

BABA YAGA

Luka Carter + Sonia Ruscoe

A Jar

2022

Baba Yaga is pleased to announce "A Jar," a two-person exhibition of new works by Luka Carter and Sonia Ruscoe. The exhibition title is a reference to both Carter's ceramic vessels and Ruscoe's paintings, which often picture open windows - containers for passages in both two- and three-dimensions.

Carter's vessels are derived in part from childhood memories of his mother's cookie jar collection, which was deaccessioned during a divorce. In making new vessels, Carter played with notions of usefulness and uselessness; for example, one jar is purposed for the laundromat, complete with plastic chair, hangers, and a detergent pod-spot. And yet the fragility and beauty of the jar suggest its primary use is to be an object of display. Carter's jars retain an element of both freehandedness and powerful determinacy.

Ruscoe's paintings, meanwhile, share a sense of the surreal with Carter's vessels; one painting delineating a room with a wall missing so that viewers can peer in, finding two figures lying on the floor, with a dramatically foregrounded form that looks in equal parts like a tree trunk and a snake's scaly body up the left side of the canvas. Ruscoe's midnight blue hues are sometimes filled with artificial yellow light and sometimes drenched edge to edge in what looks like moonlight over a natural clearing in a forest. Curtains and blinds seem to dance around in several paintings, as if tickled by a warm evening breeze.

Taken together, Carter and Ruscoe's works propose a child-like perspective, welcoming the uncanny as a new opportunity. Both artist's contribute a strong element of magic in their work, a magic that is strongest in us in childhood. With "A Jar," Ruscoe and Carter conjure forth the eager energy of discovery and potential. In Ruscoe's world, windows become frames around a dream. Each of Carter's objects possess a kind of wholeness reminiscent of Antoine De Saint-Exupery's The Little Prince (1943) - one imagines that these jars have their own gravity, their own physics, their own functionality. The works in "A Jar" propose that while we usually dread them, transitions can be wedded to softness, humor and purity. We can be hopeful in the hands of these artists.

- Exhibition Text written by Blair Taylor