

BRIE RUAIS: PENUMBRA

November 4–December 23, 2023

INDEX OF WORKS



Performing the Light Across the Full Moon, 135lbs, 2023
glazed stoneware, hardware
64 ¾ x 67 x 3 in.



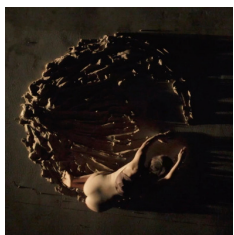
Performing the Eclipse of Three Bodies, 130lbs + 130lbs, 2023
glazed stoneware
96 ¾ x 97 ¼ x 3 in.



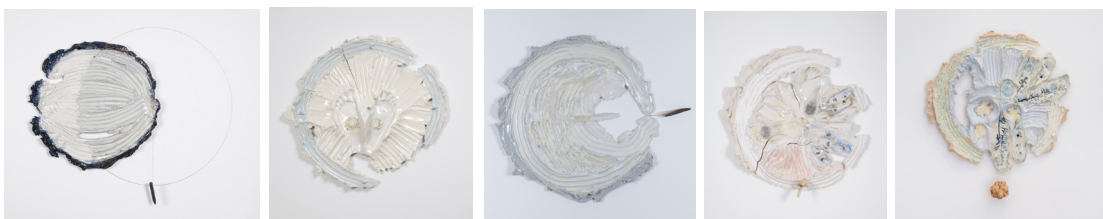
Performing the Energy of the Sun (July 21, 2023), 135lbs, 2023
stoneware clay and hardware; fired in an atmospheric kiln fueled by vegetable oil and glazed with soda ash, produced at Studio Scala, Santa Fe, NM
65 ¾ x 61 ½ x 2 in.



Performing Water Flowing, 600lbs, 2023
glazed stoneware, hardware
162 x 73 ½ x 3 in.



Daughter, You Seem Foreign To Me
2023
9 min video
Ed. Meryl O'Connor



left to right:

- The Guiding Moon, 2023, glazed stoneware, wire, graphite pencil, string, ceramic element: 20 x 20 1/2 x 1 in., installation (with drawing): 24 x 34 x 1 in.*
- The Dance Party Moon, 2023, glazed stoneware, 22 x 23 x 1 in.*
- The Spellcasting Moon, 2023, glazed stoneware, found feather, 20 x 26 x 1 ½ in.*
- The Moths to a Flame Moon, 2023, glazed stoneware, found bone, string, 23 x 25 x 3 in.*
- The Flowering Moon, 2023, glazed stoneware, raw clay, string, 25 x 29 x 3 in.*

Seven Sisters celebrates the grand opening of its gallery in Houston's historic Fourth Ward on November 4, 2023, with **Brie Ruais: *Penumbra***.

For her first solo exhibition at Seven Sisters, Ruais composes a site-specific installation with the requisite actors for an eclipse: the sun, the moon, and the Earth. In front of *Performing the Eclipse of Three Bodies, 130lbs + 130lbs, 2023*, surrounded by a radial arc of stones, the viewer is positioned as the fourth body in the cast of the penumbra: a space of partial illumination between a perfect shadow and full light. In the undefined margins between the sacred and profane and the magic of the night occurring during the day, Ruais engages with the wonder, uncertainty, and phenomena that ground our daily lives.

Having recently relocated from New York City to Santa Fe, Ruais' Spring 2023 exhibition at Night Gallery, Los Angeles, highlighted a shift in the artist's gaze from the geological toward the celestial, particularly the moon. With reverence for the moon as a harbinger of seasonal changes and cultural signifiers, the artist has made a series of smaller-scale works incorporating found objects like feathers, bone, and twigs into their intimate orbits.

In the following poem, Emily Dickinson's personification of the moon sees Her through various phases, but always holding court in the sky. Through this tender description, Brie, too, sees the sun as the moon's friend and flashlight; the moon's face peeks in and out, waxing and waning and reflecting an alchemical range of light. In *Performing Light Across a Full Moon*, Ruais worked outside, under the moon's watchful eye, to keenly convey its ethereal qualities. In embodying sunlight caressing the lunar surface, Brie documents the passage of time and provides a form to what seems absent or immaterial.

