

Portfolio

Olivier Fabrice Adam, Sculptor

Working instinctively with earth-based materials and found objects, I create poetic sculptures that inhabit the space between presence and absence, challenging the myth of closure through the lens of ambiguous loss.

Acting as a tangible counterpoint to a culture of categorical clarity, my work inhabits the messy, ungeometric rhythms of a nature that includes us—not as masters of the landscape, but as fragile participants within its own process of flux and repair.

I use these hand-built forms to establish an ecology of ambiguity: a space designed to foster resilient minds that embrace difference and find peace within the beauty of our unprocessed nature.

My work invites a celebration of life's inherent uncertainty, suggesting that when we stop looking for finality and instead find beauty in the ongoing journey, we become more open to the diverse, intricate realities and richness of the embodied human experience.

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“An Unintentional Architecture of Empathy”, H54 x W38 x D50 cm, 6 kg. Timber, steel, fibres, lime, hemp, wool. Nov 2025.



“Nomad of the Tethered Root”, H67 x W55 x D70 cm, 5kg. Lime, bandage, steel, timber, thread. Dec 2025.

Working intuitively and by hand, I create abstract sculptures from raw, earth-based materials: lime, clay, sand, hemp, and foraged remains. These elements are chosen for their organic textures and living histories, allowing me to shape forms that are simultaneously fragile and resilient. My practice seeks to transcend the purely optical; I invite an encounter that engages touch, scent, and physical presence, transforming the act of viewing into a visceral, emotional dialogue with the unprocessed world.



"Offset", H20 x W20 x D20 cm, 3kg. Lime, GGBS, hemp & willow. Royal Academy Summer Exhibition 2025.

For me, these sculptures serve as tangible anchors for memory. They transform grief into an ongoing conversation with absent loved ones—conversations that are unfinished, open, and evolving. I explore the psychological concept of **Ambiguous Loss**, a form of grief where closure is unattainable and absence is never fully resolved. By creating forms that are inherently ambiguous, I aim to give physical shape to this experience. The sculptures exist in a shifting space where presence and absence overlap, where despair is inseparable from hope, and where the human longing for resolution remains both vital and impossible.

Rather than treating grief as a process that must end in closure, I want to affirm the value of maintaining connection—with those lost physically (the missing, the dead), psychologically (dementia, addiction), or socially (exile, exclusion). My practice resists the cultural urge toward finality, offering instead a space to live with uncertainty, to honour unfinished relationships, and to accept that love and memory do not simply vanish.



“Shrine”, H40 x W50 x D40 cm, 25kg. Found object, lime, soil and plants. May 2020.

Ambiguity is the central pillar of my work. I see it as essential to creative freedom—a space where diversity, multiplicity, and contradiction can thrive. My sculptures advocate for a culture that respects and values ambiguity, acknowledging that human experience is rarely absolute or clear-cut.

The concept of **Ambiguous Loss** provides a restorative counterpoint to the binary thinking that dominates much of contemporary discourse. While our cultural climate often demands the severing of ties to achieve moral or social clarity, my sculptures practice the art of entanglement. They argue for a resilience found in the unresolved, choosing to bind and mended fractured parts rather than discarding them for their lack of perfection.



“Primal Tilt”, H125 x W65 x D30 cm, 8kg. Bamboo, lime, drift timber, sack, ropes and wool. Oct 2025.

Through my practice, I hope to encourage others to see ambiguity not as weakness or confusion, but as a vital part of life—a space of coexistence, possibility, and profound human strength.

Abstract Art as a Human Necessity

In a society drowning in data, I believe abstract art serves as an essential counterpoint. Standardization is an algorithm's ideal; uniqueness is the organic truth. Abstract art purposefully disrupts our automated perception by offering no easy answers, forcing the brain to halt its habitual "meaning making" process. This ambiguity compels the viewer to engage in an act of creation, synthesizing meaning through their own imagination and identity. In this personal response, we reclaim our humanity.



"The Persistence of the Fragile", H100 x W120 x D100 cm. Lime, cement, clay, timber, and coir. Aug 2025.

