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Call Rhonda

Laura McCoy

30 OCTOBER TO 11 DECEMBER, 2022

Recently, Laura McCoy called her mother, Rhonda McCoy, for her thoughts on what should be included in this show.

Lucas called Lisa Smolkin, Vida Beyer, and Augustina Sia Saygnavong—artist friends and collaborators—for their thoughts on art made in Toronto since the late 1990s, and, therein, for their understanding of Laura McCoy: a longstanding fixture in the performance art scene there. Her friends said her work was a lot like her: colorful, curious and complicated.

When she was a film student in the early 2000s, Laura wrote and directed *Tickle Down*, an autobiopic starring a now famous pop-astrologer. In the film, the character asks: “What has your DNA done for you lately?”

This question, for us at least, is the root of Laura’s practice, an angst for living and the balm of making that at once delivers performance, drawing, sculpture and painting. “What does it mean for a medium to be close to the body? To be close to the body is to be urgent.”

Call Rhonda marks Laura’s second exhibition in New York City. It sits low to the floor, colors and shapes chattering. Across the room paint speaks from acrylic, clay, fibre and board. It mines the impulsive, forming preverbal chunk speech, the work bright and tumbling like a sun shower in the fall. There’s vitality in the residual, as that’s what marks time and our essence.

And what’s an art that can barely hold it together? In a conversation I had with Laura back in 2020, she yearned for an art that, be it of its (genetic) material or make-up, is weak. She said, “I think people want an impenetrable art, an art that is so industrious and strong that it will never die...But I’m obsessed with the weak art. I want the people that can’t hold it up, that can’t hold it together. It feels they’re more connected to some truth.”

If art’s mystique emerges from its impossibility as a feat of craft and labor, Laura asks herself and asks others what’s possible.

Laura McCoy (b. 1981, Cambridge, Canada) lives and works in Toronto, Canada. Her work spans a variety of media including painting, drawing, sculpture, and performance and has been featured in various group shows in Canada and the United States since 2010, including the Toronto Biennial of Art; Mercer Union; The Power Plant; The Art Gallery of Ontario; Gallery TPW; Cooper Cole, Toronto, Canada; Los Angeles Contemporary Archive, Los Angeles, USA. Recent solo and two-person exhibitions include *Wiggle Scripts*, AKA Artist Run Centre, Saskatoon; *The Body is a Butter Brain*, Calaboose, Montreal; *Mona Poem*, Erin Stump Projects, Toronto, Canada; and *Kims*, Rodi Gallery, New York, USA.

