



PRESENTS

SPIRIT WITHIN



ALEXI MARSHALL | ANNA SEBASTIAN | HAZEL FLOREZ | KENDALL JONES
MAFALDA FIGUEIREDO | OLIVIA MANSFIELD | ROSIE MCLACHLAN | SALOMÉ WU



Spiritualism, occult, paganism, mysticism, esotericism – these are just a few of the different manifestations of ‘the resistant woman’ that have dramatically increased in contemporary art practices and exhibitions in recent years. Historically, women resisting patriarchy were labelled witches, and practicing ‘evil’ occult rituals. Today, this figure, and the associated practices, has re-emerged - enlivened by feminist, environmental and post-colonial interpretations and perspectives.

Spirit Within, is a multidisciplinary exhibition bringing together the practices of eight women artists: Alexi Marshall, Anna Sebastian, Hazel Florez, Kendall Jones, Mafalda Figueiredo, Olivia Mansfield, Rosie McLachlan, and Salome Wu. The exhibition showcases a unique, multidisciplinary insight into how contemporary women artists draw upon themes of mysticism, spirituality, tradition, occult and other worldliness, through a distinctly feminist lens.

Although mysticism and spirituality can be treated as a subset within the larger category of the occult, there exists a prominent independent mystical tradition with a long history in both Eastern and Western culture. Mysticism, astrology, magic, tarot, and alchemy are among the rituals and belief systems that have been historically excluded to present a more hegemonic and ‘dominant’ perspective – that of the patriarchy and other knowledge and belief systems such as religion. As the title suggests, this exhibition takes the viewer on an introspective deep-dive, drawing links between the exhibited works, the subconscious and the current political feminist climate.

One of the exhibiting artists, Hazel Florez, refers to herself as an “esoteric surrealist” and an “alien from outer space”. Florez creates imaginary worlds and “mystical portals” through her work, and makes use of a wide range of mediums including oil, acrylic, pen and ink, installation and photography. Presenting three works in this exhibition, *Exaltation* (2022), *Danu’s Garden* (2022) and *Talisman to Protect the Endangered Flowers of Albion* (2022), she compiles layers of iconography and symbols to explore witchcraft, medicine, identity, cosmology and folklore.





Exaltation (2022) and *Danu's Garden* (2022) both draw upon the historical and contemporary relevance of women healers and the natural world. Historically, the witches of the Middle Ages were often those women who were seen to be healers, with a powerful knowledge of herbs and natural medicine. The witch was the village midwife, soothsayer, sorceress or medic, whose empirical knowledge was heavily reliant on access to common and shared spaces. The loss of these spaces through enclosures, and the persecution of women throughout the centuries, has led to a complete loss of knowledge and relationship to nature, as famously documented by activist, feminist and writer Silvia Federici. Consequently, the occult, spiritualism, and its practices have often been seen as necessarily associated to an out-dated relationship with nature.

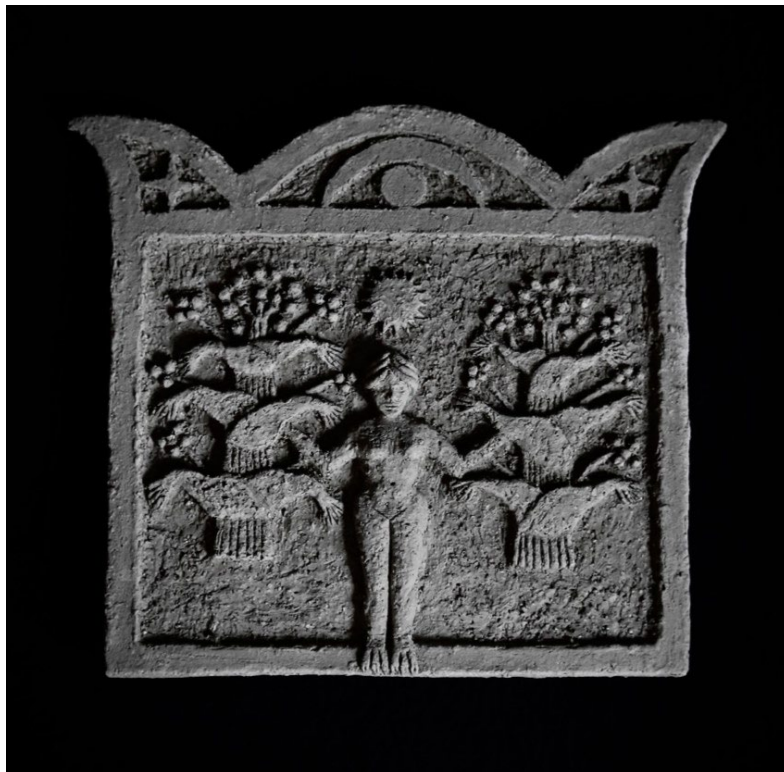
Talisman to Protect the Endangered Flowers of Albion (2022) showcases some of the UK's rarest and most threatened medicinal plants, celebrating their beauty through oil and gold-leaf; a distinctive aesthetic feature consistent throughout Florez's works. Florez expertly straddles the inherently sacred experience of knowledge sharing and storytelling, as well as the relationship between women and nature.

