

# APHROCHIC

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BEHIND THE LENS \ A PLACE TO CALL HOME \ THIS LAND IS OUR LAND

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## ARTISTS & ARTISANS

### Andile Dyalvane

There is a story in the work. For ceramicist Andile Dyalvane, his work is the story of growing up in South Africa, his connection to the legacy of his Xhosa ancestors, and the indelible imprints of the places he has been. His pieces are more than a meeting of hands and clay. They are a form of self-expression - a record of who Dyalvane is and who he is constantly becoming.

In his most recent solo exhibition held at Friedman Benda in New York City, Dyalvane introduced audiences to Camagu, a term that loosely translates in English to "I am grateful," and which serves as the title of his latest series of work. For Dyalvane the works in Camagu were created to express gratitude to those who came before and to those who are yet to come. "I've always wanted to do a solo show," the artist remarks, "creating works I'd only ever dreamed of producing. It's been my chance to realize designs that would otherwise have remained in my sketchbooks. Camagu references my gratitude."

Guided by the physical and spiritual influences of his culture, the works in Camagu are an exploration of meaning sought through the connected lenses of family, place, home, and memory. In Dyalvane's large-scale clay sculptures you

can see the Salt River, where he currently works in a suburb just outside of Cape Town. A wall sculpture, *Ifusi*, is a black clay landscape, with markings made by bolts and typewriter keys found in Cape Town street markets. Standing approximately five feet tall, *Mkokocha*, is a mountain peak, the work an articulation of the rolling green hills Dyalvane saw while growing up in the Eastern Cape. As a unique signature of the artist, the markings on the surface of his objects are symbolic of the ancient practices of the Xhosa who scarred their flesh for healing purposes.

Ultimately, Camagu is a collection of tactile reminiscences in which each work is a unique act of gratitude for a specific experience. Hard edges and sharp angles define pieces that reflect on the artist's time living in California. In these works, the artist's daily concern over earthquakes during his

residency in the state become intentional fractures in the design, reflecting fissures and fault lines as well as the fragile feeling of living in fear of a natural disaster.

Before Dyalvane's sculptures became fully realized pieces, they existed only in his sketchbook - pieces of ideas waiting for a chance at completion. The book also contained collections of observations drawn from experiences, reflections and daydreams. Momentary reflections and spontaneous flashes of inspiration, nascent concepts hastily transcribed onto paper. Unfocused, incomplete, but not forgotten. Manifested now as completed sculptures, they combine Xhosa culture and his personal experiences to create material prayers of thanksgiving, reminding us all of the possibilities contained in small beginnings and the power of saying, "I am grateful." **AC**

Photos by Justin Patrick

Words by Jeanine Hays













