

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DEBRA BAXTER: LOVE TEARS

October 29, 2021–January 20, 2022

CURATOR & PRESS PREVIEW

Wednesday, October 27, 1–4pm

OPENING RECEPTION

Friday, October 29, 5–7pm

ARTIST OPEN HOUSE

Saturday, October 30, 2021, 12–4pm



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(October 2021) Debra Baxter’s solo exhibition *Love Tears* embodies the entanglement of love, mortality and the natural world. Taking cues from Victorian mourning jewelry, Baxter uses a vocabulary of crystals, minerals, glass and metal to examine how loss, grief and longing have manifested within material culture throughout history. She emphasizes the preciousness of our shared humanity by incorporating anatomical and natural imagery, giving form to the individual and collective grief of the Covid-19 pandemic and other converging crises. An Opening Reception will be held on Friday, October 29, 5–7pm, followed by an Artist Open House on Saturday, October 30, 12–4pm.

For Baxter’s second solo show at the gallery, the artist presents 16 sculptures, 14 of which were created between 2020-2021. Two of the earliest works, a pair of wall sculptures in bronze-cast lace, gifted by a departed friend, and moss-like green coral, epitomize Baxter’s mesmerizing talent for imbuing “forever” materials with delicacy and ephemerality. The works are tributes to a friend who passed away, and they provoke a question that Baxter ponders throughout the show: how do you make the temporal timeless? Other objects, like *After the Storm* and *Marrow of my Bone*, which incorporate a bronze casting of a fox skull and found bones, underscore this universal quest to preserve and commemorate transient states. “There’s inevitable pain in every form of love,” says Baxter. “I’m fascinated by the ways in which we decorate this grief and mourning, and I wanted to see how far I could push myself with balancing the immediate, often ornate, demonstration of loss, and my use of permanent materials. This is about loss and legacy.”

“Debra is a master at melding and joining disparate materials,” says Gallery Director Jordan Eddy. “These elegant combinations of made and found objects—some delicate, others impenetrable—explore dynamics between life and death. *Love Tears* is a clear-eyed meditation on the ways we exhibit both love and loss in stormy times.” One room over from *Love Tears*, Baxter engages a broader community of sculptors in pondering these themes for the group exhibition *She Dances Like A Bomb*. Baxter co-curated the show with fellow Bard College MFA alumnus Dawn Cerny. While Baxter looks to the unknown in her solo show, she levels a loving gaze on her origins in *She Dances*, which features work by fellow sculptors who have participated in the prestigious studio program.

Some works, such as *Ear to the Ground*, in which a purposefully-broken alabaster bust of Aphrodite is fused to a found glass oil lamp, were created during the artist’s 30-day sculpture challenge in the first months of the pandemic (featured on [The Jealous Curator](#)). Baxter has also included a new addition to her *Crystal Brass Knuckles* series, significantly subtitled (*forever*), whose sister can be found in the permanent collection of the Smithsonian’s Renwick Gallery.

Debra Baxter is a sculptor and jewelry designer who combines carved alabaster with crystals, minerals, metals and found objects. She received her MFA in Sculpture from Bard College in 2008 and her BFA from the Minneapolis College of Art and Design in 1996. She also studied at *Accademia di Belle Arti* in Florence, Italy. Baxter has received an Artist Trust Individual Artist Grant, three 4Culture Individual Project Grants in Seattle, Washington, and is the 2019 recipient of the Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters & Sculptors Grants. Her work has been exhibited at Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN; Memphis Metals Museum, TN; and Tacoma Art Museum, WA, among others.

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