

SIKKEMA JENKINS&CO.

HEIDI LAU

A Cacophony of Rocks

February 9 – March 16, 2024

Sikkema Jenkins & Co. is pleased to present *A Cacophony of Rocks*, a solo exhibition of new sculptural work by Heidi Lau. Shown in the back two galleries, Lau's immersive installation of ceramics takes on an experimental sonic dimension in the second room. *A Cacophony of Rocks* is on view from February 9 through March 16. A public opening reception with the artist will be held Friday, February 9, from 6-8 PM.

Lau's practice is driven by an exploration of the malleability and materiality of time. Her use of clay, one of the world's oldest materials, speaks to the medium's protean nature and elemental presence in monuments past and present. For the past few years, Lau has been engaged with the zoomorphic imaginings of *Shanhajing* (The Classic of Mountains and Seas), a text compiling hundreds of geographies and fantastical creatures dated as early as fourth century BCE. The source mythologies of these cross-pollinated species, transmutable beings, and androgynous beasts informs Lau's sculptural conceptions of a cosmic space, interweaving anti-colonial, anti-categorical, non-linear thinking with personal histories and narratives of memory.

Formally displayed in the first room, chimeric sculptural bodies and figurines made in a combination of clay, glass and bronze evoke *mingqi*, or spirit vessels: burial objects prevalent during Eastern Han Dynasty. Part of Lau's ongoing engagement with dynamically embodied Taoist ritual items and funerary garments, these objects offer a reassessment of death and its attendant materiality as a vital presence in our living world. Rather than mere containers of spirits, Lau's vessels propose alternate configurations of time and space, and a generative diasporic position that is channeled through ritual, grief, and longing.

The second gallery presents a slippage into a realm no longer centered around corporeal experience. The gallery walls are flanked by monumental totems and a rippled archway composed of light blue and sea-green folds and adorned with cradled hands and jeweled orbs. Hovering in the middle of this ceramic enclosure/entrapment is a skeletal representation of Zhulong (燭龍), a primordial creature in *Shanhajing* who manifests night and day by closing and opening its eyes, thus embodying time. Rock-like speakers dispersed around the central hanging sculpture like satellites emit subtle tones as sonic remnants of Zhulong. The environment is spatially intimate, yet psychically expansive, a permeable threshold between the monstrous and the sublime; prehistory and posterity; the animate and the inanimate.

The immersive audio and media production in the exhibition is conceived by Anchit Patni.

Heidi Lau was born in Macau in 1987 and received her BFA from New York University in 2008. In 2021, she was the inaugural recipient of the Green-Wood Cemetery Artist in Residence Program. Her installation *Gardens as Cosmic Terrains* was shown in the Cemetery Catacombs in May-June of 2022. Her work has been exhibited in local and international institutions, including the Museum of Arts and Design, NY; the Bronx Museum of Art, NY; and the Macau Museum of Art. Lau's exhibition *Apparition* was presented at the Macau-China Collateral Exhibition for the 58th Venice Biennale in 2019. Her work is included in the collections of M+, Hong Kong; Macao Museum of Art; Bronx Museum of Art, NY; and The Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY. Lau lives and works in New York.

For additional information and press inquiries, please contact Laura Weinthal at 212.929.2262 or laura@sikkemajenkinsco.com.

UPCOMING EXHIBITIONS

Vik Muniz

March 22 – April 27, 2024