Taking a different approach to such depictions of women is Alexi Marshall, who works in print, mosaic, drawing and embroidery, and investigates, in her own words "themes of womanhood... and regeneration". In her choice of medium alone, Marshall references rich feminist histories and traditions. Showcasing a hanging work, visually reminiscent of a tapestry, Marshall draws her inspiration from Pamela Colman Smith's Rider-Waite Tarot Deck –the most popular and widely used tarot deck in the world. First issued in 1910, each card is rich in symbolism, and is markedly different from all predecessors. Importantly, Christian imagery does not feature, and instead is heavily influenced by occultist and magician Eliphaz Levi, as well as the teachings of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. In *The Return* (2022), Marshall depicts a woman, hand-embroidered on a thick fabric, embellished with beads and other mixed medias. The naked (rather than nude) woman is at one with nature. She exudes knowledge, as well as solace. Tarot cards are often used to predict futures, or comment on past experiences, usually wielded by expert readers. *The Return* draws upon this, imbuing not only the artists' own experiences and memories, but also a hopefulness and yearning for the future.

Throughout the exhibiting artists is a powerful sense of truthfulness and honesty, be that in their beliefs, practices or representations. Kendall Jones, a sculptor based in Vancouver, creates work that is born from her own “shamanic practice”, and an intuitive need to portray her experiences of meditation and lucid dreaming. Within her current small works, she draws from experiences within the Pueblan culture in Mexico, exploring various aspects of the self, as well as the cycles of life and death. Repeated faces, placed together almost like a Russian doll, articulate the complexity of the self and identity: how it is shaped, formed and expressed.

Rosie McLachlan forages naturally occurring river-bed clay to create ceramic works that are deeply connected to her studies as an archaeologist. Working with and through materials found in her locality, she both practically and ideology explores our connections to place and the natural world while imbuing her process with symbolism. Her work is intricate and timeless, with a clear relationship to vessels and bodies long past, and bringing forth ideas of divinity and mortality. Jones and McLachlan are united by their use of the Anagama Kiln for firing, an ancient and deeply involved method requiring equal parts skill, chance and a deep understanding of natural materials akin to alchemy in its specificity.

Anna Sebastian, who works in the more distinctly two dimensional medium of paint, also draws from her own experiences – specifically in the exploration of memory and lived experiences. However, much like both Florez and Marshall, she borrows certain ideologies and practices from the occult, presenting her works within the visual framework of mythology and symbolism.





Heat, undulation and movement simultaneously juxtapose and unite the works of Olivia Mansfield, Salome Wu and Mafalda Figueiredo. Whereas in Mansfield's and Wu's fantastical works, women are engulfed in multicoloured, rippling flames, Figueiredo's figure is shown separate, distinctly in control, as in *Burn it Down* (2022). This latter work is powerful. The woman, nude and bathed in orange, looks directly out at the viewer, daring them to engage. Behind her, or potentially attached, are additional limbs, which reach out and playfully caress the potential danger. The woman is neither afraid, nor concerned by the flames. Figueiredo's works circle around the topics of self analysis and observation, and dreams. Whilst not drawing on the occult directly, Figueiredo's work contains the same meditative and intangible sense of power, femininity, and resistance.

It is both a constant resource for feminists and for audiences alike to marvel at the many approaches to mysticism and spirituality. This exhibition, and the artists who partake, evoke the inexpressible through both form and aesthetics, and ultimately help lift the veil on a powerful practice and feminist history.