The Raw and the Instinctive

The raw quality of my work intentionally mirrors the instinctive truth of human emotion—a primal nature often suppressed by social conventions. When we acknowledge this inherent rawness, we recognize our place within the broader natural world. This realization moves us past the delusion of human mastery; we are not above nature but intrinsically intertwined with it. Embracing our own "unprocessed" instincts is the first step toward cherishing our environment.



“Reliquary of the Raw”, H65 x W45 x D45 cm, 10kg. Lime, cement, clay, timber, coir and found object. Sep 2025.



“The Weight of Char”, H45 x W60 x D20 cm, 9kg. Lime, cement, clay, timber and crushed leaves. Aug 2025.

Ambiguous Loss as an Educator

Ambiguous Loss offers a difficult but profound emotional lesson. It creates a space where the linear path to closure is disrupted, encouraging us to question rigid social expectations that pressure us to "move on." Resilience emerges not from ending grief, but from creating meaning and actively choosing to sustain the memory of those who are absent.

From Nature, Back to Nature

I am troubled by a "throwaway society" that relentlessly values mastery and productivity, often treating old age and death as failures. My art stands in direct contrast to consumerism; the completion of a sculpture is not an end product, but the beginning of a new journey—an artifact meant to endure and decay naturally.

Inspired by the restorative impact of nature on my own mental health, I strive to create works that are both visually arresting and environmentally sound.



"The Wilding Pulse", H70 x W90 x D30 cm, 5kg. Lime, cement, clay, timber, steel, hair, rope, wool and wire. Dec 2025.



Process: Kneading, Foraging, and Bricolage

I trace my first connection to sculpture to the kitchen, watching my mother bake. The nurturing ritual of mixing and kneading dough remains central to my work. My practice is further rooted in **bricolage**—a technique of assembly and repair passed down through generations. By layering disparate fragments and foraged items imbued with history, I create forms that resist easy definition, inviting the viewer to step into their own world of memory and resonance.

Key Terms

- **Ambiguity of Human Nature:** The paradox of being simultaneously free to choose a path yet bound by biological and social limitations.
- **The Myth of Closure:** The psychological understanding that grief is not linear and does not have a definitive end point.
- **Ambiguous Loss:** 'A loss that remains unclear, such as a loved one who is physically absent but psychologically present (missing), or physically present but psychologically absent (dementia)' (Boss 2006, p. 4).
- **Social Ambiguous Loss:** A modern state of trauma experienced when "cancel culture" or social ostracization denies an individual a clear path to redemption or resolution.

Research & Influence

Boss, P. (2006). *Loss, Trauma, and Resilience: Therapeutic Work with Ambiguous Loss*. W. W. Norton & Company

Schulze, J. (1994). *Non-finito: Sculpture and the Unfinished*. British Museum Press.



“The Bearer”, H28 x W25 x D10 cm, 5kg. Lime, cement, clay, ropes hay and sand. Aug 2025.

About the Artist

Olivier F. Adam is a sculptor whose practice is an ongoing investigation into the resilience of the human spirit and the beauty found in the unfinished.

His journey into sculpture began not in a studio, but in the kitchen and the countryside. His earliest memories are of the rhythmic, sensory act of watching his mother bake—learning that creation is a nurturing ritual of mixing, kneading, and transforming raw ingredients by hand. This foundational connection to "making" was deepened through a family tradition of foraging, a practice that taught him to see the history and intrinsic value in found objects long before they were ever called "art."

Influenced by these intergenerational teachings of bricolage and repair, Olivier's work is a rejection of modern consumerist perfection. Instead, he leans into the raw and the "ungeometric", using earth-based materials like lime, clay, and hemp to mirror the messy, beautiful complexity of nature.

Olivier's work is profoundly shaped by the psychological concept of Ambiguous Loss. Having navigated the spaces where presence and absence overlap, he uses his practice as a vessel for ongoing conversations with those who are no longer present (physically, psychologically or socially). His sculptures do not seek to provide answers or closure; instead, they offer a space where uncertainty is celebrated and where the "incomplete" is recognized as a vital, living state.

Today, Olivier continues to explore the intersections of psychology, ecology, and fine art, advocating for a world that values the visceral over the digital, and the enduring journey over the final product.

