

PLAY DATE CERAMICS & WATERCOLORS



MARCIE JAN BRONSTEIN





This catalog was printed on the occasion of the exhibition
PLAY DATE : CERAMICS & WATERCOLORS
May 4 - June 23, 2023
at the Maine Jewish Museum in Portland, Maine.

Introduction by Carl Little.

All paintings are watercolor on paper. Titles and dates are noted in **ORANGE**.
Ceramics are hand built stoneware. Titles and dates are noted in **RED**.

back cover: *Cuddle* . 2022



Maine Jewish Museum



Play Date brings together years of process driven paintings and ceramics, both of which were created in a state of responsiveness to material, shape and color: Deep Play.

The whimsical and suggestive ceramic vessels capture relationship dynamics and vulnerabilities. These are hand built works which emerged in the process of making; they surprised and delighted me all along the way.

The watercolor paintings are improvisations, composed and discovered completely in the moment. My interest is in using the special qualities inherent to watercolor (bleeding, flowing, layering) to create intimate paintings that reflect an inner world: Symbolic, emotional and psychological.

The catalyst for exhibiting my ceramics with my watercolors was, in great part, the feedback of many friends and supportive art lovers who, when visiting my studio (which is filled with work in both mediums) said "this is how your work should be seen."

~MJB





BRONSTEIN'S BRILLIANT BALANCING ACT

Marcie Jan Bronstein, a Belfast, Maine-based artist, has arranged for two bodies of work to spend time together and, well, play. And how splendidly they do just that. Moving from luminous watercolors to fanciful ceramics is to witness—and take part in—an engaging aesthetic back-and-forth, one that offers biomorphic shapes, balancing acts, and vessels that might be the most charming you've ever met.

Bronstein knows the ways of watercolor, that notoriously misbehaving medium: she has been honing her skills for decades. This time around she exploits its fluid traits to create abstract compositions in which she combines both diaphanous and solid, pale washes with darker passages. There are assorted stained glass grids, free-floating circles, and cairn-like arrangements of stone shapes.

For all their improvised qualities, these paintings cohere into complete designs. Titles help guide our responses without giving anything away. *Origin Story* aligns with what might be the view through a microscope of emerging life forms while *Pandemic Diptych* speaks to viral presences, times two. And there's *What I've Done with Where I've Been*, an evocation of the fragile equipoise we seek in life and art.

The ceramic pieces have organic qualities too. Some resemble plants or gourds; others are abstract forms inscribed with irregular stripes or girdled in stoneware straps. Then Bronstein surprises us: curious creatures—dogs, cats, birds, sometimes two at a time—appear atop and within the glazed hand-shaped creations, looking around as if they were discovering a new world.

Other beings are present as well. A winsome bespectacled *Pool Gazer* regards us with wonder from his refuge; a wide-eyed *Blind Seer* inhabits a gnarly cave. The figures are comical yet empathetic.

