

Responding to Kelly's poetry

I knew I would like the piece “*Tantra*” from the title alone. I wasn’t disappointed. Very soon the phrase “black peacock” jumped out. A tantric peacock would surely be black, a night dweller frequenting cemeteries. I also like the way that, while there does exist a black swan, and a white peacock, a black peacock is an imaginary beast, perhaps a portent of apocalypse, or beneficent cosmic gear-shifting.

I’ve made two ceramic works based on the black peacock. One is a small good luck charm to be worn around the neck. The other is an ornament for the bookshelf. Much of my ceramics practice involves making facsimiles of books. In this case, The Black Peacock has made its nest on a copy of D.H. Lawrence’s *The White Peacock*: for a moment, yin dominates yang.

I also responded to the short poem “awash” which begins:

a rugged silver trekked coastline
maps the edge
of a figure-eight snail getaway
head-on into a shifted potplant

Perhaps I was being too literal, but I instantly saw a figure-eight plant pot, that is, two pots side-by-side creating an infinity symbol. Snails would be circling the pot, and there would be plants in the pot: a living artwork with a poetic pedigree.

Tessa Laird, July 2015