

INTERVIEW

INTERVIEW BY LINDSEY LOWE
PHOTOS BY MARCO COUSINS
RACHEL GRADY, STYLIST
CREATIVE DIRECTION, LINDSEY LOWE

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OF SARAH CABIGAS

sarah cabigas

HER DREAMLIKE PAINTINGS
COMBINE SYMBOLISM AND
FAMILIAR OBJECTS THAT OPEN
PORTALS TO THE CROSSROADS
OF ESOTERIC GIRLHOOD.
EACH CANVAS IS AN ALTAR.
EACH OBJECT, A RELIC OF
DESIRE.

IN THIS INTERVIEW, SARAH
TALKS BLADES, BRAIDS, AND
STRAWBERRY-SCENTED
MEMORIES.
SHE WAS PHOTOGRAPHED AT
GOLDEN HOUR IN LOS
ANGELES.

SARAH CABIGAS, *THE ONLY WAY OUT, IS THROUGH*, 2025.
OIL ON CANVAS, 36 X 48 INCHES





**STEPPING INTO SARAH CABIĞAS'S
STUDIO IS A BIT LIKE RECALLING
A DREAM.**

Everything feels uncannily familiar, as if I've been here before, though this is my first time. A sense of déjà vu washes over me—nostalgia for what, for when? The space is alive with people and activity. A woman pushes a rack of gowns past as Sarah greets me. The woman who emerges from behind the couture curtain happens to be Rachel Grady, celebrated costume designer and stylist, who recently garnered praise for her Magdalene collection. She drops a large trunk at our feet, overflowing with colorful wigs that spring forth like snakes in a can from a magic store. Apologizing, she offers, "I can get out of your way if you need privacy."

Sarah looks at me apologetically, gauging how I feel amidst the commotion. "Do you want me to clear everyone out?" she asks. "No," I say, "if this is normal and not distracting for you." "Yeah, this is pretty normal," Sarah responds. "I've always dreamed of my studio being a community space, a place for people to use or escape to. Even if someone just wants to come and do a puzzle while I'm working, it doesn't always have to be a collaboration. I'm just happy that so many people feel comfortable using the space and moving in and out freely."

It occurs to me that maybe what's been bubbling up from my subconscious is a reboot of the Andy Warhol Factory fantasy. It's queer, it's alive, and it runs like a theater troupe performing, whether or not I'm there to witness it. The environment feels far from chaotic—in fact, it seems fueled by sobriety, along with a generous dose of whimsy. I feel safe in assuming that Sarah doesn't believe creativity requires suffering.

Cats descend from towers and storage spaces overflowing with art supplies. Open windows let in a breeze, and candelabras are adorned with layers of melted wax. Tarot cards hang from a mobile, accompanied by witchy artifacts whose meanings I can't quite discern. And then, almost unexpectedly, I notice the large, nearly wall-sized framed portraits of Sarah. Shot by renowned photographer Marco Cousins, these images evoke the striking photos of Björk taken by Spike Jonze—intimate, yet larger-than-life. As I study them, I can't help but associate Sarah's rising notoriety with the early days of Björk's fame. There's something of her youthful, magnetic energy reflected in these portraits, making Sarah feel like she's on the verge of something monumental.

We sink down into a plush vintage sofa, and Sarah hands me a cup of herbal tea served in a mug shaped like a mushroom. As the Kate Bush record spins to its end, everything around us dissolves, as if we've stepped into a fairytale.

LINDSEY LOWE - To me, your paintings feel like arrangements of symbolic objects, almost like tarot spreads or altars. Do you think of them as part of a visual language? And how do you choose what objects appear in your work?

SARAH CABIGAS - They're absolutely part of a visual language. Since the beginning, I've thought of each piece as an altar with its own intention—whether it's to a feeling or a person. A lot of the objects I choose live in the same curio cabinet in my brain. I've always gravitated toward flames and candles, and beautifully ornate, almost historical ritualistic weaponry—daggers, scythes, scissors. Anything antique, unique, or evocative of rich ritual. These things all kind of lay down in red velvet in my mind. Then, depending on where I'm at and what I've envisioned, I choose what comes out to play.

LINDSEY LOWE - You mentioned earlier your frustration with painting on smaller canvases. Do you think size is related to different planes of reality for you?

