

# VAN DOREN WAXTER

Daisy Youngblood

*Tender Mercy(s): Early and Late Works in Clay*

September 8 – October 23, 2021

23 East 73<sup>rd</sup> Street | 3<sup>rd</sup> floor



*Little Gorilla*, 2020, low fire clay, 12 1/4 x 11 1/2 x 6 3/4 in (31.1 x 29.2 x 17.1 cm)

Van Doren Waxter is delighted to announce *Daisy Youngblood. Tender Mercy(s): Early and Late Works in Clay*, a survey of haunting animal and human forms made of low-fired clay to go on view at the gallery's historic 1907 townhouse at 23 East 73rd Street from September 8 to October 23, 2021. This is the gallery's first one-person exhibition of the artist since announcing representation and includes rarely seen or reproduced material made by the artist between 1977 and 2020. Youngblood is noted for an affecting, mystical body of sculpture made slowly through deep immersion with changing form. Since the 1970s she has received critical attention for her work in clay and in cast bronze. The survey will be accompanied by a rare interview available on [vandorenwaxter.com](http://vandorenwaxter.com) conducted by Miani Johnson, who in 1979 showed the artist for the very first time at the legendary Willard Gallery (1940-1987) in New York City.

A John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Fellow lauded for her aptitude of “molding psychological vitality” into clay and producing sculptures with “immediate, visceral and enduring impact,” Youngblood began working in the ancient, sensuous medium during her early childhood in North Carolina when at four years old she discovered she could create form with red clay and “made a bear out of it.”

The six works to go on view can all be seen as “light-body/portraits” that emit a distinctive and watchful presence drawing their language from the artist's affinity for indigenous cultures, living creatures, and the ability to see more than just the exterior. Two of the portraits are of Buddhist Lamas: Kalu Rinpoche and “Lama” from Chagdud Tulku Rinpoche—where the exterior image is gone over for years until the light or felt body is experienced. A friend, *Chandrika* (2014), whose face is made of red clay and rocks is also a study of the material body coming together as light or energy. There are two very early self-portraits, *Head Crucifixion* and *Wired Waitress*, both

1977, that express the artist's difficulty in those times. The animals in the show could also be seen as light-body/portraits that come together when the form study is exhausted.

Animals, especially primates, regularly appear in her practice, as well as goats and cheetahs. The seated *Little Gorilla* (2020), with its jagged, angular form, discharges a presence and personality. The work invokes art critic Thomas Micchelli's assertion that Youngblood has the ability "to endow clay with a pulse" and that her animals are "uncommonly alive" and "exude a dignity and intelligence." The American art critic Eleanor Heartney enthused in *Art in America* that "taken together, these personages have an ancient quality as if they were unearthed rather than fashioned." Youngblood's mysterious bodies and heads spring from the artist's relationship to her ancestors and energy, and for her, "feels like somebody is there."

Daisy Youngblood was born in Asheville, North Carolina in 1945 and today lives and works in Costa Rica. She studied at The Richmond Professional Institute, Virginia. She began exhibiting in New York City in the late 1970s and has shown in the U.S. and internationally. Her work has been on view in solo exhibitions at Willard Gallery, Barbara Gladstone Gallery, and McKee Gallery, among others. She been included in numerous group exhibitions, such as *Figuratively Speaking* (1981) at P.S. 1 in Long Island City, NY; *Modern Masks* (1984) at The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY; *A Labor of Love* (1996) at The New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, NY; *Midtown* (2017) at Lever House, New York, NY, curated by Jeanne Greenberg Rohatyn, Michele Maccarone, and Paul Johnson; and *Animism Reanimated* (2020) at Jessica Silverman Gallery, San Francisco, CA. Youngblood is the recipient of a John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Fellowship (2003). Her work is held in many permanent collections such as The Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, TX; The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY, the North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh, NC; and The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, CA. Her work has been reviewed and featured in publications such as *Artforum*, *ARTnews*, *Art in America*, and *The New York Times*.

The artist is represented exclusively by Van Doren Waxter.