

HESSE FLATOW

Kate Klingbeil: *Uprooted*

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“To understand light you need first to have been buried in the deep-down dark.”

— Robert Macfarlane, *Underland: A Deep Time Journey*



Hesse Flatow is pleased to present *Uprooted*, a solo exhibition of new works

by multidisciplinary artist Kate Klingbeil. An exploration of the self and psyche, Klingbeil expands on her earlier series of elaborate subterranean paintings and ventures into a new body of work that concentrates around a central root woman figure, who is both character and symbol for much of Klingbeil’s own internal experiences. Through paintings, cast metal sculptures, and a stop-motion film, *Uprooted* is a singular and abundant showcase of Klingbeil’s vivid world-building and personal narratives.

Much of this body of work investigates the cycle of excavating and emerging— processes universally experienced over the past eighteen months due to the pandemic. Presented together as a complex ecosystem, the works construct a fantastical narrative of a personified root attempting, with some difficulty, to exhume herself from the dense, dark underground. Klingbeil’s paintings are created in a three-dimensional, collage-like process; layering paint and embedding ceramics, cast metal reliefs, found objects, and various sedimentary materials. Her root figure is presented as a main character in various stages of emergence. In one piece, her vascular, tendriled body is ripped from the earth, in another, she excavates herself with a shovel towards the earth’s surface. Tightly packed with hidden language, personal iconography, and complex compositions, her paintings are a visual scavenger hunt from start to finish. In conversation with her painted works are Klingbeil’s new cast of root character sculptures (cast in bronze, iron, and brass). They are presented in various states of movement, atop natural rocks and sand shaped into a figure of a woman, who is becoming one with—or emerging from—the earth.

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As winter ends, the vibrant life beneath the earth's crust beckons to the surface. Signs of life, rebirth, and regeneration make themselves known and the stillness of the season begins to vibrate with new energy. Klingbeil's work is an invitation to this transitional moment, allowing viewers to travel the narrow pathways and tunnels of personal upheaval. Reflecting on how our bodies and emotions mirror the intricate systems found in nature, Klingbeil's work implores viewers to contemplate their relationship with the hidden parts of themselves and the natural landscapes they inhabit. In her own words: "The underground is an incredibly rich, complex, and expansive landscape that is often overlooked, but worthy of deep investigation. It is in the underground that both germination and burial happen, the beginning and the end of all life on earth."

Kate Klingbeil (b. 1990) lives and works between Milwaukee and New York. She has exhibited her work at Steve Turner, Los Angeles (Grown Woman, 2021); SPRING/BREAK, New York with Field Projects (Burrowed, 2020); Monya Rowe, New York (On The Inside with Rebecca Ness, 2019) and Crush Curatorial, New York (Thick, 2017). Kate has been included in group exhibitions at Nino Mier, Los Angeles (2021); Steve Turner, Los Angeles (2020); Nevven Gallery, Gothenburg, Sweden (2019); Andrew Edlin, New York (2019); Paul Kasmin, New York (2018), The Hole, New York (2018), and Andrew Rafacz, Chicago (2017). Residencies Kate has attended include Silver Art Projects at 4 World Trade Center (2021), Oak Spring Garden Foundation (2021), Marble House Projects (2021), the Arts/Industries program at John Michael Kohler Art Center (2020), Yaddo (2019), and ACRE (2016). Her work has been written about in the New York Times (2020), Artnet (2020), and Maake Magazine (2019), among other publications.

Image: Kate Klingbeil, *Digging Myself Out Of A Hole*, 2021. Acrylic, pigment, flashe, pumice, sand, crushed garnet, mica, cast brass, ceramic, bones, beach glass, shells, rocks from Lake Michigan and Lake Charlevoix, and oil stick on canvas, 84 x 60 x 2.25 in. Courtesy of the artist and Hesse Flatow