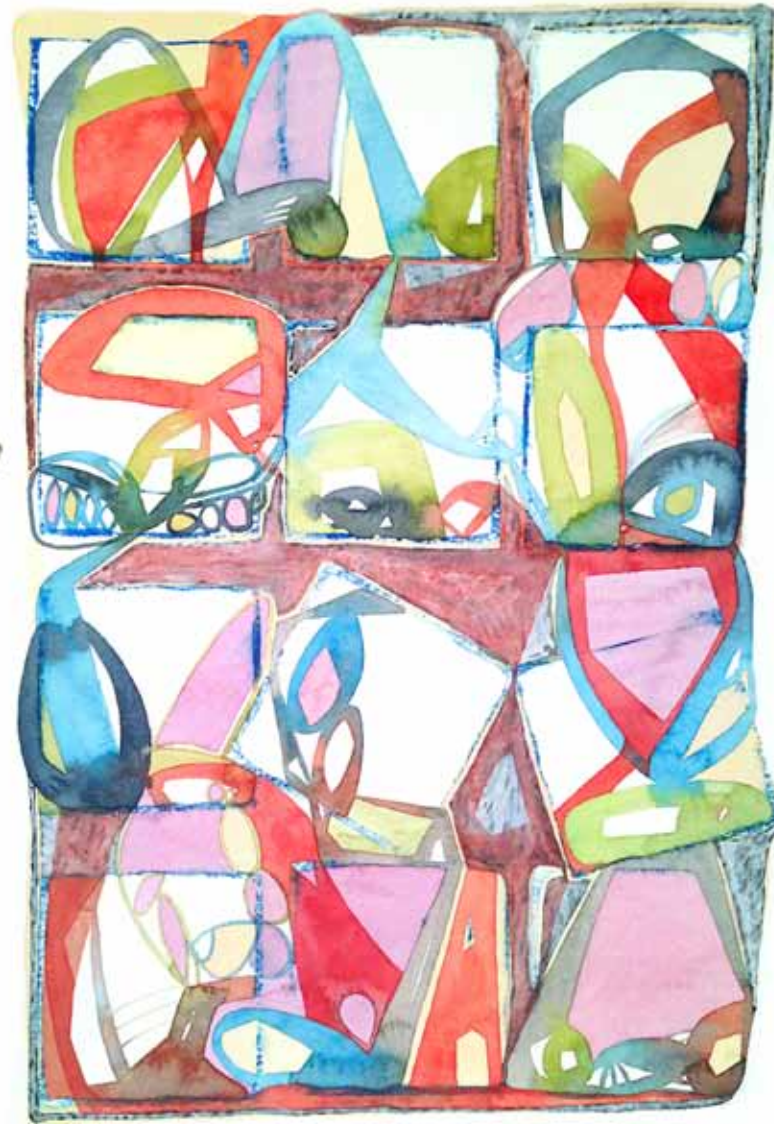
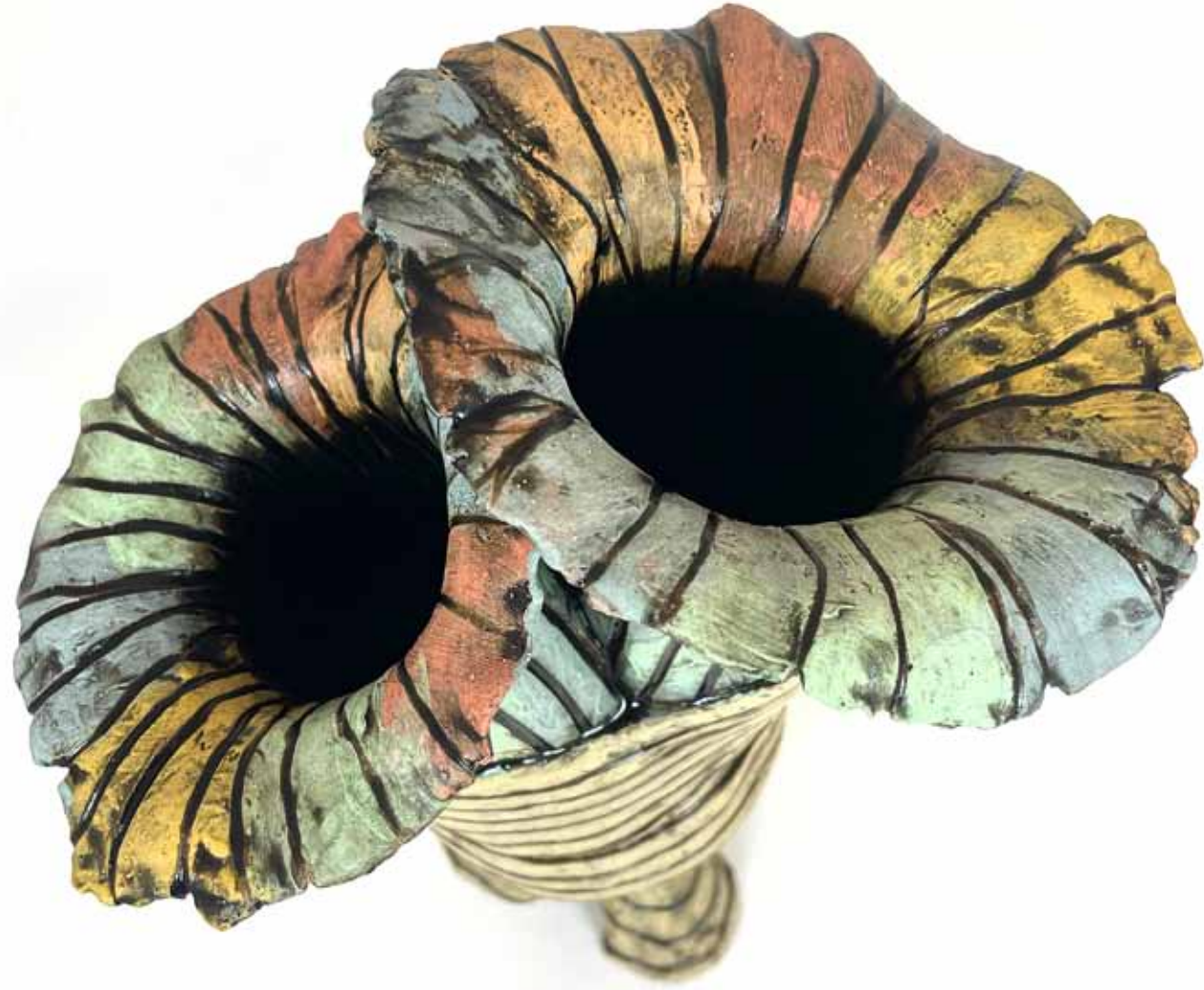
Inventive and spirited, this is a play date to remember.

