

# WILDING CRAN GALLERY



Lauren Elder, *The Muse and the Simurgh*

July 2 - 30, 2022

Wilding Cran Gallery is pleased to present *The Muse and the Simurgh*, a solo show of new ceramic works by Los Angeles based artist Lauren Elder.

Elder's practice pays tribute to the diverse traditions and histories of her Iraqi & Scottish ancestors. Merging their ancestral experiences and cultural iconography with those of her contemporary Los Angeles upbringing, she creates a visual identity of her own.

"My ceramic practice is the most immediate and visceral attempt to engage these ancient cultures, with the most ancient and organic medium: clay. I understand vases as modern relics, each piece of stoneware illustratively engraved and influenced as much by Greek and Persian mythology as by Amphora vases, the natural etchings and hieroglyphs found inside the Lascaux Cave, and computer-generated map-making. In my hand-painted vessels I carve signs and symbols that merge these mythologies with signifiers from my own quotidian existence, weaving ancient languages with pictorial narratives connected to the subconscious. They chart my own psycho-geography as it overlaps with the physical geography of my studio and social life in Los Angeles."

"In clay I also explore a range of feminine archetypes: from the ancient warrior figure who cultivates power, with a sense of purpose in order to create social justice and systemic change, to the 'Instagram Influencer' parlaying augmented body forms for likes and social-media power. My ceramic female bust series

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examines everything from the archetypes represented in Judy Chicago's *The Dinner Party*, and punk rock princess to exhibitionist Tik-Tokkers to the matriarchs in my Middle Eastern family who rebelled against systems of oppression. They seek to question power structures and hierarchies within feminist circles and the culture at large."

This is Elder's first time exhibiting with Wilding Cran Gallery.

**Lauren Elder** lives and works in Los Angeles and holds a BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, with an emphasis on Fine Art & Technology. A first-generation American, Elder works in an array of media and techniques that span the ancient practice of hand-forming clay through the rendering of digital imagery and UV printing as she develops her own cross-cultural and cross-generational forms of communication. Her paintings, ceramic sculptures, and prints have been exhibited in London, Hong Kong, New York, Chicago, Amsterdam, Toronto, and Los Angeles including work shown at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago and UMOCA in Salt Lake City. In addition to her creative practice, Lauren teaches art and ceramics to Los Angeles youth. She has volunteered with Inner City Arts, and works with Wilding Cran Gallery, where she curates site specific lessons based on current exhibitions.