



Jeltje Borneman , above Elena Gileva
Photos : Lisa Derevycka



Wall Pieces
Photo : Pascal Vangysel



Branch N3
Photo : Pascal Vangysel



Trunk vase
Photo : Pascal Vangysel

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CONTEMPORAINE
LA BORNE

Exhibition
from 3 SEPTEMBER
to 18 OCTOBER 2022

Elena Gileva et Jeltje Borneman (ACLb)

The sound of trees walking

Presentation of the «La Borne Residences»
programme

Residencial Home La Borne

The project of artistic residences for ceramic creation was launched in 2013, at the initiative of the French government, the La Borne Ceramics Association and local authorities, with the aim of creating the momentum to develop and promote La Borne's ceramics output.

The aim of the residences project is to encourage the sharing of knowledge, experience and techniques, in order to rethink existing categories and traditional hierarchies, particularly between art, design, arts and crafts. It enables artists from all walks of life to come and work together with ceramic artists from the Ceramics Association of La Borne, with the aim of developing projects for the joint creation of works of art.

In 2022 the Ceramics Centre and the La Borne Ceramics Association will play host to artists in residence Javier Bravo de Rueda and Éléonore False. The 2020 and 2021 Artist in Residence programme continues with Charlotte Coquen & Isabelle Pammachius, Ile/Mer/Froid & Hervé Rousseau

The residences of La Borne are supported by the 'Communauté de Communes Terres du Haut Berry', the Centre-Val de Loire Regional Department of Cultural Affairs, the Centre-Val de Loire Region and the Department of Cher.

Starting in 2019, the artistic residency of Elena Gileva and Jeltje Borneman has seen many unexpected twists and turns: stays cut short or postponed due to the pandemic, several firings in the wood-fired kiln, a whole host of tests and experiments, etc. In the end, it was a three-year research and collaboration process that developed over the long term. In the beginning, in formal terms, everything was there to divide artist Elena Gileva and the potter Jeltje Borneman. They had to take their time to meet and discuss in order to establish together the challenges of their research and the direction their residency was to take. Both were attracted to ways of living that had a fresh, new relationship with nature, so they decided to put their natural environments at the heart of their work.

Based on a dialogue that took its inspiration from each other's techniques, they concentrated first of all on experimenting with glazes made from ash, and more specifically, phosphorus pentoxide found in plant-based ash, together with ash from Jeltje's wood-burning stove (a mixture of oak, beech and pine). Ash also from lavender, fruit trees, volcanic ash (with lava dust) and Irish peat, etc. They made a colour circle, a colour chart, a real classification album, as a means of memorising and presenting all the colours they had created and used throughout their time as artists in residence. In this study, the modified material was not considered just as a mere material, but as significant and independent in and of itself. They attempted to draw a kind of artistic expression from the material by engaging directly with its 'perception', the 'possibilities of relationship' with it, and its 'essence'.

The relationship between artist, artisan and environment is rooted in the different techniques shared by the two participants. They experimented with several living spaces according to certain variables of their personalities and environmental preferences (sharing a workshop, meals, living arrangements), as well as their respective expectations and needs (particularly the transmission of references and techniques). For Jeltje Borneman, one of the challenges of this residence programme was to step out of her comfort zone; to go above and beyond what she was already producing - perfected forms that are reproduced in small series and/or what her customers «expected» of her. To understand

this great step into the unknown more fully, it is important to note that Jeltje works with a defined colour range of work oriented towards functional shapes, ensuring that her loyal customers have a continuity of work. So her breaking with this approach is an act of real «resistance». On one hand, a break with her own economy, built day after day in the calm of her studio and demanding an ecology of output that is «just right», in balance, even downsizing; and on the other hand, in the face of her references to architecture, to sober, pure, direct curves. For Jeltje, this is a courageous new stance, one that is committed and open to human, artistic experience based on the vernacular, the organic, letting go and distortion. During one of our interviews, Jeltje quite correctly explained: *"I want to make the contradictions apparent, to distort what I know how to do and what I have learned, to express more spontaneous, intuitive gestures that are freed from the constraints of perfection and the right way of doing things. I want to bring joy and the unexpected. I want to be more flexible, less stiff."*

It has been a huge collaborative programme for Elena Gileva, who had ambitious goals: to continue throwing pots, to build a kiln, to experiment with natural glazes, but also to master a potter-artist relationship and to manage to transmit her own practices, her research, her «techniques. Elena has been present at each stage of the artist in residence programme, and has been attentive to the transformations taking place in Jeltje's work. Her artistic research has been enriched by learning new techniques and exploring the core of life - from nature to contemporary pottery culture. This constituted a leap into a challenging universe with different reference points and customs, compared to the art world where the artist has been working for the last ten years.

