

Nicolas Baird

I was born in Tucson and moved to Rancho Linda Vista with my parents, Selina Littler and Imo Baird, when I was three years old. An artist and professional biologist, I started seriously making art when I was in high school, taking photographs of the desert around the Ranch and in the foothills of Oracle. This immediate connection with the natural world has been essential to my art practice and has inspired my biological research (which is currently on mammalian evolution). I am interested in dreams, poetry, language, the very large, the very small, and finding new ways of drawing meaning out of mundane experiences. The media I work with includes photography, sculpture, printmaking, writing, painting, and performance, a diversity that grew directly from the support of the Ranch community. Although I currently live in Berlin, I visit regularly and for extended periods. I have always considered the Ranch home.

Among my pieces in this show is a constellation made from the ground-up dust of a cow scapula. I found the bone in the hills near the Ranch while on a hike with my father and, when I am away, I think often of the clear Milky Way in the sky above Oracle. There is another painting of the sunset after a monsoon from the roof of my parents' home and the story of a dream carved into clay. On their own, these pieces are disconnected, almost fragments, but here perhaps, surrounded by the art of the community that raised me, the connections become clear.

Just After Sunset from the Roof of HE
casein and spray paint on canvas
on loan from the Charles Sternberg Collection

Record of the Night
ceramic
on loan from the Sharon Brady Collection

Pleiades (Messier 45), Bonedust
acrylic and bone on canvas
on loan from the Littler-Baird Collection



THE DREAM SHIFTED AND I FOUND A CHURCH WITH ONE OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL DREAM SEQUENCES I REMEMBER. A GIANT TREE GREW IN THE MIDDLE OF THE CHURCH AND THE WHOLE ROOM WAS HUNG WITH FABRIC. I KNEW SOMETHING SPIRITUAL WAS ALIVE IN THIS ROOM AND IN ME. I FELT SO CONFIDENT IN MYSELF, MY STRENGTH AND BEING, AND I KNEW I WOULD — DESPITE MY FEAR AND PREVIOUS DIFFICULTIES IN DREAMS — BE ABLE TO FLY AT WILL. I THOUGHT, AND TOOK FLIGHT. I SOARED AROUND THE ROOM, TUMBLING, TWISTING, USING THE FABRIC AS AN ANCHOR AND PIVOT IN MY ELATED DANCE AROUND THE ENORMOUS TREE. I FELT WE WERE COMMUNICATING FULLY, THIS TREE AND I. SOON, I HEARD NOISES IN THE ADJACENT, SMALLER ENTRANCE ROOM AND I WENT TO INVESTIGATE — IT WAS A BOY WITH LONG HAIR, AND I KNOCKED HIM OUT BY FLYING INTO HIM. WHEN HE AWOKE HE PUT HIS HAND ON ME AND THE DREAM SHIFTED AGAIN. THIS TIME AMALITA WAS IN THE LARGE ROOM, WASHING SOMETHING, ANGRY. I CAME IN AND TO DISTRACT AND CHEER HER, I DANCED, MY BEST BALLET. I WAS CHANNELING MY FLIGHT ON SOLID GROUND. I WAS JULIET AND ROMEO AT ONCE. IT WAS THE BEST I'VE EVER DANCED.





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