

**Luisa Caldwell**

*A Cat In God's Garden*

September 29–November 4, 2018

All works courtesy of the artist

*Tree of Life series, 2018*

210 drawings: pen and marker on card stock

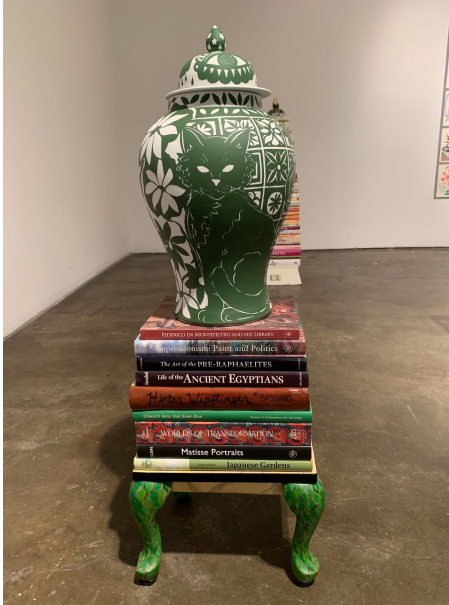
Each: 11" x 8 ½" each

Caldwell's botanical drawings of fantastic flora were inspired by the Tree of Life, an ancient archetype that represents a source of life, healing, and eternity in the world's mythologies. Variations of this sacred tree have been described in ancient cultures and religions spanning Ancient Mesopotamia to Buddhism to Germanic paganism to Christianity to Islam and beyond. In art, the tree is often depicted in abstract, stylized form with a symmetrical arrangement of branches and leaves. Caldwell follows this pattern in many of her drawings, but then deviates by creating more fanciful forms, such as bouquets and fountains.



# S m a c k M e l l o n

Vase: *Sentinels*, 2018, with ceramic book:  
*Hinter Wipflinger di Bassano*, 2018  
Etched found ceramic vase and underglaze ceramic  
12" x 9 1/4" x 1 1/2"



Vase: *Mad Kitty*, 2018, with ceramic book:  
*Botticelli*, 2018  
Underglaze/clear glaze on sandblasted found  
porcelain vase and underglaze ceramic  
18" x 8" x 8"



# S m a c k M e l l o n

Vase: *Library Still Life*, 2018, with ceramic book:  
*Nanny & Her Flowers*, 2018  
Etched found ceramic vase and underglaze ceramic  
19" x 10" x 10"



Vase: *Water Lilies*, 2018  
Etched found porcelain vase, sculpt, acrylic paint,  
air plant  
15" x 10 1/2"



# S m a c k M e l l o n

Vase: *A Cat in God's Garden*, 2018, with ceramic book: *#acatingodsgarden*, 2018  
Etched found ceramic vase and underglaze ceramic  
15" x 8 ½" x 8 ½"



Vase: *Just Flowers*, 2018, with ceramic book:  
*For The Love of Cats*, 2018  
Etched found ceramic vase and underglaze ceramic  
14" x 8" x 8"



# S m a c k M e l l o n

On the gallery floor, Caldwell has created an installation of found porcelain and stoneware vases that have her own feline and botanical imagery etched in the surface. Rather than exhibiting these vessels on traditional bases, she displays them on stacks of art books that refer to the influences that spill into the content of her work. Interspersed within each stack are handmade ceramic books, which the artist attributes to personal references on which there are no books written; inspirations from her grandmother and other family members are honored in these objects. Inside a handmade vase will be a bouquet of fresh flowers from Caldwell's garden, bringing together the natural and the representational, the outdoors and the domestic.

*Cats Communing With Nature Coloring Page, 2018*

Printed paper

17" x 14"



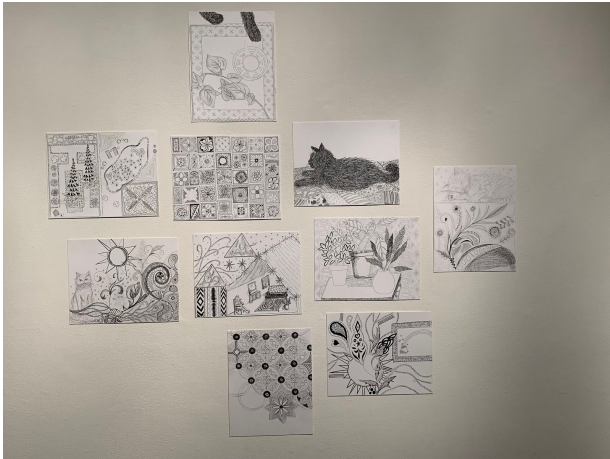
*Cats and Patterns series, 2017*

10 drawings: pen & pencil on paper

11" x 14"

Visitors may take a print home and color it in any way.  
Please share pictures of your piece on social media  
and tag with #acatingodsgarden #luisacaldwell #smackmellon

# S m a c k M e l l o n



Caldwell's recent work is inspired by flowers and plants that she grows and nurtures in her Brooklyn garden, as well as the stray cats that come and go from her yard. The kitty imagery refers to the current cat craze in digital media (cat memes and videos, for example), which the artist relates to worship, recalling ancient deities such as Bastet, the Egyptian cat-headed goddess of protection.

In the spirit of sharing offerings to the public, included in the exhibition is a free poster with one of Caldwell's line drawings printed on it. Visitors are welcome to pick one up and color it in at home. While Caldwell's exuberant installation might appear to be a paean to flower power and cat kitsch, for the artist, it represents the importance of surrounding oneself with the items that bring us happiness.