

JAMES HARRIS GALLERY
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PRESS RELEASE



"Undresser" Glazed Earthenware 9 x 3 x 4 inches



"Skeleton Woman Wonder" Earthenware 7 x 5" x 4"

Lena Takamori "Light and Pit"
June 1 to July 20, 2024
Gallery Hours:
Wed to Sat 11:30-5:30PM
and by appointment
Reception: June 1, 4-6PM

James Harris Gallery is pleased to present our first solo exhibition by American artist Lena Takamori who currently lives in the United Kingdom. Working primarily in ceramics, her small-scale sculptures are culled from her imagination. Titled "Light and Pit", this exhibition explores the artist's interest in liminality as the point where light and darkness merge. Her figurative work is an investigation of the female body. The figures emerge into perceptibility as well as bare the bones that give the body its strength. Takamori's landscapes of a tree, house or clouds become aesthetic thresholds wherein she visualizes the moments of transition.

The exhibition marks a shift in Takamori's working process. In the past, she used black glaze to delineate line and shadow. In both "Undresser" and "Skeleton Woman Wonder", the artist gouges and scratches into the clay body to demarcate details. These shadow lines border on description as well as evoke mood or mystery. In the sculpture titled "Undresser", the head and arms of a figure emerge from the act of taking off a sweater. Takamori pushes this figure into abstraction in which the appendages are barely visible from the overall biomorphic shape. The act of undressing has many associations; erotic, threatening, or humiliating.

"Skeleton Woman Wonder" takes this idea of light and darkness further. The artist visually poses the question of "what is inside?" The sitting figure is completely unglazed. The gouging and scratching reveal the female form as a vessel. Delicately carved lines depict hair, facial features, arms, hands and feet. The spine, rib cage and abdomen are defined by indenting and molding the clay to reveal hollow corporal form. The shadows of the frontal cavity creates a womblike void. Takamori sees these figures as not as empty vessels but as transitions between inanimate formless mass into distinct viscera. The void inside can be read as allegory, where life emerges out of the unknown.

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Gradually losing shape and recognizability, “Kudzu House” focuses on the unseen as much as the visible. In this way it directly connects to Takamori’s figurative works. An abandoned house engulfed in kudzu vines is full of feeling and presence. While the house is vacant, it is not a void.

Takamori’s sculptures recall the expectations of forms taking ever new shapes while also invoking an anticipation of loss and the fragility of the world in which we exist. They take pleasure in the impermanence and the frozen moments of the eternal. Her sculptures can be read as markers in the passage of time where the state of departure and return remain uncertain.

Lena Takamori (b.1990 in Seattle, Washington) is an artist with a background in sculpture. She received her BFA from the Cooper Union in New York and has also studied at Kyoko Seika University in Japan. Takamori currently resides in Bristol, England where she maintains her studio practice. Takamori has had solo exhibitions at Lucy Lacoste Gallery (Concord, MA), Kunstforum Solothurn, Solothurn, Switzerland. Takamori’s work has been included in group exhibitions in the US, Europe and Japan. Her work is in the collection of the Musee Ariana, Geneva Switzerland.