

LOIS LAMBERT GALLERY **SERENA POTTER**

at Bergamot Station
2525 Michigan Ave E3
Santa Monica, CA 90404

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Lois Lambert, Director
Lois@loislambertgallery.com
Isabella DiPietro, Assistant Director
Isabella@loislambertgallery.com
310.829.6990

"Fables of Rhyme or Reason"

September 18, 2021 – November 7, 2021

Opening Reception Saturday, September 18th, 6-9pm

SANTA MONICA, CA – Lois Lambert Gallery will be exhibiting Serena Potter and Cynthia Sitton's **"Fables of Rhyme or Reason"** opening September 18, 2021.



"Peeper", Oil on canvas, 36" x 20"



"Here Nor There", Oil on canvas,
36" x 42"

Serena Potter's California figurative narrative oil paintings and mixed media work use storytelling to seek reason in the unreasonable.

Her pieces are notable for their vintage Southern California spaces and lighting, specifically drawing inspiration from her Culver City upbringing, classic film, illustration and literature. As a response to what the world experienced in 2020, this new body of work expands on those ideas and draws inspiration from Picasso's 'Guernica'.

"Fables of Rhyme or Reason" highlight feelings of isolation and the fear of the unknown beyond one's window. Potter's new work often uses interior space, walls or fences to create barriers, a result of a year of staying at home. Her warm color palette draws viewers in by evoking feelings of comfort and nostalgia, only to lead to more sinister elements deeper within.

During the early stages of the pandemic, Potter created multiple small character studies of her family. They began with sketches and photo references which she used to inform small oil paintings – remarkably smaller by comparison to her previous works. "During the pandemic, I needed to do something more immediate. I just kept painting 9" x 12" oil paintings." Later in the year, Potter used her character studies for a larger composition, the three paneled 'Masquerade' which matches the proportions of Picasso's 'Guernica'. "I started with the composition for the right canvas, sketching it out, and fitting the larger elements together. Once the composition was sketched, I then uploaded, edited and printed all the photos I wanted to use for reference. Twelve to fifteen photos on average are used per painting for references, though the composition will continue to evolve on the canvas, adding elements, such as gloves or apples as needed, to lead the viewer through the composition."



"Spores", Oil on canvas, 36"x 30"

One element added to 'Masquerade' was the apple, some peeled, some half eaten, some hanging on strings or bobbing in a pan of water. The apple, in this series, is a metaphor for many aspects of our 2020 experience, 'In some instances, it is the thing we fear or in others becomes that thing we desire which is out of reach.' The apple is used similarly to the egg that has been present in many of Potter's earlier works and is seen again here in the painting, "Spores", of a young woman in a forest burying eggs with the help of her Labrador companion. The egg is not the only imagery that has carried through from her last exhibition, 'Inside Out'. The oversized fish and fish bowl from an earlier painting of the same name, reappears in "Here Nor There", a painting of a woman in a vast storm swept California landscape. She's alone with a suitcase, rotary phone (also found in previous work) and fish in a bowl at the side of route 66. Even with familiar imagery present, it is clear that Potter's work has evolved. Brush strokes have become more direct and impressionistic, with the large scale and complex composition of "Masquerade", a direct response to continually challenging herself as an artist.



"Enchanted Apple", Oil on canvas, 30"x 20"

In "**Fables of Rhyme or Reason**" Potter's work draws you in with its illustrative color palette and story book narratives. Upon a closer look though, nothing is as straightforward as it initially reads. In the painting 'Enchanted Apple' the viewer is inside a kitchen with a colander of fruit and a cake tin, looking out of a gingham framed window at a figure wearing a horse mask, presenting a shimmering apple with one hand to the glass pane. The ring on its hand and the style of dress suggest that they are appealing to the domestic, safe and conventional, but the posture and mask are menacing. The fairytale, Snow White-esque, nature of the scene inspires questions and a search for the allegorical.

Potter received her BFA from the University of Utah and her MFA in painting from Laguna College of Art and Design, where she is currently mentoring in their MFA program. She teaches at National University, Mt. San Antonio Community College, and California State University Long Beach.