

# Anton Kern Gallery

## Roxanne Jackson *UNKNOWN GIANTS*

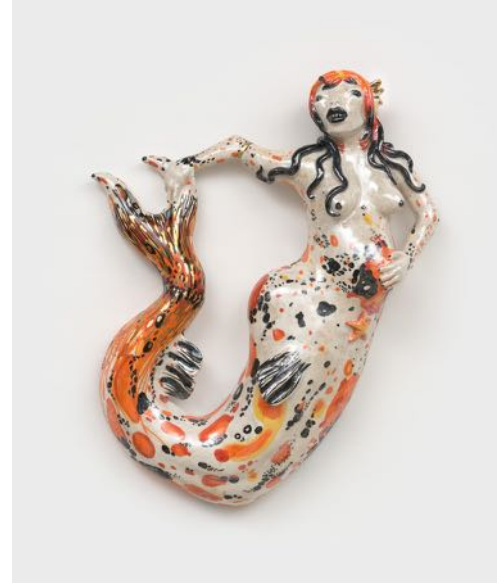
Opening January 10, 2025

Anton Kern Gallery presents *Unknown Giants* by Roxanne Jackson at WINDOW (91 Walker Street), an exhibition that transforms the gallery's street-facing windows into an immersive, life-size diorama, inviting viewers into the artist's meticulously crafted and imagined world. In Jackson's hands, these vitrines function not just as mere display cases, but as portholes into a submerged ecosystem—a fantastical realm set within a light-teal expanse of open ocean (where you may feel dizzy, not knowing if you are above or below the water's surface). While the creatures are bizarre and monstrous (and at times waterlogged), they are also opulent and alluring. There are slimy conch shells; tentacled starfish; a one-eyed anemone; vibrant clownfish; and multiple mermaids with names like *Llorona* and *Cordelia* whose siren calls beckon you deeper, urging you to explore their barnacled and mysterious realm.

Nearly two dozen mythological creatures are on display, ranging dramatically in form and technique. Each showcases Jackson's command of the ceramic medium and her fascination with fantasy and lore. There's remarkable expertise demonstrated in Jackson's use of scale: see the three-foot tall *Nessy*—named for its counterpart in Loch Ness—and the eight-foot long *Crystal*. *Crystal* is one of the artist's largest sculptures made to date, and is both dragon and serpent all in one. This she-beast breathes fire, has a unicorn-like narwhal horn, and several hanging udder-breasts—a nod to the wolf mother who suckled the Remus and Romulus twins in the foundational Roman myth. Nearby, true to form, *Nessy's* elusive head is in profile, emerging from a murky bog, her form recalling blurry images from internet forums. There's also mastery in technique: *Loch Ness (Nessy)* and the *Dragon (Crystal)* have been glazed fired multiple times at different temperatures. The process of glaze firing a piece more than once allows the artist to enhance the finish and add more texture, thereby achieving a more nuanced and complex surface. Because of this technique, *Crystal* dons water marks, appropriate for a water beast; and dark green and brown glazes drip down *Nessy's* neck, an homage to the dirty water she calls home.

Jackson's ecosystem flourishes with a richness of form and narrative that transcends far beyond simplistic depictions of both mysticism and aquatic life. In addition to the giants *Nessy* and *Crystal*, several mermaids enrich Jackson's mythology. Her calico glazed mermaid, *Cordelia*, is goth, girlish and pregnant. The 'old hag' mermaid *Llorona* looks as though she's survived at least one shark attack. She remains vain despite this, and holds up a mirror to her wrinkled face. Jackson's use of the mirror motif here is no mere decorative flourish but a sly allusion to Medieval representations of mermaids—often depicted as symbols of dangerous lust and vanity. The scene is further populated by feral creatures like a jagged-toothed sea urchin, a cyclops anemone, and a curled eel, alongside gator eyes, predatory fish, a poisonous jellyfish, and wreckage—all scattered across the ocean floor.

The exhibition's second display case contains just one work: Jackson's *Salvaged Vessel*, a two-foot tall jar rendered in the style of a large-scale amphorae of ancient Greece. The vessel looks like it's been pulled out of the sea after a couple of centuries. It is crusty, covered in textured glazes and barnacles, coral, mussels, cracks, and tentacles. To achieve this weathered appearance, Jackson glazed and fired the piece countless times. Though covered in grime and oceanic debris, the vase's emerald green ceramic surface still shimmers with iridescence, a ghost of its beauty beneath the layers of time. Visually rich, and filled with a complex narrative history, the amphora encompasses the essence of *Unknown Giants*—in Jackson's (under) world, the surface is only the beginning, and there is always more to uncover down deep.



*Cordelia*, 2024, Ceramic, glaze and luster,  
19 x 16 x 4 inches (48.3 x 40.6 x 10.2 cm)

Roxanne Jackson was born in California's East Bay and currently lives in New York. Press for her work includes the New York Times, the New Yorker, the LA Times, Juxtapoz Magazine, Hyperallergic, Sculpture Magazine, Forbes, Metal Magazine, Cool Hunting and Ceramics Monthly, among others. She has attended residencies at Shigaraki Ceramic Cultural Park, Koka City Shiga Pref., Japan; the Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts, Omaha, NE; Socrates Sculpture Park, Queens, NY; the Center for Contemporary Ceramics, California State University Long Beach, CA; Plop Residency, London, UK; the Ceramic Center of Berlin, Berlin, DE (funded by a Jerome Project Grant); and the Pottery Workshop, Jingdezhen, China (funded by an NCECA fellowship). Selected museum exhibitions include the Schloss Museum, Linz, Austria; the Arter Museum, Istanbul, TRKY; Craft Contemporary, Los Angeles, CA; the Mütter Museum, Philadelphia, PA; the Grassi Museum, Leipzig, DE; and the Minneapolis Institute of Art, Minneapolis, MN. Her work is in the permanent collection of the Museum of Art and Design, NY, NY. Selected New York City exhibitions include The Armory Show with Night Gallery, The Hole, R & Company, Underdonk, Elijah Wheat Showroom, Ortega y Gasset Projects, Sardine, Dinner Gallery and Spring/Break Art Fair. Other exhibitions include Sargeant's Daughters, Los Angeles, CA; David Lewis Gallery, East Hampton, NY; Andrew Rafacz Gallery, Chicago, IL; Louise Alexander Gallery, Sardinia, ITALY; Duve Berlin Gallery, Berlin, DE; Public Gallery and Cob Gallery, London, UK; Mindy Solomon Gallery, Miami, FL; and Anonymous Gallery, Mexico City, MX.