

Waar Bloed Nie Loop nie

28 June – 24 August

catalogue.

Mellaney Roberts

**Berman
Contemporary**



MELLANEY ROBERTS

ARTIST STATEMENT AND BIOGRAPHY

As a Coloured, in the collective memory of my story, I always felt like an invisible individual trapped between Black and White classifications. Therein lies an untold story of being somewhere between and not represented, creating the feeling of 'not-belonging'. Through constructing narratives of lived experience, hybrid communities can challenge dominant stereotypes and subvert discourses of otherness and difference.

My work focuses on presenting ceramic sculptures depicting the fluid shift of borders. I use borders as a metaphor for the way that our identity transforms as we experience various spaces. My ceramic sculptural forms are often cut, pierced, or demarcated, showing the divisions in cultural differences. The divisions emphasise how the parameters of identity are often blurred and how an object's placement in space can reference things other than itself, acting as a memory trigger.

The works also explore the element of form, space and time, presenting the viewer with a shifting perspective on materiality. My intuitive response to clay enlists the rich and multileveled reference that ceramics has as a medium, evoking the permanence and impermanence associated with time.

Mellaney Roberts (1988) born in Willowmore, South Africa, Roberts completed her National Diploma in Fine Arts in 2010, BTech Fine Arts (Ceramics) in 2011, and Masters of Fine Arts (cum laude) in Ceramics in 2017, all at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, Gqeberha, and is currently reading towards her PhD. Roberts has been a lecturer in ceramics for several years and is currently lecturing at the Tshwane University of Technology in Pretoria.

She participates in numerous public art projects, as well as local and national art exhibitions. Roberts has been selected for the Nando's Creative Exchange Programme 2023. As part of the NCX Programme, her work will be exhibited at the GFI Gallery in Port Elizabeth in 2023.

In 2023, Mellaney showcased at THE 2020's: new forms of abstraction – part 2 at Berman Contemporary. Since 2023, she has participated in various group exhibitions at Berman Contemporary. In 2024, her works were showcased at Ceramic Brussels with Berman Contemporary, as well as Investec Cape Town Art Fair.

Mellaney Roberts is represented by Berman Contemporary.

Instagram @Mellaney.coza

WAAR BLOED NIE LOOP NIE (WHERE BLOOD DOESN'T FLOW)

Solo Exhibition by Mellaney Roberts

Exhibition text

This body of work arises from an open-ended question. The making begins with contemplating my lineage, my ancestral knowledge and ultimately my becoming. Through the work, I explore themes of home, identity, land, heritage, and the collective memory of the Baviaanskloof Coloured community. These sculptures and installations build on an earlier body of work, wherein I explore the intersection of the tangible and the intangible memories that bind me to the Baviaanskloof. I explore the absence and silence of the lost and forgotten voices in shaping presence and meaning. I draw from their fragmented histories, memories, and untold stories.

In this body of work, I am the artist yet also archaeologist, I am a community member in search of an answer. Clay, as my predominant medium, is sacred and personal; it plays an important role in capturing memory. It is a transformative material through which I construct complex narratives, embodying both permanence and fragility, much like memory.

Through clay, I engage with the layers of history embedded in the land and its people. I explore a sense of belonging and the spaces held by ancestral bloodlines, excavating cultural ties long forgotten. This work invites viewers to navigate these metaphorical spaces. Like the blood of the Baviaanskloof, clay shapes my sense of being.



INSTALLATION PHOTOGRAPH | WAAR BLOED NIE LOOP NIE | BERMAN CONTEMPORARY | 2025



The Ancestor, 2025
Ceramics, sand, and rope
2 x 2 m (Installation)
55 x 51 x 66 cm (Large center ceramic)

