

## Leanne McClurg Cambric

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### Artist Statement

"The second-hardest thing I have to do is not be longing's slave." Sarah Manguso wrote those words in a poem entitled "Hell." I twirl the last two words around in my brain. "Longing's slave." They seem to fit too well; they register in my body as some part of my identity. Understanding longing is the second-hardest thing I have to do too.

Several years ago I began to ask questions about how we make decisions. What is instinct? What is intuition? What is learned behavior? How do we survive? These questions have led me to investigate my choices and to see that many of my turns are guided by one main device: Appetite. I long for situations, things, and feelings. It is within this hunger for something "other than" that motivates many of the decisions I've made. It is within that struggle of accepting things as they are that I begin to understand my own humanity and find connection again with an animal's self sufficiency and instinct.

What do you long for? What are your desires? How strong is your appetite? Can we share experiences? I have been undressing the vocabulary of appetite. I see images that trigger desire for the "other" and those images become the foundation of my drawings. The vessels I make are the vehicles for appetite. They can deliver satisfaction to the body and at the same time they can be the objects of desire.

I begin with my body and my perception; it is the genesis for all that I make. My impetus for making is to convey a certain truth about my life experiences. I am interested in the connection between the desire for consumption and the repercussions of fulfilling that desire on the body.

"Decision making" is the impetus for my current body of work. I began by looking at the distinctions between internal forces (like instinct and intuition) and how they influence our external body. Instinct is an automatic response our body makes for increasing longevity. Procreation and protection are the clearest examples of instinct and behaviors that we have most in common with animals. I use animal imagery in my work as a connection to address instinctual issues. At the same time, I also use animals to illustrate feelings of comfort and the familiar.

Tattoo imagery also has become part of my visual vocabulary. Tattoos are a type of marker of the past or a set of instructions as to how to live life. I etch the drawings into my pots as a tattoo artist etches permanently into the skin. Both are a record and a reminder.

As an artist, I want to make my human experience sharable. My work represents an extension of my physical being. When someone uses a cup I've created, I want them to think of my lip touching theirs as they drink. I draw inspiration from how my full body interacts with other objects...other bodies. The presence of my fingers pinching the work is proof of my body as maker. Every breath, like every fingerprint in clay, is a record of my existence that I want to communicate.

The combination of allegorical images and pattern making that are imbedded into the heavily pinched forms give me a platform to share my life experience. The functional object allows me subversive access into the most intimate surroundings and engages the viewer on both a visual and tactile level. It is in this arena of the domestic that I find a stage to share my human struggles and longings through my artwork.