



IN PERSPECTIVE

Future Forms

McCLAIN GALLERY of Houston, Texas, is currently mounting its first solo exhibition of work by the Vermont-born, Brooklyn-based artist Julia Kunin. "Rainbow Dream Machine," which is on view through January 30, presents ceramic pieces from Kunin's *Caryatid* series. These intricate wall-mounted high reliefs occupy a space between abstraction and figuration and borrow from the language of architecture, from the ancient to the futuristic.

Kunin says, "These abstracted surreal female and non-gender-specific figures that I am continuing to develop address



sexuality while incorporating imagery from once utopian structures. The body and architecture become intertwined, creating portraits that verge on the robotic and otherworldly, stand-ins for future Guerilleres, or warriors."

Works in the series, like *Double Portrait* (2018, ceramic wall piece) and *Labrys Queen*

(2019, ceramic wall piece), feature symbols of femininity and anatomy but, unlike the sculpted female caryatid pillars of ancient Greek architecture, are essentially genderless. The abstraction of gender in Kunin's works points to the erasure of queer bodies in neutral space (i.e. straight, white) and mirrors

the practice of expressing sexuality through code but also creates potential new, totemic symbols of protection, like those created by ancient cultures.

The works in the show also highlight the artist's use of proprietary luster glazes. In pieces like *Red Clay Keyhole* (2019, ceramic wall piece), the iridescence of Kunin's glazes is reminiscent of Art Nouveau. The metallic sheen of the work's glaze and its interlocking shapes brings to mind the robotic costumes of Oskar Schlemmer's *The Triadic Ballet*, an inspiration of Kunin's, or the futuristic suit of the female *Maschinenmensch* in Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*.