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# SORRY JAR

## An Essay In Humility

On May 24th, 2020, The New York Times published the names of 1,000 victims of the Corona Virus 19. That was 1% of 100,000. The Obituary Notices were in a smaller typeface than usual, hard to read. I sat up in bed and read every one of them, smiling with tears. On that day, and many thereafter, I rethought the work I had brought home from Happy Life Pottery Studio, and resolved to just finish the pieces, no matter if they were only bisque fired or not. The kitchen adapted to a studio. And there I would “put” around making decisions about moving forward. Without a kiln. That’s huge. Some of the pieces were only bisque fired. One piece Aurelia Emma “threw” for me so we could work on a collaboration. It was a jar with an attitude, and a lid. The idea had been to cover the surfaces in cartoons and vivid Pucci swaths of color. I had playfully added balls of clay to the surface. The original ideas withered away.

So the piece evolved from a clownish adventure into the sobering recognition of living life in California during raging wild fires, an out-of-control election and sheltering-in-place during a Pandemic. Using a cold process of powdered pigment, enamels, oils and gesso, I naturally

started with shading in black around the bottoms of the clay balls, and washes of black around the jar, leaving the waist to washes of a dusty Persian orange. It was then that the thought of a kind of funeral jar emerged, thinking to collage the the tiny bios from the New York Times to the inside of the jar. So I named the piece, "Sorry Jar." The lid wasn't quite right, so Aurelia made another nice fat one. It was an inspiring lid, the inside plunging low into the bowels of the Sorry Jar. By the time the lid dried and was bisque fired, the inside was completely collaged. Aurelia suggested the same treatment for the lid. Now the body and lid met, and the lid was collaged also. And down the road I went.

Now, pretty much all together, I moved further away to add a piece of hardwood, a knob of sorts, over the collaged names. A peek inside spoke of the necessity of an azure blue sky with fluff muff clouds. That seemed to work too, but needed a rim of crimson around the neck. The last touch, was an iridescent green under the clay balls with strokes and spatters of gold.

A lot of work for a jar. A crowd of obits to consider. Like that thing we did as children...."Here is the church. Here is the steeple. Open the doors and see all the people".

I built a 'church'.

