

Bockley Gallery



Lauren Roche: Collected Vessels

Opening Reception: Friday, March 9, 6 to 9 pm

Exhibition: March 9 through April 14, 2018

Gallery Hours: Wednesday through Saturday, Noon to 5 pm

Bockley Gallery is pleased to announce its forthcoming exhibition, *Lauren Roche: Collected Vessels*. This is the Minneapolis artist's second one-person exhibition with Bockley Gallery. Roche's latest collection consists of five dynamic mixed-media works on paper where female nudes, animals and surfaces pose, float, touch and bleed into and onto one another. In these dramatic new compositions her dark-haired figures bend and reach in gestures of care, connection and empathy, suggesting solidarity and harmony between impassive but vulnerable female forms. Her figures are posed against rough fields of color, abstracted furniture, and interior spaces populated by a menagerie of creatures and ceramic / textile forms. Smudges of red and black become masks, veils and wounds as the women seem to seek succor, repose and comfort from the animals and one another.

Reminiscent of Peter Doig's tranquil and disorienting figures against landscapes, this new collection is consistent with Roche's earlier works, depicting women in formal (here often seated) poses against abstracted environments. But in place of her previously uniformly dark and wilderness-like backdrops, here a field of pastel and claylike terra cotta colors suggest interior spaces, while the figures' actions suggest domestic acts and self-care ("Woman Having Her Hair Braided"). Roche's vision is of women at ease in their naked skin, easily as much as the crane-like birds with their monochromatic plumage. Their dramatic physical postures—embracing, assuaging, weeping, warning—contribute to a classical, dreamlike environment; Greek mythology transmuted through a 21st century psyche.

As a kind of private, ambiguous allegory, each work depicts a vivid narrative open to interpretation. One figure, her face obscured, seems to hold her equally veiled doppelganger in her arms. A crane-like bird is cradled like a wounded child, its beak bleeding as it bites a snake. Elsewhere, two large tiger-like cats pin a prone bird near a group of ceramic pots that stand

poised and unbroken. The female nudes' signs of injury or suffering are counterbalanced by serene figurative compositions reminiscent of classical portraiture, and their often impassive faces and gestures suggest Roche's characters are at home in this charged environment.

In these compositions Roche places a new emphasis on patterning: the skins of animals and the upholstery of chairs and rug patterns seem to share a rhythm with clusters of tears, ('tears' of weeping and 'tears' as in rips and wounds in skin), scratch marks and black blood. Archlike patterns in the air suggest radiance and an energetic life-giving aura in contrast to the claws and clusters of tears. Hairs, the teeth of a comb, plumage and rhythmic decorative motifs echo the multicolored arches, textiles and braided carpets.

In these new works, nature is often partially domesticated—leafy plants make up 'still life'-like compositions on the 'walls' in "Reclining Woman Holding a Bowl", while below the figures' feet, tiger-like cats lurk only as patterns in a rug. But the presence of the wild persists, most often as blood—bright red, claylike and reminiscent of menstruation—marking the breasts, faces and pubic areas of the figures, emblazoning them with a sexual charge and an uncanny beauty, and filling a bowl held suggestively over a woman's nakedness—radiating red inverted waves and a mysterious energy.

A native of California, Lauren Roche was born in 1983 and raised in Santa Rosa. She is a self-taught artist and has been making art since she was a young child. She won the first of many coloring and art competitions in grade school and later was, in her words, "known for her dog portraits." Roche moved to Minneapolis in 2006 and is one of a coterie of artists who make narrative, often fantasy-driven work. After encouragement from one of the artists, Tynan Kerr, Roche applied and was awarded a Jerome Foundation Visual Arts Fellowship in 2012-2013. Her first solo exhibition, *Silent Partner*, was seen at Bockley Gallery in 2016.

For further information or press photos please contact Bockley Gallery.