

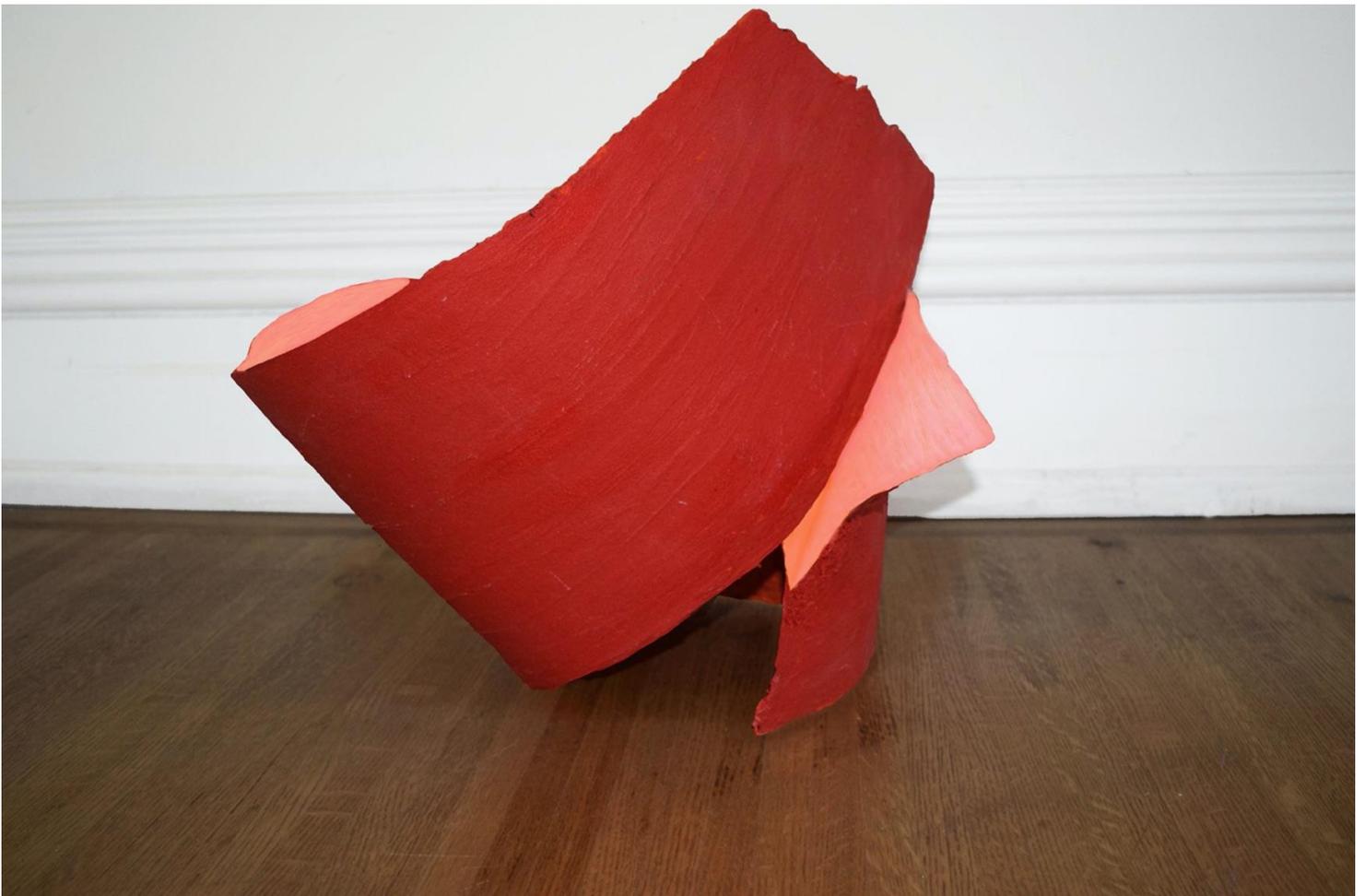
PANDEMIC PORTFOLIO

July 14, 2020 in Visual Art tagged Elaine Sexton by Kristina Marie Darling

An Introduction

by Elaine Sexton

In the very early days of the pandemic, just before the call for all non-essential workers to stay at home, I was able to have a “studio” visit with artist Ro Lohin, whose work we featured in TQ15. For part of the year Lohin’s studio is the tree-lined yard of her place on the eastern tip of Long Island. Standing six feet apart, we walked around three or four new paintings laid out on tarps on the grass, both of us uncommonly lucky to be standing in the sun and shade, at liberty to move and work out in the open air as schools, museums, theatres, shops, businesses, and commerce world-wide shuttered or found ways to adapt to the pandemic. That week I began to check in on artists I know, and many I’ve interviewed for *Tupelo Quarterly* over the past three years, to see how they were coping and managing to work. Normally I would be looking for work of three new artists to feature here. My editor Kristina Maire Darling agreed to shift the focus on this issue from individual artist portfolios to a single portfolio, offering a glimpse of art made during this time of confinement. The work that follows was made or completed from March-May, during a time many of these contributors to TQ were also dealing with cancelled or “virtual” exhibitions, stalled or lost commissions, lost residencies. For those who teach, some were scrambling to adapt classes to teach remotely, while also working in make-shift studios, hunkered down at home in city apartments, some in the country, some in the comfort of their studios, some working at their dining room tables. What follows is a portfolio of 31 works that include sculpture, photography, water color, oil, collage, mixed media, and video. I asked each artist to say (in a caption-length text) a few words about the work they chose to share, and if they could, something about the making art at this time.



Ouroboros, 16 x 15 x 15 inches (model); actual 78 x 72 x 72 inches; steel, acrylic

Miriam Ancis

The mythic image of a snake eating its tale, the “Ouroboros,” symbolizes the cycle of life, death and rebirth. In response to the pandemic, I’ve made a model for a large outdoor piece, “Ouroboros Jumps the Course,” as a symbol of hope and optimism. The “end” of the piece glides into the furrow, a reference to the snake eating its tail. But the end sails beyond the furrow, refusing the limitation of a closed parameter, signifying that the cycle is no longer a closed loop. The Ouroboros transcends its trajectory and reconfigures its destiny.

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