

# MEMENTO MORI: DEATH AND THE ART OF LIVING

LARASSA KABEL

JUNE 2, 2023 - NOVEMBER 4, 2023

MAYER GALLERY





A close-up profile photograph of a woman with short, grey hair. A small snake with black and yellow stripes is coiled around her ear and cheek, its head resting near her eye. The background is solid black.

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# Curatorial Statement

Exploring that which makes us most uncomfortable, Larassa Kabel explores the emotional and intellectual space between life and death, love and loss. Through drawing, painting, performance, and sculpture, she confronts our view of ourselves “outside of Nature” and our desire to distance ourselves from our mortality.

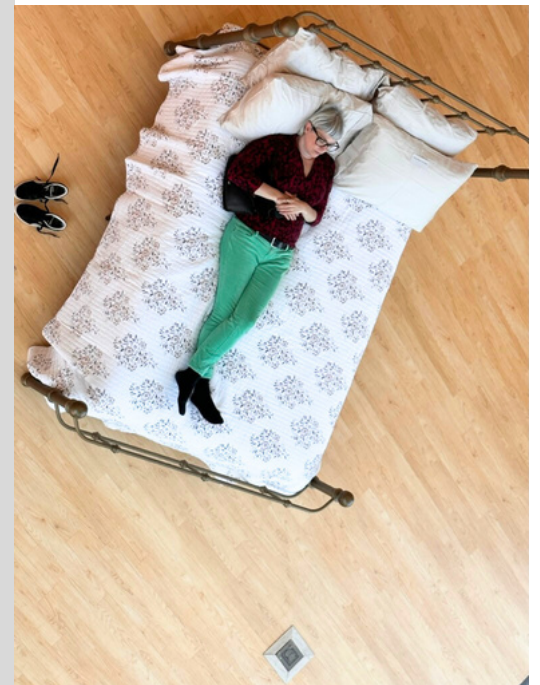




# Artist's Statement

I am an interdisciplinary memento mori (“remember death”) artist. I believe that by factoring in the limits of our time on earth, we will be more aware of ourselves, the ways we spend our time, who we share our lives with, and how we treat others and our environment. I am interested in how mortality has been addressed on a micro and macro level over time and by various cultures.

I think and create at a walking pace. Every morning I walk at dawn, and with each stride I am reflecting and making connections between myself, my imagination, my community, and nature. My work is a form of maximalist minimalism: I try to frame simple, revelatory questions and then create complicated work that often requires careful observation, the long-term collection of materials, and high levels of skill to realize. Some of the projects even require coordination with the natural rhythms of the seasons. It is highly detailed and labor intensive, but I find the process of creating to be extremely meditative. I am happiest immersed in long term projects.







# Artist's Statement

The work for *Memento Mori: Death and the Art of Living* is a combination of photos from my *Death in the Family* series and a site-specific installation inspired by being with my father-in-law when he died last year. His hallucinations changed his room into a menagerie of visiting animals and people who he alone could see. The idea of the death bed as a public and private space, one full of intense transition, personal symbols, memories, love, fear, and hope have been churning in my mind for almost a year. I am very excited to transform the gallery into a space that changes from personal to public depending on whether it is day or night.





# Artist's Bio

## *Larassa Kabel*

**Larassa Kabel** was born in 1970 and received her BFA with honors in 1992 from Iowa State University with an emphasis in fibers. She currently lives in Des Moines, IA where she works as a fulltime artist and independent curator. She has received numerous grants and awards including an Iowa Arts Council Fellowship. Her work has been shown nationally and is in several corporate and private collections including the Des Moines Art Center, the White House Collection, and the World Food Prize.





# Invitation to Reflect



Larassa Kabel's work offers us beautifully intricate images and sculptures which emerge from her walking meditations and performances and make connections between herself, her imagination, her community, and nature. Through this exhibition, we are invited to consider our own relationship with the cycles of life and the relationships we have with other beings. We are also encouraged to be mindful of the joyous moments we experience and to seek them often.

