

Virginia Leonard New Zealand b. 1965

'A resolved work for Leonard is a piece that is suspended in the slim interstice between her will and the clay's refusal of it. A work might crack in the kiln, requiring a surgical procedure of resins, glazes and lustre, the application of which – as thick and as craggy as possible – provides another opportunity for her to approach the form's limits; the point at which it seems to be heaving under its own extravagance.' - Connie Brown



Installation view of Virginia Leonard works *Stained Legs and Legwarmers* and *Court Shoes* pictured at *Distorted Duets*, Usine Kugler, 2021

Virginia Leonard Biography

The emotional, emotive and intensely personal ceramic works created by artist Virginia Leonard are powerful self-portraits that address her bodily scarring and experiences of chronic pain - the result of injuries obtained in a serious motorbike accident in London in 1986, which left her hospitalised for two years.

The maturity of these works belies the fact that Leonard only began working with clay in 2013. However, her ceramic practice has followed a successful painting career in her native New Zealand. Her painterly approach is evident in her current work in which she moves clay as she would have moved paint on a canvas, making the material gestural as she builds her constructions. Chronic pain has no biological value, modern medicine cannot reliably treat it; it lacks both language and voice. For Leonard the language of the clay is an attempt to rid her body of trauma and reduce her level of chronic pain. Clay is visceral, oozy and clumpy. It resembles bodily scarring but is also a precarious medium, which serves as a reminder of the fragility of her body.

Leonard's recent ceramic works evolve from a process of stacking, in which the artist piles random individual pieces on top of one another, a methodology she refers to as "building precarious towers resembling my human form". Virginia Leonard lives and works in Auckland, New Zealand

Education

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| 2001 | Master of Fine Arts, Whitecliffe College of Arts, Auckland, New Zealand |
| 1990 | Bachelor of Arts, Whitecliffe College of Arts, Auckland, New Zealand |

Selected Exhibitions | Solo

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| 2021 | Golden Legs and Other Bits, Mindy Solomon Gallery, Miami, US |
| 2020 | <i>Breath Holder</i> , Gow Langsford Gallery, Auckland, New Zealand |
| 2019 | Gloria, Martin Browne Contemporary, Sydney, Australia |
| 2018 | artgenève [represented by Taste Contemporary], Geneva, Switzerland
Mindy Solomon Gallery, Miami, USA
<i>Two Rooms</i> , Auckland, New Zealand
Installation, Objectspace, Auckland, New Zealand
Melbourne Art Fair, Solo Installation, Paul Nache, Melbourne, Australia
Auckland Art Fair, Solo Installation, Paul Nache, Auckland, New Zealand |
| 2017 | Galerie Wolfsen, Denmark |
| 2009 | Oedipus Rex Gallery, Auckland, New Zealand |
| 2008 | Oedipus Rex Gallery, Auckland, New Zealand |
| 2007 | Palette Gallery, Auckland, New Zealand |
| 2003 | Barrows Gallery, Martinborough, New Zealand
Oedipus Rex Gallery, Auckland, New Zealand |
| 2002 | Oedipus Rex, Auckland, New Zealand |
| 2001 | Oedipus Rex, Auckland, New Zealand |

