

NIGHT GALLERY

2276 E. 16th Street, Los Angeles, California 90021

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Lindsay Preston Zappas, "Poppies and skulls commingle in fantastical airbrushed paintings," *KCRW*, December 15, 2020.



ARTS & CULTURE STORIES

Poppies and skulls commingle in fantastical airbrushed paintings

Written by Lindsay Preston Zappas • Dec. 15, 2020

This week's picks include an artist who creates playful and graphic airbrushed paintings with darker undertones; women who are depicted pumping breast milk while listing their fears; and an artist whose manipulated clay forms match her own body weight.

Brie Ruais at Night Gallery



Brie Ruais, "Opposing Tides, Shaping Forces," 2020, installation view in "Spiraling Open and Closed Like an Aperture" at Night Gallery, 2020. Photograph by Marten Elder, courtesy of the artist and Night Gallery.

Artist Brie Ruais literally wrestles her ceramic forms into shape. In her solo show at Night Gallery downtown, her spiraling and wall-bound sculptures are marred with deep divots and imprints that evidence the human touch. For many of the works, Ruais begins with a mass of clay that is equal to her body weight, and then goes about pushing and massaging the raw clay into forms that (like a snow angel) diagram the reaches of the artist's limbs.

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The immense physicality that is required to manipulate raw clay imbues Ruais' sculptures with an uncanny personification, the size, weight, and thumbprints embedded throughout matching her own. For, "Opposing Tides, Shaping Forces" (2020), Ruais created the work with another participant — each started by flattening out their body weight in clay on opposite sides of a room, before pushing the clay sheets towards one another across the space as the clay buckled and folded underneath the pressure. The resulting work captures this collective activity in its fired form — like two halves of best friends heart necklaces that nest together. These sculptural works are also paired with aerial photographs, taken with a drone, of Ruais' clay forms sited within the desert landscape. Photographed from above, the movements of plant and wildlife (deer trails and scattered shrubs) are vital signs of life — the ceramic forms, which also display signs of life and movement, seamlessly become one with their environment.

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