*How might you use artmaking materials to honor yourself and the lives of the beings that are important to you?*

*How do the cycles of life and nature present themselves in your life?*

*In what ways do you celebrate the joy of life?*



# Behind the Scenes





# Behind the Scenes



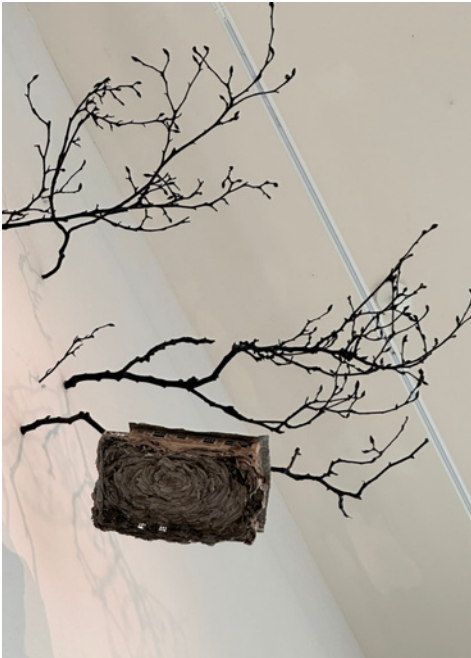


# Behind the Scenes





# Installation Images



# Installation Images





# Works in the Exhibit

Larassa Kabel



Larassa Kabel  
*The Little Foxes*, 2018  
Courtesy of the artist



Larassa Kabel  
*In the End*, 2021  
Courtesy of the artist



Larassa Kabel  
*The Camel Coat*, 2017  
Courtesy of the artist



Larassa Kabel  
*The Beautiful Disappointment*, 2017  
Courtesy of the artist

# Works in the Exhibit

Larassa Kabel



Larassa Kabel  
*Spring*, 2016  
Courtesy of the artist



Larassa Kabel  
*The Softest Fur*, 2016  
Courtesy of the artist



Larassa Kabel  
*The Curve of the Shell*, 2016  
Courtesy of the artist



Larassa Kabel  
*The Hardest Day After the Hardest Night*, 2016  
Courtesy of the artist



# Works in the Exhibit

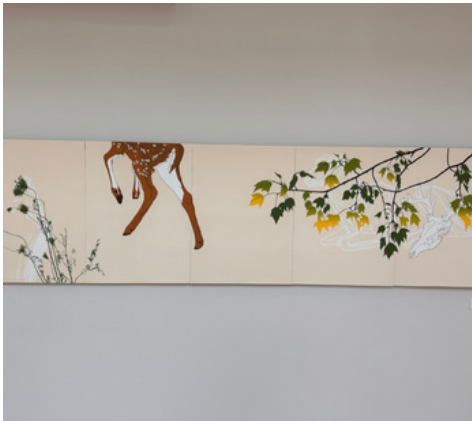
Larassa Kabel



Larassa Kabel  
*The Beginning and the End*, 2015  
Courtesy of the artist



Larassa Kabel  
*Spirit House*, 2023  
Paper wasp's nests, paper, branches, paint  
Courtesy of the artist



Larassa Kabel  
*Between There and Here*, 2023  
Silkscreen prints (5 panels)  
Courtesy of the artist



Larassa Kabel  
*The Visitation*, 2023  
Vinyl, yarn, bed, piñatas, sound recording  
Courtesy of the artist

# Additional Resources

<https://www.larassakabel.art/>

[https://siouxcityjournal.com/news/local/sioux-city-art-center-hosting-des-moines-based-artist-known-for-work-on-mortality-nature/article\\_334doedd-f586-55e3-ac59-ab4d5909bdb7.html](https://siouxcityjournal.com/news/local/sioux-city-art-center-hosting-des-moines-based-artist-known-for-work-on-mortality-nature/article_334doedd-f586-55e3-ac59-ab4d5909bdb7.html)

<https://www.instagram.com/larassakabel/?hl=en>

<https://figgeartmuseum.org/art/exhibitions/view/rock-island-art-guild-fine-arts-exhibition/227>

<https://dsmpublicartfoundation.org/artist/larassa-kabel/>

<https://dbqart.org/biennial-2021/artists/kabel/>

<https://moberggallery.com/artist/larassa-kabel/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i4qwbAis2eo>

<https://museumofnonvisibleart.com/interviews/larassa-kabel/>

<https://www.annajon.es/2018/04/larassa-kabel/>







THANK  
YOU

FROM THE TURCHIN CENTER FOR THE VISUAL ARTS

The Turchin Center for the Visual Arts at Appalachian State University engages visitors from the university, community, nation and beyond in creating unique experiences through dynamic and accessible exhibition, education, outreach and collection programs. These programs inspire and support a lifelong engagement with the visual arts and create opportunities for participants to learn more about themselves and the world around them.

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