

# rachel uffner



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Anya Kielar

*The Muses*

November 6 - January 8, 2022

Rachel Uffner Gallery is pleased to present *The Muses*, Anya Kielar's third exhibition at the gallery. The exhibition's title refers to classical notions of women as sources of artistic inspiration, continuing Kielar's longtime interest in pursuing the symbolic possibilities of feminine archetypes and the female form. Each of the nine shadowboxes in the exhibition contains a slightly larger-than-life female figure composed of stylized fragments set in a relief sculpture. Additionally, these figures and the shadowboxes that house them have each been fastidiously wrapped in textiles that Kielar makes using techniques such as stenciling, painting, dyeing, and spraying. These techniques are combined so that the pattern envelops the forms, allowing the illusory field of colors and marks to move along the skin of the shifting sculpture, creating a surface that is seamless and soft on the eye.

Bearing titles based on various feminine archetypes such as *The Seer* and *The Heroine*, these works are intended not as definitive depictions of such characters but rather as loose portraits of the subliminal aspects that all mythic archetypes evoke. Wrapped in patterned textiles that further complicate their appearance, these figures' bodies become visually ambiguous vessels for the ideas about women and female power that have floated across history.

Kielar's process of wrapping each work's sculptural components in fabric draws inspiration from upholstery and other decorative arts that have traditionally been associated with domesticity. Like a surrealist doll house, each shadowbox forms an interior—in both the physical and psychological sense of the word.

Placed within these constructed frames, the figures are suspended in scenes where they are both the setting and the subject. A subtle sense of narrative points to artistic traditions such as friezes and the carved reliefs of cathedrals, in which stories are told through the gestures of the hands, the angle of the arms, and the position of faces. In many of Kielar's shadowboxes, the posture of the figure would be impossible to recreate in real life: arms and hands bend in illogical ways, fashioned to accentuate certain gestures. In one work, for example, the figure's arms appear to multiply as they are entangled in cascading waves of her hair.

A dynamic visual tension emerges through the integration of two-dimensional imagery with three-dimensional forms, creating surfaces that are both alluring and elusive to the viewer. As the shapes comprising each figure are concealed by fabric, the viewer's eye is challenged to trace the soft contours of her body with careful attention, pausing in recognition where her torso, fingers, and face emerge and dissipate within the composition. Kielar demonstrates that despite—and, perhaps, precisely because of—its centrality throughout art history, the female form still contains previously unseen layers of beauty, power, and meaning.

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**Anya Kielar** (b. 1978, New York, NY) earned a BFA from The Cooper Union School of Art, New York and an MFA from Columbia University, New York. Kielar has presented solo exhibitions at venues such as Locust Projects, Miami; Casey Kaplan, New York; and Daniel Reich Gallery, New York. She has also been included in group exhibitions at the Rubell Family Collection, Miami; the Philip and Muriel Berman Museum of Art, Ursinus College, Collegeville; the FLAG Art Foundation, New York; White Columns, New York; and the Zabłudowicz Collection, London, among others. In fall 2021, Kielar created work for the exhibition *Miss Dior - 12 Women Artists*, which opened at Ba-tsu Gallery, Tokyo, and traveled to Chateau de la Colle Noire, Montrauroux. In fall of 2022, Kielar will present a solo exhibition at Pioneer Works, Brooklyn, curated by Gabriel Florenz. Her work can be found in the permanent collections of the Dikeou Collection, Denver; the Christian Dior Art Collection, Paris; the Henry Art Gallery, Seattle; the New Century Art Foundation, Singapore; the Rubell Family Collection, Miami; the Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery, Saratoga Springs; and the Zabłudowicz Collection, London. Kielar lives and works in Brooklyn, NY.

Image: Anya Kielar, *Temptress*, 2021, paint, linen fabric, foam, aqua resin, wood and Plexiglas, 40 1/4 x 30 1/2 x 8 inches (102.2 x 77.5 x 20.3 cm)

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