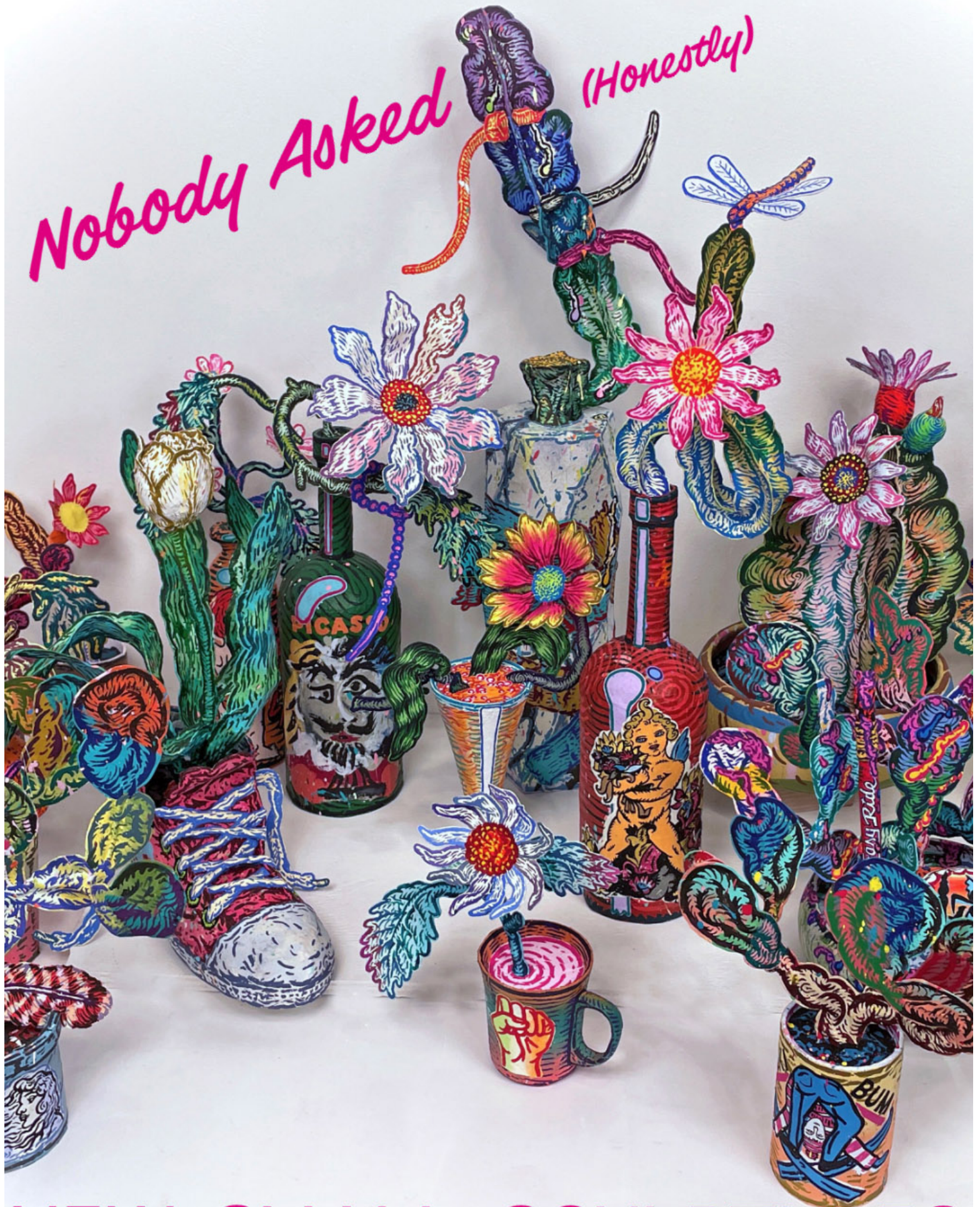


*Nobody Asked (Honestly)*



**NEW SMALL SCULPTURES**

It's such a hectic moment in time right now, which has the art world feeling understandably peckish. The role of art in helping us through hard times has been kicked to the curb in recent years. The art world has been gaslighting itself and all else who crave Kool-Aid, that it's been expanding on Warhol's Pop concept of art as a business, but if we clean the lenses in our wannabe Deitch, bright, thick-rimmed glasses, it's clearly just been unironically running another zombie fashion industry. With rent the way it is, people needed a quick flip and that SUPREME brick looked like a gold boom. Those long lines around the block, or on waiting lists for hot-name-brand art, have had artists rolling the clock back on workers' rights and turning their own studios into Depression-era, cold-lit sweatshops to crank out hot product. No sense in unionizing when you're your own boss. No HR department steppin' in when you're forced to shake that ass for the algorithm. ***But soul-based art*** has been standing out in bread lines, getting hungry. Getting ready for this moment right here.

The art world made its own bed by dismissing "soul" as arbitrary or sentimental, and defining "folk art" as naive or ignorant. It's been turning its nose up at oranges while sick with scurvy. The art world is malnourished and just needs to get some of that good stuff. Art is powerful medicine and has been doing its thing for far too long to be this confused about it.

Making art that expresses unique personal experience with a focus on conveying deep truths, traditions or even hot takes, in a way that makes people feel the power of it whether or not they relate, is so undeniable. You don't need to be a Dust Bowl refugee to have your arm hair stand on end listening to Woody Guthrie melt you to people you've never met.

"Identity art" is a redundant term, and it's absurd and even highly problematic to declare that folk art can't also be rigorous or avant-garde. Truth in art is everything. Folk art doesn't have any fear of AI. AI is just a soulless, derivative artist. You might be too, if AI can make your art.



I've definitely come to understand my work as being a visual cousin of the blues. These days, that's feeling especially pronounced. I've always leaned into sincerity, social consciousness, and pathos, but definitely absurdity and humor at the same time. And if that ain't the blues...

