrun is pleased to present *XO*, a solo exhibition of new ceramic works by Brie Ruais. It is the first in a series of pop-up shows organized by Nicole Klagsbrun. Through a physical and symbolic tracking of the body and landscape, Ruais explores the materialistic capacities of clay in a process that merges performance with sculpture, the figurative with the abstract and the sensual with the spiritual. *XO* will be on view from November 8-December 21, 2013 with an opening reception on November 8 from 6-8 pm. A concept book containing photographs and a conversation between Ruais and Sarah Sze will be released in conjunction with the exhibition.

The exhibition's title, *XO*, makes direct reference to symbols that function universally as indexes of location or site. Arranged on the walls of the gallery, these works activate a calligraphic scene of choreographed gestures performed by the artist in her studio. Merging the constraints of Bruce Nauman's repetitive action pieces and the materiality of Eva Hesse's amorphous latex installations, Ruais' work strikingly implicates the body's form in these ceramic terrains.

Each piece is guided by its own directive, relying on the limitations of Ruais' body or surrounding architecture to determine a starting point that retains the fluidity of both the action and the material. In *Four-Armed Compass (X Torn from two people's combined body weight in clay)*, clay is spread out until it reaches its limit and an "X" is torn out and placed back in the center. The tension between the edges of the newly created figure and the form that it once occupied accentuates the delineation of space both within and outside of the work.

Evocative of Jay DeFeo's iconic painting, *The Rose*, the works on view are created through extreme physicality, but equally generate a breadth of symbolism. In *Two Ways Towards Center*, Ruais worked for the first time with a partner to document the movement of two bodies merging and dividing. Across the room from one another, each partner pushed clay equal to their respective body weights towards the other until both bodies and material met. In instructions to her partner, Ruais wrote: "When our masses meet, keep pushing, balancing pressure. The clay must go vertically between us, dividing. Continue until we are standing." As the form emerged, patterns of fingerprints, footprints, quirks and contours coalesced to create an abstract sculpture where the body is both absent and present.

Ruais has described her directives as primordial movements, as implied by her titles: *Two Ways Out From Center*, *Inside Peeled Out*, *Unfolding*, and *Big Push*. Eliciting the vivid color palettes and spontaneous marks of Abstract Expressionist painters like Lee Krasner and Jackson Pollock, she relies on a fixed framework that produces an immersive, meditative act. Her process reveals a subtle staking of territory, as well as a sensual connection to the landscape. Each piece is a symbol in itself, originating as a site in the studio, and then cast as a map of movement worn by the hand. Like the land, these works retain the memory of being occupied—they exist as both gestures and images of gestures, simultaneously fluid and frozen.

Brie Ruais was born in 1982 in Southern California and received her MFA from Columbia University's School of the Arts in 2011. Most recently, she has exhibited with Salon 94, Abrons Art Center, Eli Ping in New York, Xavier Hufkens in Brussels, Marc Selwyn in LA, the Horticultural Society of New York, Interstate Projects and 247365 in New York, and Halsey McKay in East Hampton. Her work is currently on view in *Come Together: Surviving Sandy Year 1*, curated by Phong Bui at Industry City in Brooklyn. This is Ruais' first exhibition with Nicole Klagsbrun. She lives and works in Brooklyn, NY.

Above: *Four-Armed Compass (X Torn from two people's combined body weight in clay)*, 2013, Pigmented clay, clear glaze, hardware, 84 x 82 x 4 inches, 213.4 x 208.3 x 10.2 cm