

Educator Notes

Liz Larner

February 26–June 5, 2016



Liz Larner, *v (subduction)*, 2014–15. Ceramic, epoxy, pigment, stones, minerals, 20 3/4 x 39 1/4 x 11 1/4 in (52.7 x 99.7 x 28.6 cm). Courtesy Regen Projects, Los Angeles

About the artist

Liz Larner was born in 1960 in Sacramento, California, and currently lives and works in Los Angeles. She holds a BFA from the California Institute of the Arts. Her work has been characterized by a sustained examination into the nature of sculpture. Among Larner's most notable exhibitions are a permanent sculpture, *Public Jewel*, commissioned by the GSA for the plaza of the Byron Rogers Federal Building and US Courthouse in Denver, CO (2014), a site-specific work exhibited by the Public Art Fund at the Doris C. Freedman Plaza in New York City (2006), and solo presentations at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago (2002), Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (2001), MAK, Austrian Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna (1998), and the Kunsthalle Basel, Switzerland (1997).

About the exhibition

Liz Larner's exhibition at the Aspen Art Museum showcases the artist's longstanding investigation into the possibilities and poetics of sculpture. From *X* (2013), a mirror-polished stainless steel sculpture installed for a year on the AAM Commons, to a series of wall-mounted ceramic pieces presented in Galleries 2 and 3, Larner's work uses line, color, volume, and form to produce new relationships between the viewer and the surrounding environment.

Since 1988, Larner has been committed to exploring both the physical qualities and suggestive power of objects. Her work engages viewers intellectually as well as emotionally through an ever-evolving language of abstract forms. Made from diverse, often organic materials, these sculptures are substantial, refined, and experimental in equal measure.

Larner's ceramic works in this exhibition evoke associations with the earth and geology, both in her use of material as well as through the titles she gives such as *mantle*, *calectation*, and *passage*. This blend of poetic and scientific terminology reflects the power of the artworks to have multiple effects. The resulting objects hover in front of the wall, managing to be painterly and sculptural all at once.

Questions for discussion

- | “Telluric” is a word often used to describe Liz Larner’s ceramic works on view in this exhibition. It means of or relating to the earth. How do the colors and materials used in these sculptures relate to that word?
- | Where would you find these colors in nature?
- | When creating her pieces, the artist has said she looks at each blank ceramic slab and tries to understand what it wants to be and who it wants to be before adding the pigments and epoxy. Find a piece that grabs your attention. What kind of personality do you think it has?

Suggested activities

Sculptural Landscapes

Gather rolling pins, air-dry clay, various paints, Mod Podge, and varying sizes of solid objects such as stones.

Have students imagine their home or town from above. Ask what kind of earth formations they would be able to see, and what might be happening below the ground’s surface.

On a flat surface, students can use the rolling pin to flatten a medium-to-large-sized ball of air-dry clay. Drape flattened pieces of clay over a selection of solid objects to create ridges that students might see from above where they live. If the clay happens to break apart into two pieces, challenge students to use that natural break to their advantage and create texture while piecing it back together.

After the clay has dried completely, ask students to paint their new landscape with a variety of colors. Invite them to choose colors they would see every day in nature near their home or imagine what colors lie beneath the earth’s surface. Once the paint is dry, coat the ceramics in glossy Mod Podge for a glazed effect.

Caesura Poetry

Many of the titles of Liz Larner's artworks in this exhibition contain the word "caesura."

"Caesura" is a literary term that means a break or pause within a poem.

Show students the artwork pictured on the front. Ask them to use paper and pencil to write a poem that responds to its colors and forms.

Have students describe what they notice from left to right using their words. When they reach any ridges or gaps in the artwork, they can include a caesura (break) in their writing. When they have finished writing their poem, invite students to share with the class, making sure to pause when they reach the caesura.

For more information, please contact the Education Department at 970.925.8050 ext. 133 or email education@aspenartmuseum.org

AAM exhibitions are made possible by the Marx Exhibition Fund. General exhibition support is provided by the Toby Devan Lewis Visiting Artist Fund.

Liz Larner's exhibition is supported by Gabriela and Ramiro Garza and Susan and Larry Marx, and funded in part by the AAM National Council. Additional support is provided by Eleanore and Domenico De Sole.

AAM education programs are made possible by the Questrom Education Fund.