

## Lauren Chipeur

*everything it had to swallow to make itself, 2022*  
*wild clay and mineral supplements*

### Artist statement

I make sculpture and site responsive installations that explore the connections between humans, waste, industry, technology, and the environment. My current research explores ceramic and everyday materials to reflect on the parallel and opposing belief systems about our shared material realities. In mixing consumer products, plants, waste, and geological materials my practice works towards untangling or distilling new ways to know things.

The minerals our bodies absorb from the food we eat are the same minerals that make up a ceramic glaze. By tracing material lineages and biographies, I try to understand a world that is concealed from view, from the interior of the body or smartphone to industrial resource extraction and production. *everything it had to swallow to make itself*, unearths the relationship between the body, geology, and deep time. The three vessels are made using wild clay collected in Eastend, Saskatchewan a landscape that once held the Western Interior Seaway, a body of water that divided what we currently know as North America.

They were fired using a gas kiln schedule I developed that act like an atmospheric time machine. The atmosphere in the kiln is programmed to follow the path of oxygen from present day to 4.5 billion years ago when Earth's atmosphere was in reduction (lacked oxygen). Mineral supplements (potassium, spirulina and zinc) in pill form were pressed into the clay vessels.

The atmosphere of the kiln acts on the soluble salts and mineral supplements in the clay causing carbon trapping and the unique appearance of the clay surface. The main reason I chose to submit this work to the AFA Collection is because the conditions that led to the pieces being made are difficult to repeat. I made them using wild clay and dried them very slowly which created the unique quality of the clay surface. I have tried to repeat this and have not been successful. It could be that the clay I used had a unique chemical make up on that specific day I collected it or the atmosphere of the studio as it dried.

Ceramics always has many variables at every stage of the process. For this reason, it is important to me that the works are preserved and cared for by the AFA Art Collection. As an artist often working in installation it is difficult to distill into something that makes sense for an art collection. This sculpture maintains the core ethos of my practice while being something discrete and containable, expansive in its' concept rather than form.