~Carl Little, poet and art writer





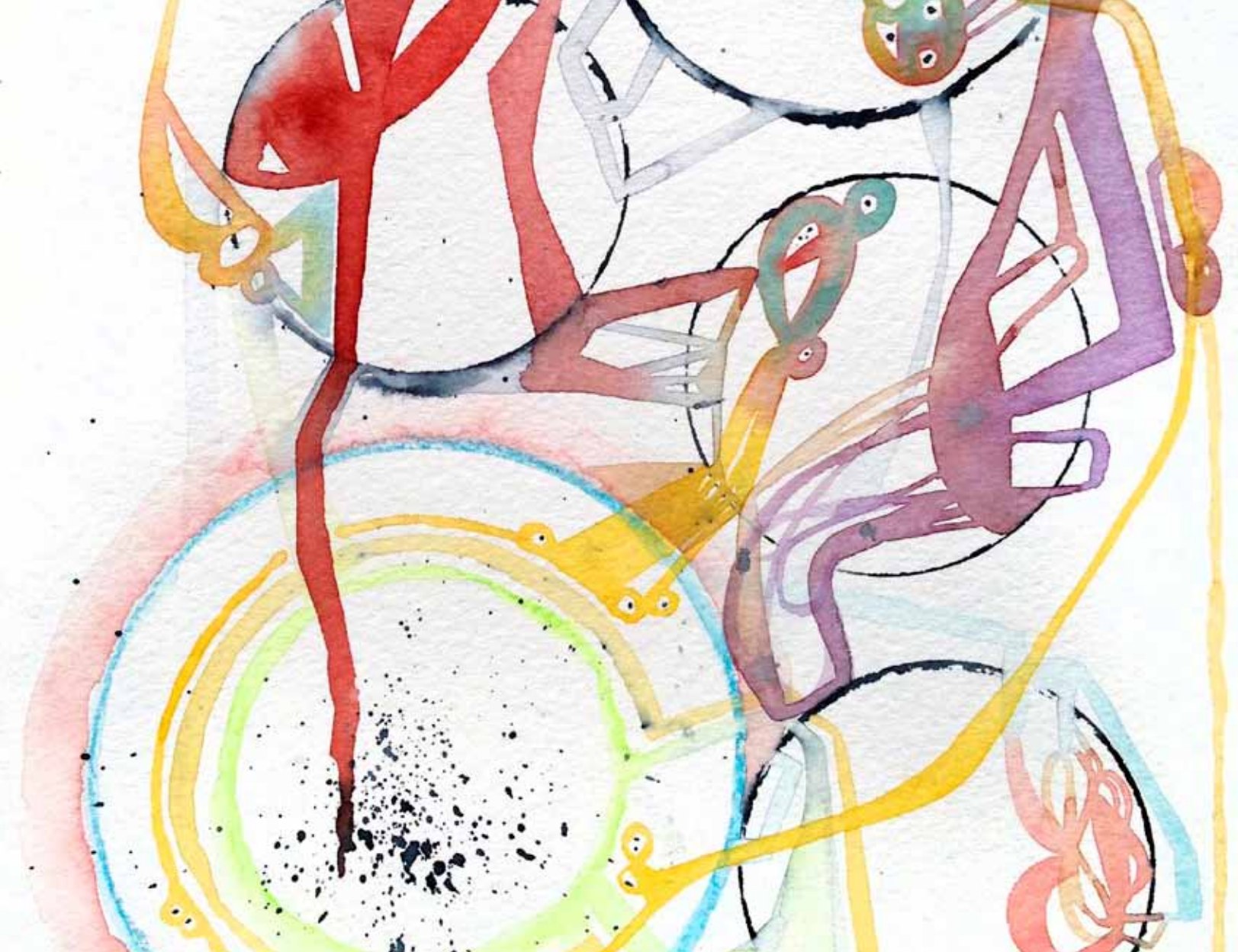






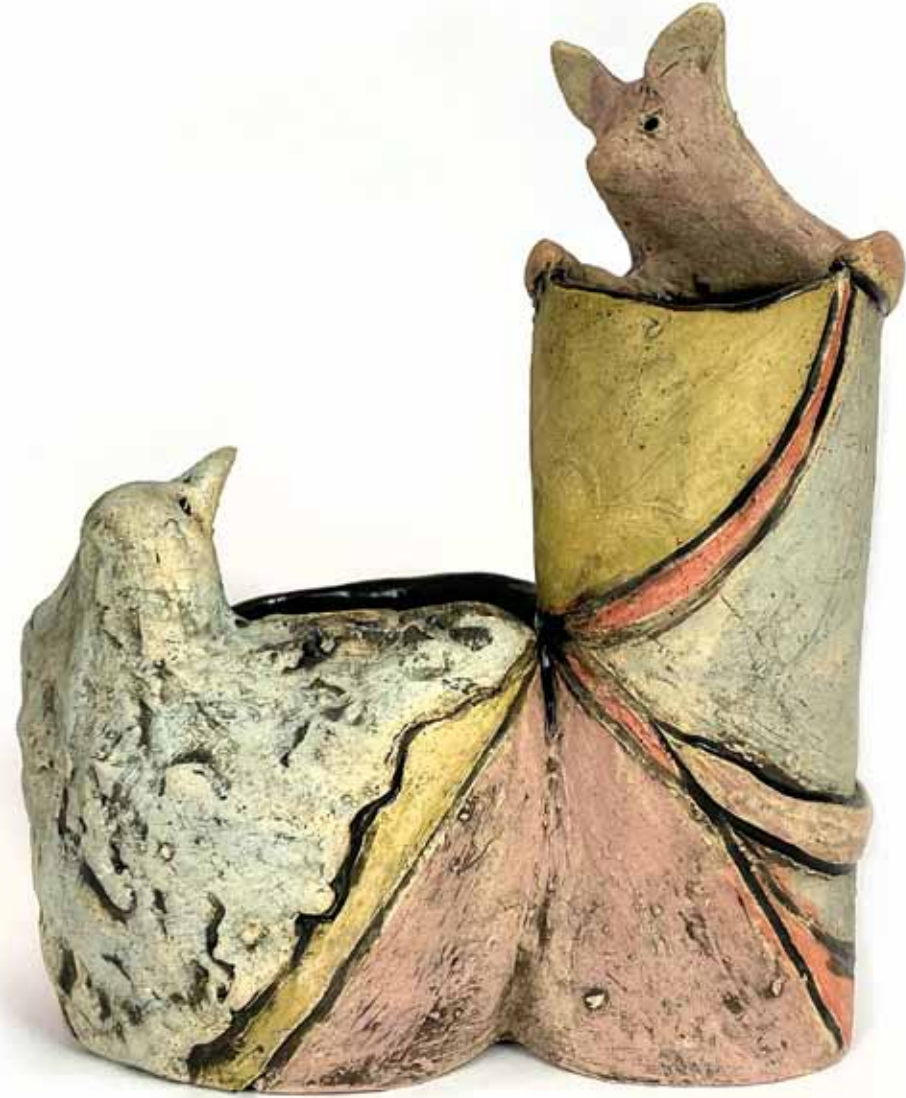






















*The creation of something new is not
accomplished by the intellect
but by the play instinct
acting from inner necessity.*

~Carl Jung





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