

CANDICE MADEY

JULIA HAFT-CANDELL

Carrier Bag of Fiction

November 13, 2020 – February 6, 2021

CANDICE MADEY is pleased to introduce Julia Haft-Candell's first solo exhibition in New York, *Carrier Bag of Fiction*. The exhibition title references Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction*, in which Le Guin explores millennia-old storytelling traditions that favor conflict and violence, weaponizing fiction to reinforce the myths of the hero and the strongman. Alternatively, Le Guin proffers a concept of fiction as a carrier bag or vessel used to gather the collective activities of everyday people.

Haft-Candell's work often references science fiction and feminist writers. The epigraph of her *Glossary of Terms and Symbols*, a book and related series of watercolors started in 2017, also cites Le Guin:

I talk about the gods; I am an atheist. But I am an artist too, and therefore a liar. Distrust everything I say. I am telling the truth. The only truth I can understand or express is, logically defined, a lie. Psychologically defined, a symbol. Aesthetically defined, a metaphor. — Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Left Hand of Darkness* (1976).

Glossary of Terms and Symbols shares Le Guin's interest in the slippery and often gendered meaning of language and symbols. Examining the subjective origins of storytelling and how dramatized retellings become inscribed as history, Le Guin prompts writers to scrutinize the visual cues and symbols we accept as historical truth—a charge Haft-Candell takes up in her work. Haft-Candell's *Glossary* redresses universally-recognizable themes such as infinity symbols, combs, hands, and chains through a personal and poetic lens. The series of sculptures featured in this exhibition originated with a rewriting of a glossary entry titled “weaving,” paying homage to the commonplace material of baskets and bags.

Haft-Candell works primarily in ceramics, a material that the artist is drawn to for its ostensibly contradictory states: fluid and malleable when wet, and fixed when fired. Her attraction to clay's transmutability corresponds to acts of redefinition at play in her evolving lexicon, elevating to ritual importance objects predefined as ordinary. Here, Haft-Candell's inscribes “weaving” into the surfaces of her work in *sgraffito* patterns of warp and weft—the artist's hand attempting to track with exactitude the volume of clay.

The work often reads as anthropomorphic—not so much by taking the shape of the human body (although hands and legs recur), but rather by evoking through physical material a desire to connect, to touch, or to relate disparate parts. Here, Haft-Candell pays heed to Le Guin's suggested heroism, in which human nature may still refuse thoughtless oppositions and embrace the complexity of an ever-changing world.

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In conjunction with the exhibition, Haft-Candell will offer a reading list. Periodic reading circles will be hosted via zoom, with the artist, gallery and the public in conversation on topics of world building, the role of storytelling in history, and the inventive potential of science fiction. The first reading will include Le Guin's *The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction* (1986) and the introduction to *The Left Hand of Darkness* (1976). Please visit the gallery website for dates and details.

Julia Haft-Candell lives and works in Los Angeles. *Carrier Bag of Fiction* is her first solo exhibition in New York. Other recent solo exhibitions include Night Gallery, Los Angeles, CA; Parrasch Heijen Gallery, Los Angeles, CA; and group exhibitions at CANDICE MADEY, New York, NY; Inman Gallery, Houston, TX; Grand Central Art Center at California State University, Fullerton CA; the Craft Contemporary, Los Angeles, CA; Interface Gallery, Oakland, CA; Franklin Parrasch Gallery, New York, NY; among others. Her work has been written about in *Artforum*, *Surface Magazine*, *The New York Times*, and *The Los Angeles Times*. She received an MFA from California State University Long Beach and BA in Studio Art and International Relations from University of California Davis.

The gallery is open to the public Thursday to Saturday, 11am to 6pm, with a limited number of visitors permitted at a time, in accordance with city guidelines and with enhanced safety measures in place. Advance appointments are recommended.

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