SARAH CABIGAS - I think so. When a piece is almost my size, I feel fully present in the world I can see in my head. I believe these worlds exist—just not in this plane. I'm a conduit for the images I see, and making them large helps make them concrete here, where I am. It's both comforting and terrifying.

LINDSEY LOWE - Sharing space.

SARAH CABIGAS - Yeah. And being very present with that realm.

LINDSEY LOWE - I interpret your work as deeply feminine—not in an obvious way, but through its softness and the intimacy of objects. Is femininity something you consciously explore, or is it more intuitive?

SARAH CABIGAS - I've recently realized I'm actively exploring femininity and queerness in myself—primarily through my own lens, not outside sources. I'm asking: What does femininity and queerness look like for me? For my ideal self? How do I translate that without painting myself?

LINDSEY LOWE - All of these are self-portraits.

SARAH CABIGAS - In a way, yes. They're energetic self-portraits. Not literal images of me—that doesn't feel necessary right now. But each piece contains something pulled from myself.

It's like pulling out an organ and leaving it there. Here's my liver. Have fun.



LINDSEY LOWE - The lighting and atmosphere in your paintings feel suspended in time. When you chose "dream" as your theme, I immediately thought of dream space—where gravity doesn't apply. Is it just dreams that inspire that stillness, or something more?

SARAH CABIGAS - Mainly dreams—which is funny because my dreams feel very real. But I think I'm also searching for calm, suspension, stillness within myself—feelings I don't experience often. Painting them gives me a taste of that.

LINDSEY LOWE - Do you identify as an animist or panpsychist—someone who believes everything around them is ensouled?

SARAH CABIGAS - Yeah, I think so. Everything has energy, everything's humming, everything's alive. You don't need science to feel that. When I was a kid, I wanted to be buried with my stuffed animals. I still have my favorites. They're alive. They just don't move when I'm looking.

LINDSEY LOWE - I'd love to see a series about your stuffed animals.

SARAH CABIGAS - That would be sweet. I have a pink unicorn named Darla—that would be really cute. I'm already seeing it. Interestingly, I'd paint her small. The real objects in my



SARAH CABIGAS, *TO UNTETHER IS AN ACT OF LOVE*, 2024.
OIL ON CANVAS, 36 X 48 INCHES

life feel like they belong on a smaller scale. But the fantasy version of Darla? She'd be huge.

LINDSEY LOWE - The astral version.

SARAH CABIGAS - Exactly. Darla exists in the astral. She's enormous and beautiful with strawberry-scented pink hair.

LINDSEY LOWE - Speaking of strawberry-scented hair—if your art were a scent, what would it be?

SARAH CABIGAS - Oh, I love this question so much. It would be incense. It would be smoky, depending. It would also depend on the work. But I feel like there would be a trace, like, a lingering trace of jasmine. Like there's jasmine blooming two blocks away, and the wind comes by, and you can get the little smell of it, but the incense is burning right in front of you. So that's mostly what you smell.

LINDSEY LOWE - Color evokes scent, in a way black and white doesn't.

SARAH CABIGAS - Totally. Black and white smells like an old bar—leather, cigars, old books. Color has layers. A bright green smells different than a dark green. You feel it in your body.

LINDSEY LOWE - If your art could only exist in one season, which would it be?

SARAH CABIGAS - Autumn. That space between life and death. Things are starting to decay, but there's still warmth. The soil is alive. There's fog, crisp air, and still enough sunlight. Autumn.

LINDSEY LOWE - Some of the objects in your paintings feel like stand-ins for things that aren't physically present. What's your relationship to the unseen?

SARAH CABIGAS - It depends on the piece. Sometimes I know what I'm saying from the start. Sometimes I don't.

But there's safety in letting objects represent things I'm afraid of.

A braid, for example, represents devotion, care, energy spent with someone. When I paint a braid with scissors—like a cord cutting—it's heartbreaking. But I don't want to paint the person or myself. Symbolism creates a safe distance.

LINDSEY LOWE - There's a tactile quality to your work—it feels like I could touch the wax or the metal. Do you consciously think about texture when you paint?

