



The Return is a hybrid puppet show and group art exhibition, with eight performances taking place at CPM Gallery, 1512 Bolton st, Baltimore, MD, between September 17th - 25th, 2022.

In *The Return*, a woman relives her near-death experience in an effort to cope with her past and remember what she learned on the other side. This exploration of what it means to live significantly is examined through a multi-artist collaboration of marionette puppetry, sculpture, painting projection, and sound installation to consider what contemplating death within a culture prone to death-denial can teach us.



View of the proscenium and marionette, designed by Mark Fox
With *Step 2*, 2022, by Meredith James



Meredith James
Hold 1, 2022
 Ceramic
 13 x 11 x 3 inches

Email Correspondance with Meredith James on July 22nd, 2022:

Hi Vlad,

I loved these lines from the play (excerpt on previous page)

I can relate to this feeling, holding on to my favorite clothes from different eras of my life as if I might be able to one day go back to the me that was happy to wear an item- like my tiny vintage leather jacket that is both corset-tight and very thick leather. I love it, but I now consider it too uncomfortable or cumbersome to wear even though it used to be my daily uniform. But reading these lines, I also started to think about the sense of loss I have watching my children rapidly age into different versions of themselves. I try not to hold some essential idea of who my children are in all that change because they are just growing- and they are still so young that they can't even remember those former versions of themselves at different ages, let alone look back with the kind of nostalgia I bring to both their lives and mine.

During the pandemic, I started to make casts of my son's hands and feet. I found the casts incredibly poignant- the little hands and feet that would never be so little again. So I thought for this project of using casts of body parts and fitting them into/ having them interact with clothes and baby clothes in different ways. Illustrating the impossibility of inserting yourself into memories of the past as represented by the kids' baby clothes or of holding on to those moments. I really wanted to find a way to do the casts out of slip cast ceramics because of the way ceramics are highly variable in the outcome, even when you use a mold, and the way slip casting creates a cast out of a thin shell, like a leaf, that bends and twists in the handling and in the firing.