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IN THE STUDIO WITH SARAH MISKA, THE PAINTER REEXAMINING THE HORSE GIRL

For nearly the entirety of my hour-and-a-half Zoom with Sarah Miska, I have nearly as prominent a view of the artist as I do of what she candidly refers to as a horse's ass. Elsewhere in the stable in northeast Los Angeles that she's converted into a studio, there is a work in progress of a rider with a racing number pinned to her back; further afield, a closeup of a traditional equestrian hair net worn atop a sleek bun. For the past year or two, Miska has focused entirely on equestrian motifs, depicting closely cropped vignettes of the competitive horse-racing world that's captivated her for as long as she can remember. Growing up, she was a stereotypical "horse girl," she says, aspiring to own a stable and join the professionals' ranks. She still loves horses, but these days, Miska is coming to terms with her mixed feelings about what has always been an upper-class, exclusive sport.

When Night Gallery, in Los Angeles, selected Miska as the first artist to exhibit at its new space in 2022, the 39-year-old was assisting other artists and getting accustomed to the "pretty gnarly" experience of being a mom. The show sold out on opening night, and Miska went on to her first art fair presentation at Night Gallery's booth during the Dallas Art Fair. Now she is opening her second prominent solo show to date, at Friends Indeed gallery in San Francisco. The title, "Tidy," is both a nod to the rigor of the riding world and the painstakingly meticulous line work that characterizes the paintings.

Champion, Sarah Miska, 2022

Details of *Champion* (2022) by Sarah Miska. Courtesy the artist and Friends Indeed Gallery, San Francisco. Photographed by Nik Massey.