



Devi (Mother) | Naomi Blacklock

Inspired by the Hindu ritual Śrāddha, this exhibition marks the first death anniversary of my mother's passing. Conceptually, the rice and turmeric infused oil are offerings of nourishment and healing, while the brass objects emulate the sunrise viewed from my mother's hospital bed the morning she passed. Audiences are invited to meditate on the recorded breath of my mother and light a candle for a loved one.

In honour and devotion to Charlie Blacklock's ancestral spirit.

Exhibition essay by Elena Gomez

Tonal spectrum ignites you. Deep blaze of dawn's sun; hot yellow spices, ground from knobbly roots, extracted from rhizomes; copper-zinc alloy, heated, beaten into shape. Below is, as ever, inside the earth. Under the dirt surface, cold and dark but flames yet return. In this work, Blacklock raises fire but calls to the earth. We are chasing the sun.

Death, too, is marked by a sun's lap. No longer a chase but a dance – light & refractions, a glimmer ablaze.

The turmeric rhizome assembles in dirt below. Where in the rhizome does the life return? The body & soil & earth – hot spice for healing, warm brass, rich in copper.

A rice grain can be pre-plumped or gelled up with water

Breath is air is life.

It is elemental; fire sun, earth dirt, breath air. Oil is viscous, porous,
one with the golden spice.

Blacklock honours in breath, a life.

Sun laps and dripped oil; these are markers of time but after death, time becomes distorted. We who are left behind know it less, but are infused by its warping. What does a sun rise? How is it so ablaze? We see a light, we pounce, we are ready. Or we sink into the surfaces around us. There is no leg for it here. The story we are meant to tell. We carry the dead in the assemblage of the rhizome, that turmeric root network.

A network of loads made light – of a fleeting bright blaze, a tiny flitter. We who are left behind can sink our toes into dirt, we can descend in it, we cake our bodies in cold and damp and lap up the hot sun on our face, infuse our insides with healing golden spice.

We are cloaked with the loved dead. We are infused, we are messy like oil, hot like spice, we chase the sun. We are elemental: we are dirt thrown and breath exhaled. We are in unison and we are discordant. Sun and earth are broken into our mouths. You can hear the loved dead if you go quiet. If we are staring too long the sun imprints a retina.

We fill our mouths with rice and breath out. The sun lap takes us further away and closer at once.

We are orbited, we orbit, the sun glints, the fire remains, the earth is dirt.

Charlie in the sun
Charlie in the brass, in the breath.

Fire remains. We are broken into our mouths.