

ART

DOCUMENTARY

POTTERY

FOOD

THE BEAUTY OF DECAY

TEXT BY

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Decay doesn't necessarily mean old, useless, or putrid. Well, most of the time it does. But these are a few examples that prove there can be beauty even in the most rotten things.



OF ART

THE SECRET INGREDIENT

Is love. And, well, in Dasha Plesner's case, a good mix of nutrients and bacteria. While most of us will only accidentally let things go bad, this Russian artist makes it her specialty. Her canvases are petri dishes, glowing with colors and textures. They are the product of boiled nutrients which are poured into each dish and left to harden. Just before that happens, Plesner finds the perfect moment to add 'additional pigments, paints, glitter, powders, milk, blood, absolutely anything,' she tells us. While sometimes she lets the components spread naturally, there is also a more precise method that involves 'other techniques, where I use needles, borders, and stencils,' to be in control of the disintegrating organisms. The decomposing bacteria become a composition of layer upon layer of embellished rot. After studying fine arts, but (secretly) wishing she was studying to become a surgeon or a chemist, Dasha found balance between her two passions. By allowing herself to play with decaying microorganisms, she connects with nature, her faith, and her own inner voice. What may be a very meticulous scientific process is where she found a safe place to liberate herself and allow herself to 'do a lot of interesting things, including singing, and dancing.' When she stares into her own creations she sees 'people, their relations, social groups, creatures, moods, sounds, shapes, drama, poetry, nature... to be honest, everything.' Despite the obvious importance of the decomposing nutrients, there's no denying that the secret ingredient will always be love.