Selected Exhibitions | Group

- 2022 **artgenève [represented by Taste Contemporary], Geneva, Switzerland**
- 2021 ***Distorted Duets, [presented by Taste Contemporary], Usine Kugler, Geneva, Switzerland***
MIART [presented by Taste Contemporary], Milan, Italy
Odd and Even – A Collection, Maison Louis Carré, [represented by Taste Contemporary], Paris, France
artgenève [represented by Taste Contemporary], Geneva, Switzerland
 Art Project, Megeve, France
 Gow Langsford Gallery, Auckland, New Zealand
 Paul Nache, Summer Exhibition, Gisborne, New Zealand
- 2020 Design Miami / Basel, Mindy Solomon Gallery, Miami, USA
 Sydney Contemporary, Gow Langsford Gallery & Paul Nache, Sydney, Australia
MIART online, [represented by Taste Contemporary]
 Auckland Art Fair, Gow Langsford Gallery, Auckland, New Zealand
The Backbone of Things, Te Auaha, Wellington, New Zealand
Ladies Bits, Mindy Solomon Gallery, Miami, USA
The Cook and Her Driver, Gertrude Glasshouse, Melbourne, Australia (Residency Exhibition)
- 2019 *Hot Mess*, Bowerbank Ninow, Auckland, New Zealand
 The Dowse Art Museum, Dirty Ceramics, Wellington, New Zealand
 International Biennial of Contemporary Ceramics 2019, Geneva, Switzerland
 Sydney Contemporary, Martin Browne Contemporary, Sydney, Australia
 Autumn Exhibition, Martin Browne Contemporary, Sydney, Australia
 Trans-Pacific Dialogue, NCECA, Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA
National Treasures, Contemporary Ceramics from Australia and New Zealand, The Vivian, Matakana, New Zealand
Open to Art, Officine Saffi, Milan, Italy
Beau-laid [presented by Rear Window], London, UK
Five Cubed [presented by Taste Contemporary], Usine Kugler, Geneva, Switzerland
MIART two person show [represented by Taste Contemporary], Milan, Italy
artgenève [represented by Taste Contemporary], Geneva, Switzerland
 NCECA, Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA
- 2018 MIART, Erastudio Apartment Gallery, Milan, Italy
 Collective Design Fair, Mindy Solomon Gallery, New York, USA
 Exodus, The Vivian, Matakana, New Zealand
- 2017 Pulse Art Fair, [represented by Mindy Solomon Gallery], Miami Beach, US
 Installation Contemporary, Sydney Contemporary, Carriageworks, Sydney, Australia
 Wallace Art Awards Travelling Show [finalist], Auckland, New Zealand
 Farvestralende Keramik, Guldagergaard, Denmark
 40, Galerie Wolfsen, Denmark
Village huha, Paul Nache, Gisborne, New Zealand
- 2016 *HANDBUILT made in clay*, Two Rooms, Auckland, New Zealand
 Christmas Time at Middlemore, Corbans Estate Arts Centre, Auckland, New Zealand

- Wallace Art Awards Travelling Show [finalist], Auckland, New Zealand
Spring 1883, Paul Nache, The Hotel Windsor, Melbourne, Australia
MUD, Galerie Wolfsen, Denmark
Curiosity: 5 Artists / 5 Artworks / 5 Tools, Wallace Gallery, Morrinsville, New Zealand
 Graffiti Lounge, Paul Nache, Gisborne, New Zealand
- 2015 Wallace Art Awards Travelling Show [finalist], Auckland, New Zealand
 The Assemblage Show, The Vivian, Matakana, New Zealand
 Potters & Painters, The Vivian, Matakana, New Zealand
- 2014 *The Effects of Crack*, Objectspace, Auckland, New Zealand
 Wallace Art Awards Travelling Show [finalist], Auckland, New Zealand
Foursome, The Vivian, Matakana, New Zealand
The Flower Show, The Vivian, Matakana, New Zealand
- 2013 *The Small Show*, The Vivian, Matakana, New Zealand
The Local Show, The Vivian, Matakana, New Zealand
 Wallace Art Awards Travelling Show [finalist], Auckland, New Zealand
Virginia Leonard & Louise McRae, The Vivian, Matakana, New Zealand
 The Landscape Show, The Vivian, Matakana, New Zealand
 The January Group Show, The Vivian, Matakana, New Zealand
- 2012 The Opening Show, The Vivian, Matakana, New Zealand
- 2011 Matakana Valley Road Group Show, Fineline Gallery, Matakana, New Zealand
 The Mahurangi Group Show, Matakana, New Zealand
- 2010 The Mahurangi Group Show, Matakana, New Zealand
 Art in the Woolshed Group Show, Matakana, New Zealand
- 2009 Auckland Art Fair, New Zealand
 Matakana Valley Road Group Show, Fine Line Gallery, Matakana, New Zealand
- 2007 Group exhibition Oedipus Rex, Auckland, New Zealand
- 2003 Graduate Masters Students exhibition, Randolph Street Gallery, Auckland, New Zealand
- 2002 Group exhibition Barrows Gallery, Martinborough, New Zealand
 Group exhibition, Oedipus Rex Gallery, Auckland, New Zealand
- 2001 Group exhibition Barrows Gallery, Martinborough, New Zealand
- 2000 Post-graduation exhibition, Auckland, New Zealand

