

Katy Stubbs
Smoke and Mirrors

10th October – 10th November 2023

'What I like about ceramics is that even though people might think they create their own story, there is a god (me) who decides'

- Katy Stubbs



Katy Stubbs, *Waste of a Manicure*, 2023
Stoneware and glaze
27 x 27 x 27 cm (10 5/8 x 10 5/8 x 10 5/8 in)
Photo: Lucy Emms

Lyndsey Ingram is proud to present 'Smoke and Mirrors', a solo show of ceramics of British-South African artist Katy Stubbs (b.1992). The exhibition, which is organised in collaboration with PATERSON ZEVI, is the culmination of a year's work and is Stubbs' second solo show. It debuts a series of ceramic sculptures concerning ideas around deception and magic; a subject of fascination for the artist, a magic enthusiast who travels to conventions, practices conjuring tricks and collects magical ephemera, which is on display at her studio in Brixton, London.

A self-taught ceramicist, Stubbs has created a group of sculptures, each piece built by hand. These tell a story about the modern dilemma of online dating and how a couple's first date goes wrong, with both parties pretending to be someone they are not. The male character is a magician but pretends to be a cowboy, 'catfishing' women who he thinks will find this persona more seductive. The woman, his date, is keen to appear to have a perfect life, and judges what's important through the filter of her phone. After going back to his apartment and realising he's a magician and not a hunky cowboy, she runs away, leading to tragic consequences.



Katy Stubbs, *The Lobster Pot*, 2023
Stoneware and glaze
33 x 33 x 34 cm (13 x 13 x 13 3/8 in)
Photo: Lucy Emms

The story of 'Smoke and Mirrors' is a cautionary tale about the deceptions of contemporary dating culture, societal pressure to conform to an ideal and the too-good-to-be-true stories on Instagram. Ancient morality mingles with modern disinformation in funny and frightening ways. In Stubbs' studio, the word 'Hubris' is tacked up on her wall, a reminder for the artist who says - for her - it can be translated into 'bad stuff happening in the strangest of ways and how the gods have a funny way of deciding your fate'. For Stubbs, making sculptures in the

ancient medium of clay manifests an act of defiance against 'quick fix' culture; clay requires patience, time and once fired, it cannot be altered or air-brushed.

Different ceramics tell different parts of the 'Smoke and Mirrors' story. Each character has their own pot, including a tragic protagonist: the lobster that the woman orders, thinking it will look great on her Instagram. The exhibition also includes the pile of dirty plates from which the couple ate, descriptive amphoras and everyday items belonging to the characters, such as the magician's playing cards and a smashed iPhone.



Katy Stubbs, *Hit by a Car*, 2023
Stoneware and glaze
28 x 9 x 2 cm (11 x 3 1/2 x 3/4 in)
Photo: Lucy Emms

Stubbs's imagination verges into the gothic and grotesque areas. Her characters often meet with sticky ends. Originally trained to be an illustrator, she was told that her drawings were too dark for children's books and therefore turned to making ceramic sculpture in order to bring her surreal stories to life in the tactile, three-dimensional medium of clay. Inspired by both comic books and the narratives on ancient Greek ceramics, Stubbs remixes myths with pop culture to create tragi-comedic stories that play themselves out through pots. She invites the viewer to embark on a physical and imaginative journey – often by circling around each work – to discover the fates of her protagonists.



Katy Stubbs
Photo: Harry Soames

Trained at the School of Visual Arts in New York, Stubbs is based in London. Her first solo exhibition was at ALMA ZEVI in 2019, which followed on from her residency at the gallery's Venetian outpost. She participated in the British Ceramics Biennial in 2021 as well as the Great Women Artists residency and exhibition, curated by Katy Hessel at Palazzo Monti (also 2021). She has participated in group exhibitions at T.J Boulting, Tristan Hoare and most recently, Timothy Taylor, New York. Her work is in the Zabłudowicz Collection, the Katrin Bellinger Collection and was recently included in the Women's Art Collection at Murray Edwards College in the exhibition 'Life is Still Life' which closed in February this year.