

NIGHT GALLERY

2276 E. 16th Street, Los Angeles, California 90021 nightgallery.ca

Annabel Osberg, "Jasmine Little; Robert Nava," **ARTILLERY**, August 7, 2019

ARTILLERY



JASMINE LITTLE; ROBERT NAVA

Jasmine Little's ceramics and **Robert Nava**'s paintings both incorporate breezily limned imagery of fantastic creatures and people. At a distance, the large stoneware vessels in Little's show, "Retrograde," appear deceptively old-fashioned; their brown-and-white palette and vaselike forms recall antiques such as Greek amphoras and Staffordshire pottery. Art historical references abound on these vessels' carven surfaces bearing pageants of whimsical imagery: cameo appearances are made by the "Venus of Willendorf," beasts from Lascaux cave paintings, and a dancing trio of nymphs from

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Botticelli's "Allegory of the Spring." Yet Little's exuberant painterly style is decidedly contemporary, transmitting the notion that art history is made to be reimagined. With similarly whimsical flair, Nava interprets enduring folkloric characters such as dragons, ghosts, witches and robots. At a glance, his frenzied smudges and scrawly lines convey a spontaneous immediacy akin to that of children's drawings; yet his paintings' studied sophistication reveals itself upon closer observation. Most painters will relate to the notion of a canvas as a battleground; and Nava's show's title, "Vs.," is meant as a metaphor for the dilemmas and struggles he faces in endeavoring to paint interesting pictures. And it seems that he generally succeeds, for characters such as the skeletal witch in *Fire and Bone Angel* (2019, pictured above) sizzle with painterly energy, seeming to come alive despite their indistinct figuration.

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Shows run through Aug. 17