Awards

- 2021 Winner, Main Prize, Officine Saffi Awards, Milan, Italy
- 2020 First Runner-Up, Wallace Art Awards, Auckland, New Zealand
- 2019 Winner, Artist-in-Residence Prize, Finland, Open to Art Ceramic Award, Officine Saffi, Milan.
- 2018 Finalist, Wallace Art Awards, Auckland, New Zealand
- 2017 Finalist, Portage Ceramic Awards, Te Uru Waitakere Contemporary Gallery, Auckland
 Finalist, Wallace Art Awards, Auckland, New Zealand, Travelling Show
- 2016 Finalist, Wallace Art Awards, Auckland, New Zealand, Travelling Show
 Finalist, Molly Morpeth Canaday 3D Award, Te Kōputu a te whanga a Toi -
 Whakatane Library and Exhibition Centre, Whakatane, New Zealand

2015	Finalist, Waiheke Small Sculpture Prize, Waiheke Art Gallery, Waiheke, New Zealand Merit Award Portage Ceramic Awards, Te Uru Waitakere Contemporary Gallery, Auckland, New Zealand
2014	Finalist, National Contemporary Art Award, Waikato Museum, Hamilton, New Zealand Finalist, Waiheke Small Sculpture Prize, Waiheke Art Gallery, Waiheke, New Zealand Finalist, Molly Morpeth Canada 3D Award, Te Kōputu a te whanga a Toi - Whakatane Library and Exhibition Centre, Whakatane, New Zealand Finalist, National Contemporary Art Award, Waikato Museum, Hamilton, New Zealand Finalist, Waiheke Small Sculpture Prize, Waiheke Art Gallery, Waiheke, New Zealand
2013	Finalist, Waikato Painting and Printmaking Art Award, Hamilton, New Zealand
2012	Finalist, Waikato Painting and Printmaking Art Award, Hamilton, New Zealand Winner Molly Morpeth Canada Art Award, Whakatane, New Zealand
2011	Winner, Walker and Hall Waiheke Art Award, Waiheke Art Gallery, Waiheke, New Zealand Finalist, Molly Morpeth Art Award, Whakatane, New Zealand
2010	Finalist, Molly Morpeth Art Award, Whakatane, New Zealand
2009	Finalist, Waiheke Art Awards, Waiheke Art Gallery, Waiheke, New Zealand
2008	Finalist, Waiheke Art Awards, Waiheke Art Gallery, Waiheke, New Zealand
2007	Waiheke Art Awards - Zinni Douglas Merit Award, Waiheke Art Gallery, New Zealand Finalist, Norsewear Art Awards, Hawkes Bay, New Zealand
2003	Finalist, Wallace Art Awards, Auckland, New Zealand

Residency

2019	Glass House/Stone House, Chenaud, France
2017	Guldagergaard - International Ceramic Research Centre, Denmark

Publications

Contemporary Hum [online]

The Journal of Australian Ceramics

Art Link

Art Collector

Art Zone

100 Sculptures of Tomorrow, Thames & Hudson

Ceramics Art + Perception #113

Ceramics New Zealand, Volume 1 issue 2, Essay by Kim Paton

The Journal of Australian Ceramics, Vol 57 No1, Essay by Anna Briers

Updated February 2022

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