SARAH CABIGAS - Absolutely. I love making things feel real without being hyper-realistic. Texture is essential—otherwise things feel flat. I want viewers to feel like they could touch it: is it wet, dry, cold, warm? Would it burn you? I'm not trying to perfect the lighting—I'm trying to create sensation. I want my work to be interactive somehow, but for now, I translate that desire into two dimensions.

LINDSEY LOWE - Do you think about divination—not just mystically, but in the way objects can reveal something unexpected?

SARAH CABIGAS - Yes. I try to paint what I see when I have visions. Sometimes they're scary—I'll sketch them very small to make them less real and save them for later. But placement matters. Timing matters. My labyrinth piece started with yellow ribbons—originally about coming home to myself. It was inspired by a song lyric and my experience growing up with a military parent. But it evolved. Post-election, I knew it had to happen. I understood what I needed to say. Listening to that inner voice is everything. If I ignore it, I get stuck.





SARAH CABIGAS, *DREAMWATCHER, CAUGHT*, 2024.
OIL ON CANVAS, 28 X 22 INCHES



SARAH CABIGAS, *LILIES FOR A POET*, 2024.
OIL ON CANVAS, 16 X 20 INCHES



LINDSEY LOWE - Since you identify as both painter and designer—and your work has a cinematic feel—do you ever think of yourself as a filmmaker?

SARAH CABIGAS - That's interesting. I work in the film industry, so I see the world through that lens, literally and figuratively. But beyond that, I've always seen my life as a movie. That's how I perceive things—dreamlike, cinematic. So that quality just bleeds into the paintings, whether I try or not.

LINDSEY LOWE - If your paintings existed in a film, what would the title be?

SARAH CABIGAS - The Walker. That phrase has been with me for years. I am the walker. These works fit into that energy.

LINDSEY LOWE - What does "The Walker" mean to you?

SARAH CABIGAS - Movement. Years ago I realized I love films where women walk or run. I didn't know why at the time. But the phrase "The Walker" kept repeating in my mind. Now, I think it's all connected. These works exist in that title.

LINDSEY LOWE - What's something more recent that has completely captivated you?

SARAH CABIGAS - Desire. I don't allow myself desire very often, and I've felt shame around it—for people, for things. But it's pouring through my work. And now it's growing too loud to ignore. I've had to create containers for it, because it's scary. But a container makes it feel more manageable.

LINDSEY LOWE - Besides desire, are there themes that keep returning to you?

SARAH CABIGAS - Lately, I've been haunted by how my fear of not doing something perfectly holds me back. I can be brave, but with small things—like placing a cup on set or a highlight on canvas—I get timid. That timidity creates stagnancy. I'm aware of it now, but it's scary to push past it. Still, I can't stay stuck. There's a bit of masochism in that drive to expand. It hurts, but I do it.

LINDSEY LOWE - Do you ever feel like your work is a rebellion against your own identity?

SARAH CABIGAS - No. It feels aligned. Like giving out organs. Not a rebellion against myself, but maybe against who I thought I had to be. For a long time I didn't see myself as magical or colorful. Now I paint in color.



I'm saying: I'm not that scared little girl anymore. This is me. Here's my liver. Here are my lungs. You don't get the brain, but maybe an eye.

LINDSEY LOWE - If your paintings could whisper something to the viewer, what would they say?

SARAH CABIGAS - "Your dreams are real." Because they are. We think dreams are subconscious, not real—but if you dreamed it, it exists somewhere. That's what the work is whispering.

LINDSEY LOWE - What's the strangest compliment you've received about your work?

SARAH CABIGAS - Most compliments have been online, but when I gave a friend a painting of a pelvis and lilies, they said it felt unsettling and comforting at the same time. That made me feel so seen. I crave a little unsettlement in my viewers—something that makes them go, "Why did I feel that just now?"

LINDSEY LOWE - This was wonderful. I feel completely not unsettled.

SARAH CABIGAS - Great.

LINDSEY LOWE - You chose dreams as your theme—and dreams can be very unsettling. You're clearly tapped into the dream world.

SARAH CABIGAS - Yes.

LINDSEY LOWE - I'm excited for you to discover the secrets hidden there.

SARAH CABIGAS - Me too. And also not. I have all the keys—I just don't know which doors they go to. Or if there even is a door. Thank you. This was so wonderful.





prophecy
dreams