Exhibition Essay by Curator, Arts Writer and Art Historian Josephiné-May Bailey

HAZEL FLOREZ



Hazel Florez (b. 1984) is a UK artist based in a London Studio in Hackney. She graduated at Edinburgh University and the Edinburgh college of Art from the MA Fine Art program in 2007. She has a multi-disciplinary background and has degrees in Philosophy and International Politics. She worked as a university tutor before switching to become an artist. She has experimented with a wide range of mediums including oil, acrylic, pen and ink, mixed media collage, costume, dance, performance, photography, installation, and digital art. She has exhibited and performed at a number of venues and galleries including, The Holy Art, The Tub Gallery, Purslane, The Vacant Museum, Hackney Downs Studios, and Lauderdale House. Florez has given a lecture with The Jung Club, London, and will be participating in the Magickal Womens Conference in October, 2022. As part of her research and creative process, she has drawn inspiration from alchemical manuscripts at The Ritman Library Online Archive. In August 2021, she completed the Introduction to Western Esotericism: Visions of the Occult, Summer School program at the University of Amsterdam. Hazel is registered on the Art Girl Rising online archive: 'Here Are The Women Artists'. She is a Bridgeman Studios artist and her images are available for licensing with Bridgeman Images.

Her artworks make reference to a wide range of symbolism including, Greek and Egyptian mythology, mysticism, hermetic philosophy, alchemy and Jungian psychology. She has a strong curiosity in the realms of 'supra-rational' human experience. Florez draws on a wide range of cultural influences including the tarot, medieval & Renaissance art, as well as the 20th century feminist, esoteric Surrealists. She speaks to these visual references in a contemporary context and weaves them into her own imaginary narratives. Using surreal and fantastical worlds to explore different emotional and psychological states, her art seeks to bring about a union of opposites, to establish a link between the material and the spiritual, the conscious and the subconscious, order and chaos.



Exaltation

Oil & Gilding on Wooden Panel

80 x 60cm

£1,700.00

2022

By Hazel Florez



Danu's Garden

Oil Paint, Card, Gold Leaf, Metallic Powders on Wooden Oval

79.5 x 54.5cm

£1,200.00

2022

By Hazel Florez



Talisman to Protect the Endangered Flowers of Albion
 Oil Paint, Card, Gold Leaf, Metallic Powders on Wooden Oval
 79.5 x 54.5cm
 £1,200.00
 2022
 By Hazel Florez

ALEXI MARSHALL



Alexi Marshall (b. 1995, London, UK) is a Hastings-based artist who graduated from the Slade School of Art in 2018. She works in print, mosaic, drawing and embroidery, investigating themes of womanhood, folklore and regeneration. Driven by a need for new mythologies, she constructs imaginary worlds that encourage a purposeful examination of, and dialogue between, multiple traditions and histories. The hand is always present; handmade, hand sewn, hand carved, hand printed, hand bound. The traces it leaves - slippages, scuff marks and fingerprints are often visible and embraced. Her works often convey a temporality, as lines, bodies, and worlds fold into each other in fantastical yet deeply personal landscapes that seem to defy fixed narratives.

Marshall has exhibited her work in two solo exhibitions: 'Cursebreakers' at the De La Warr Pavilion in 2021, and 'The Redemption of Delilah' at Public Gallery, 2019. She has also shown in selected group shows including Bloomberg New Contemporaries in 2018. More recently, they include : 'Synthesis' Delphian Gallery at the Saatchi Gallery (2022), 'Outside The Line', Sara Zanin Gallery, Rome (2022)', 'A Star Is Just A Memory Of A Star', Brooke Bennington, Hastings, UK (2022); 'Body En Thrall', Rugby Museum and Art Gallery, Rugby (2022); Ode To Orlando, Pi Art-works, (2022).



The Return

Textile & Hand Embroidery

45 x 35cm

£2,300.00

By Alexi Marshall



Grief Is The Thing With Blood And Feathers (Ana Flies Over The Creek)

