

HUXLEY-PARLOUR

3-5 Swallow Street, London, W1B 4DE / gallery@huxleyparlour.com

Ella Walker

Cosmati Floor and Wax Fruit

19 March - 25 April 2020



Ella Walker, *Winged Victory*, 2020

Huxley-Parlour gallery presents the first solo exhibition of works by London-based painter Ella Walker in March 2020.

The Glasgow School of Art graduate, has already gained widespread recognition and had works shown at EMBASSY in Edinburgh, Christie's in London, and in the 2019 Great Women Artist's residency at Palazzo Monti in Brescia, Italy.

Walker's practice combines painting, drawing and fresco. Inspired by medieval narrative and costume, her highly stylised works often directly reference Renaissance and medieval iconography.

The new body of work, produced in 2019 and 2020, draws on a collected archive of varied imagery, and explores notions of stage, spectacle, desire and design. The exhibition will include both large and small-scale works, as well as a series of banner-style canvases and a fresco-like site-specific mural.

Inspired by medieval narrative and iconography, Walker's works explore myth making through costume and role-play. The artist interweaves imagined narratives with reconstructed scenes from medieval and early modern paintings, along with other mediated and found imagery, moving freely between historical and contemporary sources. She collapses subject, object, time and place into dramatic and resplendent images.

Walker is interested in performative spaces, both public and private, and her compositions look to rituals of procession and pilgrimage and yet are alive with a rich and hedonistic carnival atmosphere. Walker's paintings recast female subjects from both literary and art historical sources into new environments, and given both agency and power in the reclamation of their stories. Harnessing the viewer's gaze, Walker's protagonists are in turn confrontational, seductive and playful.

Walker explores lust and longing through the duality of her compositions. Referencing a wide range of sources, including *Comedia dell'arte* and Chaucer's *The Wife of Bath*, Walker explores unrequited love as well as passion and play. Her masked figures are illusive and alluring at once, and represent a number of allegorical roles. Walker invites her viewer to enter a series of twisted and transfigured narratives that, although related to her own associations about history and society, are left open to interpretation.

Stating the works are 'lyrical in their creation', Walker works intuitively, building her paintings through layers of thin brushstrokes and repeated marks to create a textured surface. Formal devices in the paintings, including translucent curtains and veils of smoke, disrupt the narrative of her work, while pattern and colour further disrupt and complicate the structure and storytelling of her work. Bodies overlap, writhe and contort themselves within the shallow space of the pictorial frame, their highly ornamented figures shifting and stirring within their stage-like setting.

About Ella Walker:

Ella Walker is a London-based artist known for her large-format works, rich in narrative and colour. Born in Manchester in 1993, Walker's practice combines painting, drawing and fresco, utilising various media including tempera, gesso, pastel and ink. She has recently shown her work at Huxley-Parlour gallery (London, UK); Christies (London UK); and EMBASSY (Edinburgh, UK). In 2019 Walker was awarded a six-week residency at Palazzo Monti in Brescia, Italy, as part of The Great Women Artist's Residency hosted by Katy Hessel and Edoardo Monti.

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