The Moon
- Emily Dickinson

The Moon was but a Chin of Gold
A Night or two ago -
And now she turns Her perfect Face
Upon the World below -

Her Forehead is of Amplest Blonde -
Her Cheek - a Beryl hewn -
Her Eye unto the Summer Dew
The likest I have known -

Her Lips of Amber never part -
But what must be the smile
Upon Her Friend she could confer
Were such Her Silver Will -

And what a privilege to be
But the remotest Star -
For Certainty She take Her Way
Beside Your Palace Door -

Her Bonnet is the Firmament -
The Universe - Her Shoe -
The Stars - the Trinkets at Her Belt -
Her Dimities - of Blue.

Ruais' expansive and sculptural practice bridges Earth-, Body-, Performance-, and Video Art to gestural abstraction. With a meditated interiority, she forms the core of her work by using a volume of clay equivalent to her body's weight, and enacts metaphorical performances through strength, movement, and intention. The sculptural forces of her work often echo environmental characteristics, such as weather extremes, fissures, fractures, geological formations, and the physical boundaries that define the tension of human development pressing against untamed nature. In *Performing Water Flowing's* reflective, deep blue glazes, Brie leaps into a new element, embodying currents as they ripple over rocks and navigate bends. In her movements, Ruais submits to phases of change and feelings that our bodies know before our minds understand.

With time and temperature, malleable clay is fired to crystallize the ephemeral and firm peaks, expose fissures, and memorialize hollows from Ruais' knuckles, fingerprints, elbows, and knees. Impressions from the energetic expansion of her limbs read like modern petroglyphs, recordings of the artist's time on Earth. She embeds these works with a primal energy filled with clues and questions that relate to pre-cognitive understanding, intuition, and ancient ways of knowing.

Brie Ruais (b. 1982, Southern California) lives and works in Santa Fe, New Mexico. She received her MFA from Columbia University's School of the Arts in 2011. Through her immersive engagement with clay, Ruais's work generates a physical and sensorial experience that explores a new dialogue between the body and the earth.

Her work has been exhibited at public institutions, including the Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, TX; Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, PA; Craft Contemporary, Los Angeles, CA; The Everson, Syracuse, NY; The Anderson Collection, Stanford University, Stanford, CA; Musée d'art de Joliette, Joliette, Québec, Canada; The Southern Utah Museum of Art, Cedar City, UT; the Katzen Center at American University, Washington, DC and the Museum of Fine Arts Boston. Her first institutional solo exhibition, *Brie Ruais: Movement at the Edge of the Land*, opened in June 2021 at The Moody Center for the Arts at Rice University in Houston, TX. Awards and residencies include The Virginia Groot Foundation Grant (2021), The Pollock Krasner Foundation Grant (2018), The Sharpe Walentas Studio Program (2018), Socrates Sculpture Park Fellowship (2014), among others.

Ruais' work is in the collections of the Dallas Museum of Art, TX; Pennsylvania Academy of Art, Philadelphia, PA; TD Bank, US; Matamoros Art In Embassies Collection, Mexico; the Pizzuti Collection, OH; Rice Public Art, Houston, TX, and the Burger Collection Hong Kong. She is featured in *Vitamin C: New Perspectives in Contemporary Art, Clay and Ceramics*, published by Phaidon (2017). Most recently, her work has been included in *Strange Clay: Ceramics in Contemporary Art*, curated by Dr. Cliff Lauson, Hayward Gallery, London, UK, 2022; *Clay Pop*, Jeffrey Deitch, New York, NY, 2021, and in solo shows at Albertz Benda Gallery, New York, NY, Night Gallery, Los Angeles, CA, and Cooper Cole, Toronto, with reviews in Art Forum, ArtNews, and the LA Times.