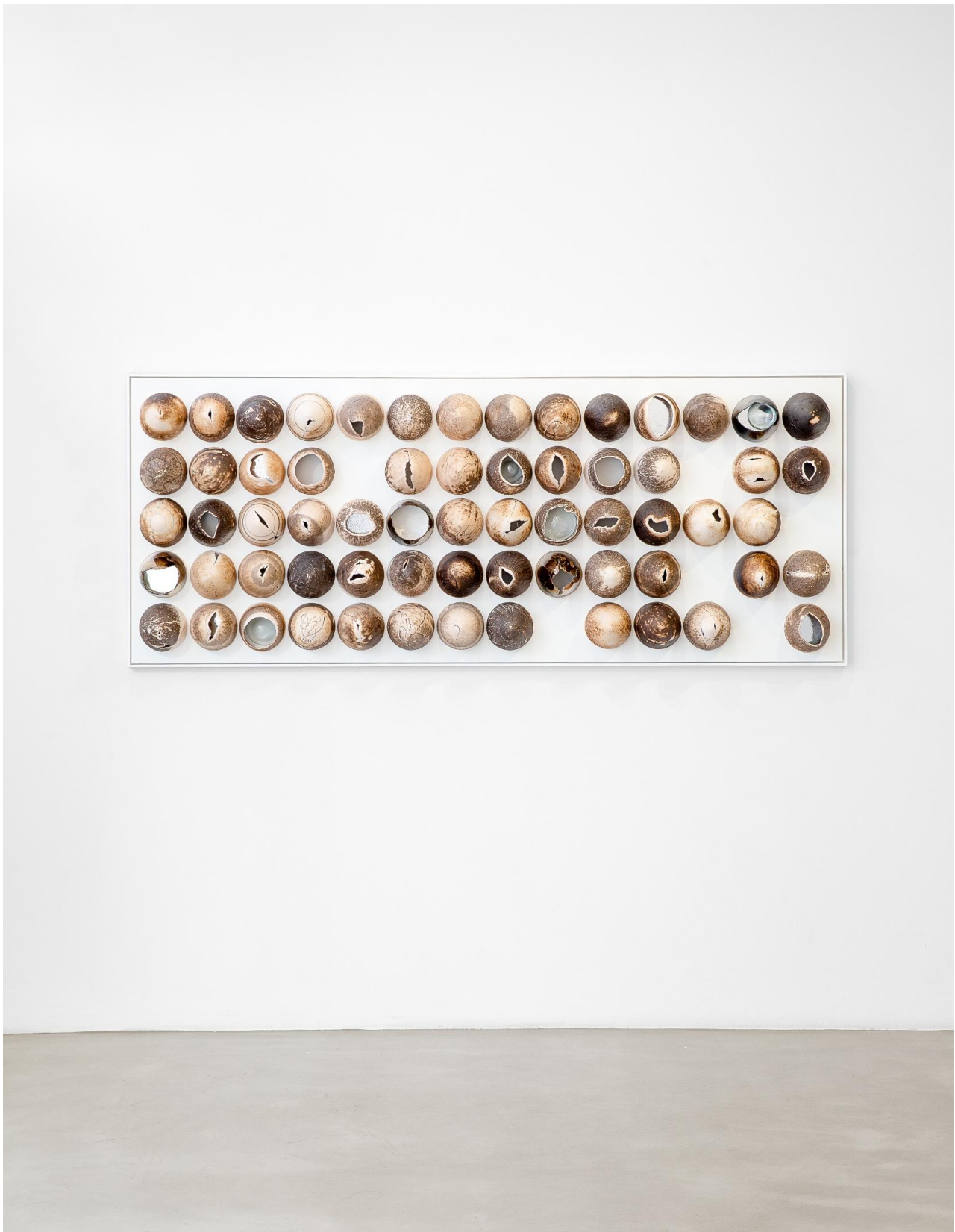


Nestlings: The inheritance, 2025
Ceramic
189 x 375 x 13 cm (Ceramic Installation)



What the Land Remembers, 2025
Ceramics, mirror, copper, and red sand
52 x 52 x 142 cm (wall-mounted tap)
80 cm Diameter (mirror Installation)
(total installation variable)





Seeds of Self, 2025
Ceramics, glass, and mirror vinyl
205 x 83x 14 cm
Framed 205.5 x 83.5 x 14 cm





Echoes in the reeds, 1,2,3 , 2025
Ceramics, Perspex, copper wire, copper tubes and Oregon pine wood
88 x 122 x 6.5 cm





Echoes in the reeds, 4 , 2025
Ceramics, Perspex, copper wire, copper tubes and Oregon pine wood
88 x 122 x 6.5 cm

The Ancestor miniature, 2025
Bronze and glass dome
20 x 20 x 10 cm
20 x 22 cm (jar Dimensions)



The Forgotten Ledger, 2025
Ceramics
182.5 x 70 x 4 cm
Framed 189 x 76 x 8 cm





INSTALLATION PHOTOGRAPH | WAAR BLOED NIE LOOP NIE | BERMAN CONTEMPORARY | 2025



Berman Contemporary

Berman Contemporary is a female-led contemporary art gallery in Johannesburg, founded in 2016 by Candice Berman, with a focus on the representation, support and empowerment of women artists. Our curatorial programme encompasses a broad spectrum of genres and media, including sculpture, painting, video, photography and installation.

The Berman Contemporary exhibition programme offers an art experience that celebrates the innovative and expressive lens of contemporary art. The gallery brings together emerging and established female talents from around the country, representing a generation of women creatives from the southern hemisphere who are standing up and expressing their voices by embracing their narratives and ancestral practices, all the while cherishing their values and belonging.

Berman Contemporary offers our women artists an ongoing mentorship programme to support their artistic development and growth within the international art ecosystem, whereafter we collaboratively shape ideas on how to present their artistic output in a unique and interactive way. This ongoing support is a process of discovery and playfulness through continuous, generative engagement, which acts as a catalyst for interconnectedness with a wide range of art collectors and other talented forces.

Berman Contemporary

bermancontemporary.com
gallery@bermancontemporary.co.za
+27 (0)84 843 8302