The exhibition's title came from this renewed relationship that could be described as a vibrant one: the sound of trees walking... Like two trees in the landscape, Elena and Jeltje have moved forward, sometimes in unison, sometimes against the

beat, to build a mutual musical score, perhaps as a continuation of the «Mono-Ha» movement¹ ?

Ahead of the exhibition, Elena Gileva and Jeltje Borneman were aiming to reduce how much they intervened, in order to focus on the relationship between the materials, the space and the spectator.

Staging reference points

The presentation is structured in three phases:
– shared blossoming: through the wall arrangement of containers inspired by traditional utilitarian shapes and Neolithic ceramics,
– individual blossoming: through installations of objects by Jeltje Borneman and sculptural pieces by Elena Gileva that have contributed to nourish a shared life cycle.

This variation on decorative objects, made by Jeltje Borneman after the shape of patty pan squashes, is representative of the approach that the potter has experimented with. She has allowed herself to be guided by the clay's constraints and has pushed the distortions of the material to their breaking point.

The series of trunks/vases reveals how intensely the two women look at their surroundings. While looking at the wood they were using for heating last winter, they could see designs left by wood-eating insects. Taking inspiration from these engraved labyrinthine forms, they reproduced the elements without interfering with them, thereby delivering raw, natural forms.

The installation on the floor by Elena Gileva (from various parts of the tree roots, trunk, etc.) enables us to discover the specificity of the artist's work and the spontaneous and expressionist character of her artistic accomplishment. The works unfold in the space as a resonance between painting, sculpture, ceramic methods and the invention of unforeseen surface effects.

I would like to thank Jeltje Borneman and Elena Gileva for their personal insight into the «Residences La Borne» project, and for the quality of their work.

Tiphane Dragaut-Lupescu, July 2022
Artistic Director, CCCLB and Manager of the "Residence La Borne" programme from June 2019 to May 2022

Born in Russia in 1992, **Elena Gileva** began her artistic career in Saint Petersburg. After two years of studying classical sculpture, Gileva moved to Paris in 2009, where she got a BFA at the Parsons Paris School of Art and Design as a student of ceramic artist Kristin McKirdy. Her 2015 residency in Japan, at the Shigaraki Ceramic Sculpture Park, proved a turning point in her learning as she decided to focus fully on ceramics from that point on. In 2016, she completed a Ceramics and Glass MA at the London Royal College of Art, where she presented a noteworthy installation of her "Woven Pebbles". Gileva is now pursuing her work as a ceramic sculptor who renews the traditional practices of the material: a coil of clay is no longer the basis for the construction of a container with her, but the displayed expression of an elaborate construction. ».

Biography taken from the website of the Galerie de l'Ancienne Poste.
Available at: <https://galerie-ancienne-poste.com/portfolio-item/elena-gileva/>

Jeltje Borneman learned ceramics in a series of courses that became increasingly professional. She chose to throw on the wheel and shape the stoneware and then wood-fire it. This naturally brought her to La Borne where she set up her workshop and built an Olsen kiln. Jeltje's work is steeped in the aesthetics of the boats she grew up with, and she strives to find the harmony and fluidity of their lines in her ceramics, which combine both simplicity and functionality. Whatever the technique used and the intended function, Jeltje's stoneware pieces are above all a medium on which the unique effects of the passage of flames, ash deposits and the gloss of the salt are imprinted.

Nicole Crestou

¹ — Mono-ha» is literally translated as "the school of things". Based on this term, from 1968 onwards a group of Japanese artists proposed to learn again "how to see the world as it is without making it the subject of an act of representation that sets it in opposition to humanity".