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179 Canal St, Ste 3B/4D
New York, NY 10013

Maisie Luo

A Room of Earth, 2025

8344 Earths made of soil, plaster, flour, water, and acrylic

March 21st, 2025 – May 4th, 2025

Opening reception March 21st, 2025, 6-8pm

Press Release

In April 2024, I collected some soil from a forest in New Jersey and made a clementine-sized Earth. It was amusing to transform literal earth into a “Blue Marble” in the palm of my hand. I decided to make more, and filling a whole room with them became appealing.

Each Earth comprises soil (99.8% locally sourced from PA, NJ, NY), plaster, flour, and water. The soil from each location has a distinctive color, smell, and texture. The roots, decaying leaves, earthworms, and imperishable plastic trash I saw while digging soil prompted me to reflect on humans’ role in the vast and intricate ecosystem on Earth.

In 1968, the Apollo 8 mission brought back the famous Earthrise photo taken from lunar orbit. The photo looks as if the Earth is rising from the Moon. In fact, the editor turned the image 95 degrees, switching the moon from being on the right side of the frame to being like a horizon. To a viewer, the new orientation became more familiar, like watching the sunrise on Earth. Soon, more photographs of the Earth, such as the “Blue Marble,” became available. Rather than standing on Earth and visualizing it, the Earth became interchangeable with the “globe” and the “planet” visually, linguistically, and conceptually.

Environmentalism became global environmentalism that uses the “Blue Marble” to remind people of our only home in the universe. It is also not surprising that after the release of Earth images, ideas such as globalization became coined and widespread among corporations which exploited earthly resources around the world while advertising global environmentalism.

I meditate on how the shift in the literal perspectives of Earth has influenced our attitudes and actions towards it. As I made and painted the Earths, I held multiple perspectives at once. While each Earth feels precious and delicate in my hands, I am also reminded of the particular locations from which I harvested the soil and that I am only a tiny creature on this “Blue Marble” that is more complex, powerful, and vast than I can ever imagine. Amid the increasing frequency of forest fires, droughts, ongoing resource extraction, growing amounts of plastic waste, and rising numbers of animals going extinct, the repeated process of making Earths offered me a space to discern how to treasure and live on it in this moment.

–*Maisie Luo*

The artist would like to thank Damien Ding, Matt Luo, Sam Magaziner, Steven Pennett, Maura Torres, Viola Tu, and Ellen Wu for their input and support during the Earth-making process.

Artist Biography

Maisie Luo (b. 1997) is an artist, writer, and educator based in New York. Her multidisciplinary practice spans painting, performance art, painted animation, and installation, which examine human attitudes and actions towards animals and the environment. She also writes about the ethics of attention in making and looking at art. Her work has been featured in publications such as the Harvard Divinity School Bulletin, the Columbia Journal of Literature and Art, and the Peace Chronicle. Her painted animations have been shown and won awards at international film festivals. Currently, Luo is a painting lecturer at Rutgers University. She earned her MFA from Rutgers University in 2024 and a Master of Theological Studies from Harvard Divinity School in 2022.

For more information, please e-mail dd@dddd.pictures