

REYNOLDS GALLERY

ESTHER RUIZ

Unearthed

September 7 – October 26, 2018

Opening Reception
Friday, September 7
7 – 9 pm



Volume III, 2016, MDF, plaster, neon, paint, hardware, 4 x 1.5 x 2 feet

Reynolds Gallery is pleased to announce the opening of *Unearthed*, an exhibition of Esther Ruiz's neon and mixed media sculptures and objects. Previously curated into a 2016 group exhibition, *Unearthed* is Ruiz's first solo exhibition at Reynolds Gallery. The show opens with a public reception for the artist on Friday, September 7 from 7 – 9 pm and continues through October 26, 2018.

Ruiz's playful palette and distinct pairing of materials stems from Minimalist influences reinvented. Her interactive pieces prove entrancing and mystical yet grounded in the nearby buzz of electrical outlets. Most recently, Ruiz explores the use of laminated MDF, or Medium-Density Fiberboard, a wood composite similar to plywood. Like *Volume III* (pictured above), her color-void shapes emphasizing the relationship between form and light as subtle tonal shifts emerge. She balances tension within the objects; the wood's curved lines contrast sharp neon brackets while a glowing exterior fades into shadowed cut-out form. In Ruiz's miniature cement sculptures, forged glass mingles with geodes and cut Plexiglas. The cement base acts as a stage, allowing punchy colors and staggered shapes to play within pocket-sized dimensions. Her materials unapologetically coexist; Ruiz's symmetrical placement communicates a believability, a naturalism, in the object's origins. Much like a sci-fi movie set, we wonder where these objects came from and how they came about. The question of archeology is further evident in Ruiz's use of

geodes, split open to expose effects of time, growth, and history. As if giving voice to the rocks below us and predicting the ones to come, her work becomes a snapshot of past and future symbols. She states, “the imagery I work with is born out of exploring and researching fictional places imagined in my mind...ultimately, my work exists as an effort to visually explain an emotional state of mind with mathematical acuteness.”

Ruiz’s imagined spaces materialize as reflective landscapes in her wall hangings. Titled “Wells,” the pool-like structures consist of a Plexiglas base, outlined in neon tubing which extends from the mirror-like surface. In one work, toxic green neon contrasts an iridescent base, while another piece boasts a glossy black surface illuminated by cool white tubing. Ruiz’s choice of contrasting colors mimics the materials’ defiant nature. The glass’s rigidity is interrupted by the neon’s soft glow, extending past the piece and onto the wall. Reflecting out, her sculptures engage the space and the viewer, distorting their surroundings like a rearview mirror to the world around us.

Based in Brooklyn, New York, Ruiz was born in Houston, Texas and received a BFA in Studio Art from Rhodes College in Memphis, Tennessee (2011). She is the recipient of the 2016 Artist Grant and Williamsburg Studio Lottery from SpaceWorks and the 2014 ArtBridge Urban Modulations Public Art Installation and Award. She has shown nationally and internationally at galleries including yours mine & ours gallery, New Release Gallery, Regina Rex, Field Projects, Planthouse Gallery, all, New York City; Urban Glass, Brooklyn Academy of Music, Brooklyn; Cross MacKenzie Gallery, Washington, D.C.; Platform Baltimore; Vox Populi, Philadelphia; and the American Center for Physics, College Park, MD. Her work has been reviewed in publications including The Washington Post, Art News, VICE, The Wall Street Journal, The American Ceramic Society, Hyperallergic, The New York Times, and on National Public Radio (NPR).

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