

Trans Goddess

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Artist Statement

This piece stands at two feet tall and portrays a robust transgender woman with one simplistic arm at her side and one over her left breast. She is headless and her legs come to a rounded point at the knees. The white slip on her body has been rubbed off to reveal the terracotta underneath.

This piece was created as part of the “Historical Departure” project in my ceramics class with Kate Tremel. The idea of the project is to take a historical piece and to bring it into a modern context. My inspiration was the collection of prehistoric Mesopotamian “Goddess” sculptures displayed at the Kelsey Museum. They range in age quite greatly, but the meaning remains similar: fertility, both in the traditional sense and in the fertility of fields and crops; freedom of sexuality, and prosperity.

The other similarities they share are in appearance: Most of them are white, oftentimes painted white with slip over a terracotta (or otherwise nonwhite) base; they have similar poses with the hands on one or both of the breasts; many of them are mold made; they’re all a similar size (about three to six inches tall); they have similar proportions that being wide hips, large breasts, and a round stomach (signs of being well fed and therefore fertile); and they often have no head (due to it breaking off or being built without one) and the legs often end in a rounded point at the knees.

I was strongly inspired by both the themes and the look of this collection and decided to create my own take on them. I wanted to recreate the look using a lot of the original techniques so the

historical departure came in with the subject matter: I made the Goddess a trans woman. Trans people, and trans women especially, have a lot of issues with fertility that are often overlooked by society at large. Trans women often become infertile due to hormone replacement therapy and sperm freezing is often prohibitively expensive. Similarly, many trans women, and especially trans women of color, have to deal with forced sterilization. In a broader sense, trans women are generally seen as a blight on society instead of people enriching our society as they should be.

With this as my concept, I decided to scale up the originals and make my own. I kept the stomach, large breasts and hips as well as the white slip on top for the finish. I also kept the rounded off features (hence no individual fingers) and the worn exterior to match the original.



Jackier Prize Competition, 2019–2020



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11. Figure with Hands Clasped below Breast



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