

PAULA COOPER GALLERY

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VERONICA RYAN

The Weather Inside

521 W 21st Street

September 7 — October 12, 2019

Opening reception: Friday, September 6, 6–8pm

NEW YORK—An exhibition of work created by Veronica Ryan over the last ten years will open at Paula Cooper Gallery on September 7th, 2019. Born in Plymouth, Montserrat and raised in England, Ryan has engaged with issues of history, identity, dislocation, and belonging throughout her career. Her meticulously handcrafted works—while quiet and elusive—also contain a capacity for provoking an eruptive and disquieting internal dialogue. “Small objects can have an immense resonance and suggest monumentality in the world,” Ryan stated. Composed of materials that reference her Afro-Caribbean heritage, the works examine the psychology and semantics of perception, as well as allude to notions of home, memory, and loss. There will be a reception for the artist on Friday, September 6th from 6 to 8pm. The exhibition will remain on view through October 12th, 2019 at 521 West 21st Street.

Various found objects have been wrapped, sewn, stacked, cast or remade in plaster. Among those displayed on shelving units are fragments of coral bound with bandages and vegetable nets; crocheted doilies; tea-stained textiles; and mesh produce bags filled with the stones of tropical fruit: artifacts that recall Ryan’s memories and ancestral associations of the West Indies. Imprinted with the artist’s meticulous and almost ritualistic interventions, the works not only convey the personal and psychological residue held within objects, but also the collective processes such the exportation of agricultural commodities, migration of peoples, and paradigmatic notions of diaspora. Towering stacks of produce trays—perforated by crocheted tunnels that extend through their foliation—are placed directly on the ground. “I’m interested in cultural dynamics [...] and the vegetable is a way of speaking metaphorically. I like the receptacles with their egg-like shapes,” Ryan explains, “and stacking as way of establishing a kind of order to make sense of one’s reality.”

The exhibition also features several sculptures from Ryan’s 2011 show at The Mattress Factory in Pittsburgh. Arranged on a ledge mounted along one of the gallery’s walls, the works consist of objects and materials of utility—including pipes, grates, shower curtains and vacuum components. Their formal combinations produce fragile propositions, unpacking tensions between container and contained, absence and presence, invisible and visible, inside and outside. In part the gray plaster works reference the volcanic eruption on Montserrat in 1995, which destroyed the island’s capital city and covered the Southern part of the island in ash. Here, preserved moments, blockages, partial evidence, and traces of things petrified evoke a liminal space and time—and question concepts of identity, memory, loss, and territorial boundaries.

Ryan (b. 1956, Plymouth, Montserrat) has studied at St. Albans College of Art and Design, Bath Academy of Art in Corsham Court, The Slade School of Art at University College, London, and The School of Oriental and African Studies at London University. Ryan’s first one-person exhibition was at Arnolfini, Bristol in 1987. Other important one-person shows have been presented at Kettle’s Yard, Cambridge (1988), Camden Arts Centre (1995), Aldrich Museum (1996), Salena Gallery,

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Brooklyn (2005), Tate St Ives (2000, 2005 and 2017), The Mattress Factory, Pittsburgh (2011), and The Art House, Wakefield, Yorkshire, England (2017). Ryan has been the recipient of numerous awards and prizes, including most recently the 2019 Pollock Krasner Grant and the 2018 Freelands Award—for which the artist will present a major exhibition on Spike Island in Bristol in 2020. Her work is in many private and public collections such as the Arts Council Collection, Contemporary Art Society, Sainsbury's Collection, Tate Collection, the Wakefield Collection at The Hepworth Wakefield, and the Weltkunst Collection at the Irish Museum of Modern Art. Ryan currently lives and works in both New York and the U.K.

For more information and images, please contact the gallery:
(212) 255-1105; info@paulacoopergallery.com