

# NIGHT GALLERY

2276 E. 16th Street, Los Angeles, California 90021

[nightgallery.ca](http://nightgallery.ca)

## BRIE RUAIS

Daughter, You Seem Foreign to Me

May 20 – June 17, 2023

Night Gallery is pleased to present *Daughter, You Seem Foreign to Me*, an exhibition of new ceramic sculptures and ephemeral, site-specific work by Brie Ruais. This is the artist's third solo exhibition at Night Gallery:

01 — In the video accompanying *Daughter, You Seem Foreign to Me*, Brie Ruais approaches a 130 lb. pile of clay (the equivalent of her weight). She kneels and spreads the clay out with her palms in one long fluid movement, then shifts her shoulders and continues.

Each push creates rough ridges on either side of Brie's hands, the varying pressure of her arms affects the depth of her lines, when she pauses to breathe, even the pads of her fingers leave prints on the surface.

02 — Before firing, Brie tears the shape she's created into fragments.

"The clay needs to be separated. It naturally wants to crack, and breaking the clay into smaller pieces enables me to move the work around on my own."

Brie references Agnes Martin's shift from six foot canvases to smaller works as she aged, how the scale of an artist's work often reflects the changing limits of her body.

03 — After firing, Brie reassembles the shape but leaves space between each fragment. My eyes linger on these spaces.

What does it mean for something to be broken and still whole? Or whole because it has been broken?

04 — Someone recently asked Brie what happens to the water in the clay when she fires the fragments.

A literal answer is water evaporates, its loss can be measured. A less literal answer is perhaps transformation requires a type of loss that is difficult to locate.

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05 — Daughter, You Seem Foreign to Me comes from an exchange between Brie and her mother, who suffers from dementia. Brie was rubbing her mom's back as she lay down for a nap.

"My mother said, 'You seem so foreign to me' ... and it broke my heart, but I knew exactly what she meant. I told her, 'You seem foreign to me, too' .. and she said, 'I can imagine that.'"

Brie's mother knows their relationship is different than it used to be but doesn't know exactly what has changed.

06 — Many of the titles in the show come from phases of the moon: Waxing Crescent, New Moon, Full Moon.

I think of how, during the night, people look directly into the face of moon but can't feel the warmth on their skin.

07 — In the first room, two sculptures hang beside each other, Counting Down (Father Time) and Counting Down (Time is a Mother).

Both are circular forms. The outer section of Father is large and dark, Mother is small and light. However, the inner section of each sculpture borrows from the other—Father has a light center, Mother a dark one.

Looking at the two in such close proximity, I think of how we sometimes keep time by noticing changes in another body, by centering ourselves in each other.

Tenuously.

— Caitlin Lorraine Johnson

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**Brie Ruais** (b. 1982, Southern California) has exhibited her work at institutions including the Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, TX; Musée d'art Joliette, Joliette, QC; Craft Contemporary, Los Angeles, CA; Katzen Center, American University, Washington, DC; Arsenal Contemporary Art, Montréal, QC; Museum of Fine Arts Boston, Boston, MA; and Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, NL. She has had solo exhibitions at Moody Center for the Arts, Rice University, Houston, TX; Albertz Benda Gallery, New York, NY; Night Gallery, Los Angeles, CA; Gaa Gallery, Provincetown, MA; Cooper Cole, Toronto, ON; Nicole Klagsbrun, New York, NY; Halsey McKay Gallery, East Hampton, NY; and Mesler/Feuer, New York, NY, among others. Ruais' work is in the permanent collection of Burger COLLECTION, Hong Kong; Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, TX; and the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Philadelphia, PA, among others. Past residencies include the Sharpe Walentas Studio Program, the Dieu Donne Fellowship, Montello Foundation Residency, Socrates Sculpture Park Fellowship, and the Shandaken Project Residency. Ruais lives and works in Santa Fe, NM.