

Gabriela Vainsencher

“Epic, Heroic, Ordinary”

March 2 - April 8, 2023



Asya Geisberg Gallery and **New Discretions** are pleased to present “Epic, Heroic, Ordinary”, a solo exhibition by **Gabriela Vainsencher**.

You walk into an ancient ruin and there is a hideous creature, some sort of serpentine dragon slithering across the wall, flaunting a hideous tail and a tangle of arms, riddled with a myriad of ears. But wait, is that a frying pan? A tote bag? And on closer inspection, perhaps her head is not that of a Medusa, but that of a worried woman. And there are pacifiers, a toy, and maybe those talons are combing a child's hair rather than wringing its neck.

Welcome to the world of Gabriela Vainsencher, where motherhood meets mythology. Her work is rich with allegory, pulling inspiration from heroic tales, ancient Greek ceramics and Roman frescoes, as well as her experience as a mother.

It all makes sense. Vainsencher has been referencing archaeology and anatomy for close to a decade. Her “Back Dirt” photographic series is all about the dig, and her previous ceramics, though abstract, have all been about the body.

The new work is a unique hybrid. Vainsencher employs a carved drawing method that gives her porcelain sculptures their close affinity to drawing. While the clay is still wet, she uses a sharp pin tool to free-hand carve her drawings into the clay, which allows the drawing line to be preserved in all its fluidity, and afterwards, she rubs pigmented underglazes into the grooves left by the pin tool. This process allows for mark-making that is between drawing, sculpture, and printmaking. The bodies, vessels and faces are then smudged, touched, and rubbed.

The centerpiece of the exhibition is “Mom”—a large-scale wall-hanging sculpture made out of 59 individual pieces of hand-sculpted, carved, and painted porcelain tiles. It documents her first year of pandemic parenting, a self-portrait of sorts. A snakelike creature made of nurturing breasts, listening ears, and hands—lots and lots of hands—doing all the mom things: fluffing a pillow, picking up a stuffed animal, cleaning, wiping, swiping, and feeding. It is the dragon mentioned above, turned nurturing and kind in mosaic form.

Vainsencher's portraits don vase-like earrings. There's a squid in one - a visual quote from the ancient Minoans, who worshiped the animal as a symbol of the sea, their giver of life. Vainsencher also celebrates the bounty of nature, but with a wary eye: her version of a cornucopia is more memento mori. It is a bowl full of fertility symbols: bursting ripe fruit, a stork, there's even a fallopian tube in there. But there's also an hourglass, perched precariously on the tip of the nose of a gasping fish, a reminder that time (for life, for having a baby) is always running out.

Her amphorae, one being the titular work of the exhibition, were inspired by the François Vase, the iconic example of Etruscan black-figure decoration of the 5th century BCE. But rather than boar hunting or lyre playing, we have child lugging, hair brushing, and sitting in silence. We have replaced the epic with the ordinary, but it remains heroic.

— Benjamin Tischer, New Discretions

Gabriela Vainsencher (b. 1982 Buenos Aires) was raised in Tel Aviv, and currently lives in Montclair, NJ. She received her MFA from Hunter College, NY in 2016. Her solo and two-person exhibitions include Hanina Gallery, Tel Aviv, Israel; Musée d'Art Moderne André Malraux, Le Havre, France; Parker's Box Gallery, Brooklyn, NY; and La Chambre Blanche, Québec City, Canada. Her work has been included in group exhibitions including Mass MoCA, US, Bergamo Modern and Contemporary Art, Italy; Kunstforening, Tromsø, Norway; Marisa Newman Projects, NYC, NY, Pierogi Gallery, Brooklyn, NY, The Freies Museum, Berlin and The National Gallery of Saskatchewan, Canada. Residencies include Yaddo, The Atlantic Center for the Arts, and Byrdcliffe, (all USA), Triangle Arts Association (France), and La Chambre Blanche (Canada).



Gabriela Vainsencher
Epic, Heroic, Ordinary, 2023
Porcelain, glaze, underglaze
30h x 20w x 0.20d in



Gabriela Vainsencher
A Mother Determined, 2022
Porcelain, underglaze, gold ink
12h x 9.50w x 0.25d in