The ridiculous and the idiotic are always present somewhere in tragedy, though usually left unacknowledged out of distress, compassion, or just good decorum. The reverse is also true. The biggest laughs come from subject matter that grinds all over that decorum line while flushing out the funny. It's such a cathartic release to indulge in that humor that sits right next to pain. With the blues, both extremes take the stage together and share the spotlight. That hot-cold therapy is profoundly powerful medicine and it's truly soul-healing.

Thinking about my work as a form of the blues has been especially grounding. It brings into focus a real sense of purpose in the work, especially during heavy times.



I rarely ever actually get much feedback on my art, but recently some people have mentioned to me, in various ways, that my work has felt like a kind of soul medicine or an infusion of joy in the midst of a constant stream of anxiety and stress. Those comments all coming just now don't seem coincidental to me, and it feels really affirming and gratifying that the work has been having that effect. It feels right.

It's been a potent experience to have a studio full of these sculptures right now. I've mainly been doing commissions in recent years, so they are usually shipped right out the door the moment they're done. Being surrounded by them this time has definitely kept me feeling charged and has made the studio a kind of energetic, utopian sanctuary for me to ride out all the crazy while I've been here working. These sculptures are feeling like they've genuinely been serving a bit of a higher function these days.



I've actually been planning to stop working on sculptures altogether for a while. There doesn't seem to be anyone making anything like them. They really have a lot of impact, but they are also extremely time-consuming and a total train wreck in the financial sustainability department. I definitely plan to return to them in the future but at a significantly different price point that allows for hiring help to work on them and also for a gallery commission, since I won't be selling them through the studio anymore.

A lot of people have been waiting for a chance at a small sculpture, but understandably prefer to choose from finished work rather than through a commission. I'm so appreciative of all the support I've gotten from a lot of people who are among those waiting, so it was important to me to make this group of smaller, affordably sized sculptures to give many people what may likely be a last shot at getting them before the price becomes prohibitive.

A very big thank you everyone who has gotten sculptures and supported one way or another. It means a lot, and makes a big difference in keepin' this truck on the road!





