



D'ANDREA BOWIE: WEATHERED ROCK

Steel, concrete, stone, clay, marble, silica, and plaster-raw and human-made materials that surround us every day, are reclaimed and repurposed in *D'Andrea Bowie: Weathered Rock*. The exhibition's title is an indicator of the geological forces that create clay itself, the raw material at the centre of Bowie's practice. In traditional casting, building, and firing techniques, she creates vessels and sculptures that reflect the long history of ceramics. While creating plaster molds, building ceramic blocks, and wood-firing sculptures, she also seeks to engage more deeply with the materials themselves. Working through research and experimentation, Bowie challenges the traditional role of a sculptor, working not only with these materials in a physical sense, but creating in collaboration with the materials themselves. Through the addition of recycled materials—from her own practice and collected from various sites of human activity—Bowie directs our attention to histories of capitalism, settler colonialism, race, and gender.

Living and working at the border between the Greater Toronto Area and the surrounding rural landscape, D'Andrea Bowie's work takes advantage of local construction and industry as well as the natural environment. World-building extracted materials like stone, clay, gravel, steel and concrete are central to much of our lives, and a marker of environmental degradation. These elements are also tied to the land and the multi-layered histories of colonialism, geological time, and human activity. Through her work, Bowie makes a direct reference to each of these elements, both physical and conceptual, as the extracted materials and waste are reinvigorated through time and manipulation. Through the creation of new forms, and challenging our perceptions of material, time, and environment, we encounter Bowie's unique perspective and new ways of thinking about our own activities and the world around us.

Bowie's ceramic and glass practice is very much built through a personal connection and manipulation of materials. Harvesting and reclaiming clay, using recycled glass and metals, and grinding stone and marble, her hands-on approach, not only to the practice, but the very materials themselves, is a careful process of research, experimentation, and creation. By connecting this process to the natural environment, Bowie further advances her practice, both as a personal and intimate experience and the development of new forms and processes. Even within her own studio, Bowie recycles and reclaims extensively. Not only in the reusing of scrap clay, but using stone and marble dust, as well as metals in her clay and glazes to create decoration and texture. Throughout many of the ceramic works in the exhibition, dust captured from the carving of *Pillow Talk*—a by-product of the creation of this work made from Canadian marble—is incorporated into the glazes, connecting the works physically and aesthetically.

Many of Bowie's works are also connected through the use and reuse of molds and materials. *Bruce's Cave* is a plaster mother mold, presented here as an artwork itself, while it was used in the creation of several of Bowie's ceramic works, including *Deep Rooted*, and *Knee Wall Stacked*. While the mold was carved to resemble tree roots crossing over one another, the resulting installation of *Deep Rooted*, which is presented on the floor, appears almost as a topographical map

of a landscape as the clay ripples and glazes bubble and pool over the surface. *Knee Wall Stacked* uses the mold to form the front panel of each clay block. Initially presented in a previous exhibition at the Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery in 2025 as a short stack of blocks titled *Knee Wall*, the components have been reconfigured for *D'Andrea Bowie: Weathered Rock* through the addition of metal supports that allow blocks to be stacked taller, connecting to the tree forms within the exhibition. Additional blocks from the structure of *Lean Together*, however in this work three blocks made from reclaimed and wild clays were stacked and coated in porcelain slip. The sculpture was then fired in the kiln, exceeding the typical temperature of the reclaimed and wild clays, causing them to melt and collapse, as the porcelain slip cracked and peeled away from the earthenware beneath. Through this process, the refined, white porcelain surface has become broken to reveal the more earthy clay beneath, thus emphasizing the contrast between the natural processes of the environment and the refining and manufacturing of human activity.

In Bowie's glass works, recycling and process are again a core element. *Dandelion Wine* is made from a glass carboy bottle that was placed inside of a wire frame before being fired in the kiln. As the glass slumped and stretched under the heat of the kiln, the copper wire held a delicate balance between bending with the glass and resisting it, causing the glass to crumple and ooze around the frame. *Kombucha Glass*, *Ocean side*, and *Crystal* are each made from different types of glass. Presented together, the unique qualities of each are highlighted, while the cast forms play with positive and negative space. Through texture and open voids, the works emphasize the colour and patterns of each material as we are drawn into the spaces held within.

Several works in *D'Andrea Bowie's Weathered Rock* also feature ceramics cast from trees. After making molds as part of another project, Bowie used them again in the creation of *Tall Snag*, *Reduced Snag*, *Ant Nest*, and several vessels. Both *Snag* works form tall towers supported by steel that evoke free forms standing tall within the gallery space. Amongst the block towers and other forms, they connect the space that is defined by concrete, steel, and human-made materials with the natural environment. Sitting within the space, they ground us, bringing our focus more directly to the environmental concerns. *Ant Nest* is composed of a cement and steel base with a ceramic cast of a tree trunk mounted on one side. Again, the glazed ceramic of the tree trunk connects us to the environment, but in this case the visible cement also immediately draws us to construction.

Finally, a series of wood-fired ceramic vessels were also created with ceramic casts of trees, but each piece was wrapped horizontally atop each other, similar to the process of using long coils to build a vessel. Changing the direction of the ceramic pieces abstracts their relationship to the trees, and instead traditional ceramics become the focus of these works. Layered and recycled, the vessels demonstrate yet another application of the tree molds.

Throughout the exhibition, Bowie's approach to creation as research and collaboration is clear. Working with traditional and found materials, she continually reimagines the possibilities of each medium. Recycling and reusing, Bowie illustrates the continual process of artmaking as well as the wide range of ways in which to reduce the environmental impact of an artistic practice. Conceptual and traditional, the range of works demonstrate her deep engagement with ceramic and glass while also connecting to critical issues of the environment and colonial, capitalist, and feminist topics that connect within.

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