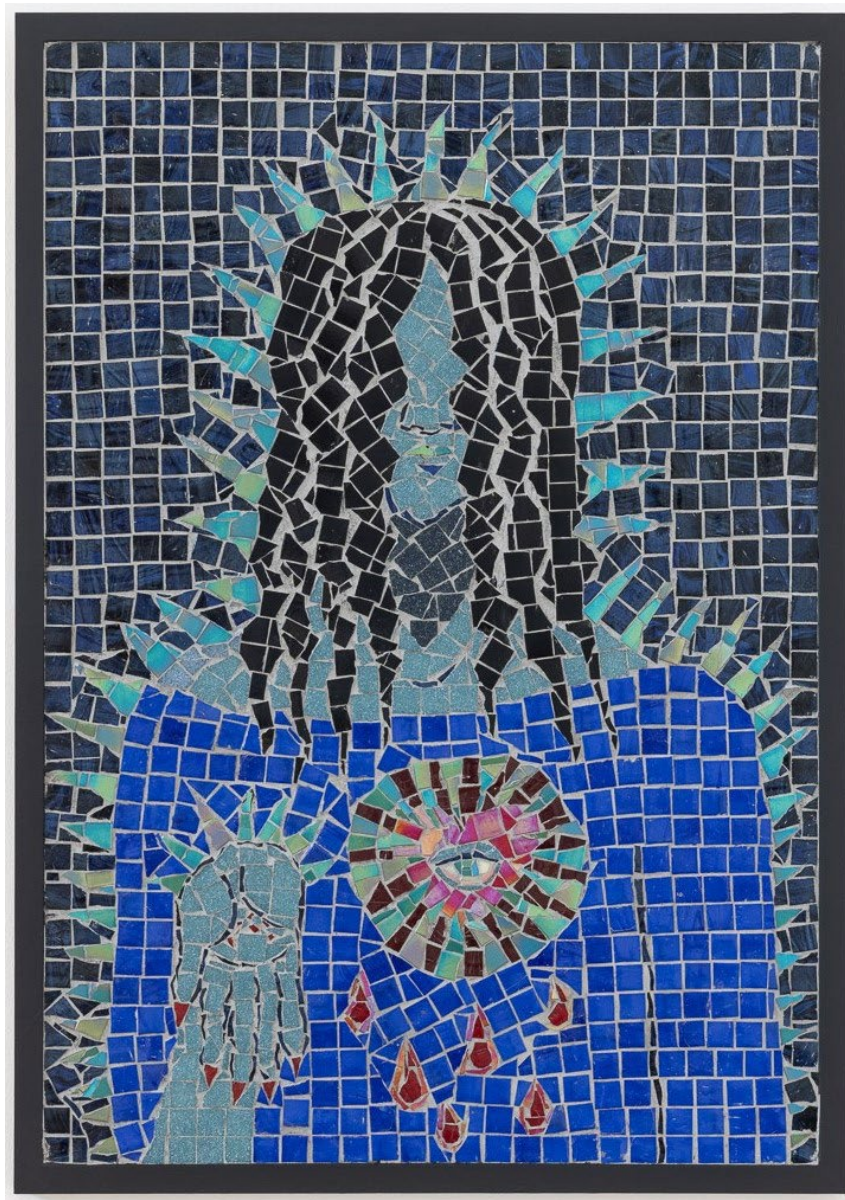
Handprinted Linocut | Ink on Japanese Paper

63 x 93cm | 75 x 105cm (F)

£2,100.00

By Alexi Marshall





The Borderline

Glass on Grout on Wood

84 x 59 cm

£3,000.00 (F)

By Alexi Marshall



The Flood

Glass on Grout on Wood

84 x 59cm (F)

£3,000.00

By Alexi Marshall



Lucid Nature

Glass on Grout on Wood

53 x 61cm

£2,300.00

By Alexi Marshall

KENDALL JONES



Oregon based sculptor Kendall Jones' figurative ceramics explore surreal human and animal forms. Jones started taking community college classes in figure sculpture in 2011, and learned to sculpt by working with models on a turntable.

One recent series came out of an artist residency in Puebla, Mexico and involves a series of nesting faces and half-faces. Inspired by a pre-columbian series of emerging masking and also sculptures of Huehuetotl, an aged Meso-American deity. Jones' work in this series explores various aspects of self, as well as the cycles of life, aging, death and rebirth and the interconnectedness of human beings as one manifestation of universal consciousness.

Jones' work is also inspired by her shamanic spiritual practice, which she describes as: "a cross between meditation and lucid dreaming. Images and animals come to me in this trance-like state and my work is to capture them and translate them into clay."

Recently Jones has participated in several wood firings at East Creek Anagama in Willamina, Oregon using a centuries-old and labour-intensive Japanese firing technique. A team of potters works around the clock for six days stoking the kiln with wood to cone 12 (about 2400). There are no glazes on these pieces, only wood ash turned to glass at high temperature. Jones loves the surrender required of atmospheric firings, and the ethereal works of art co-created by her hands, and the breath of the kiln gods.



Samsara
Woodfired Ceramics
9 x 15 x 6cm
£525.00
By Kendall Jones





Dust to Dust
Woodfired Ceramics
10 x 14 x 6cm
£525.00
By Kendall Jones





Ashes to Ashes
 Woodfired Ceramics
 10 x 12.5 x 6cm
 £550.00
 By Kendall Jones





Origami of Self
Woodfired Ceramics
10 x 12 x 6 cm
£525.00
By Kendall Jones



ROSIE MCLACHLAN

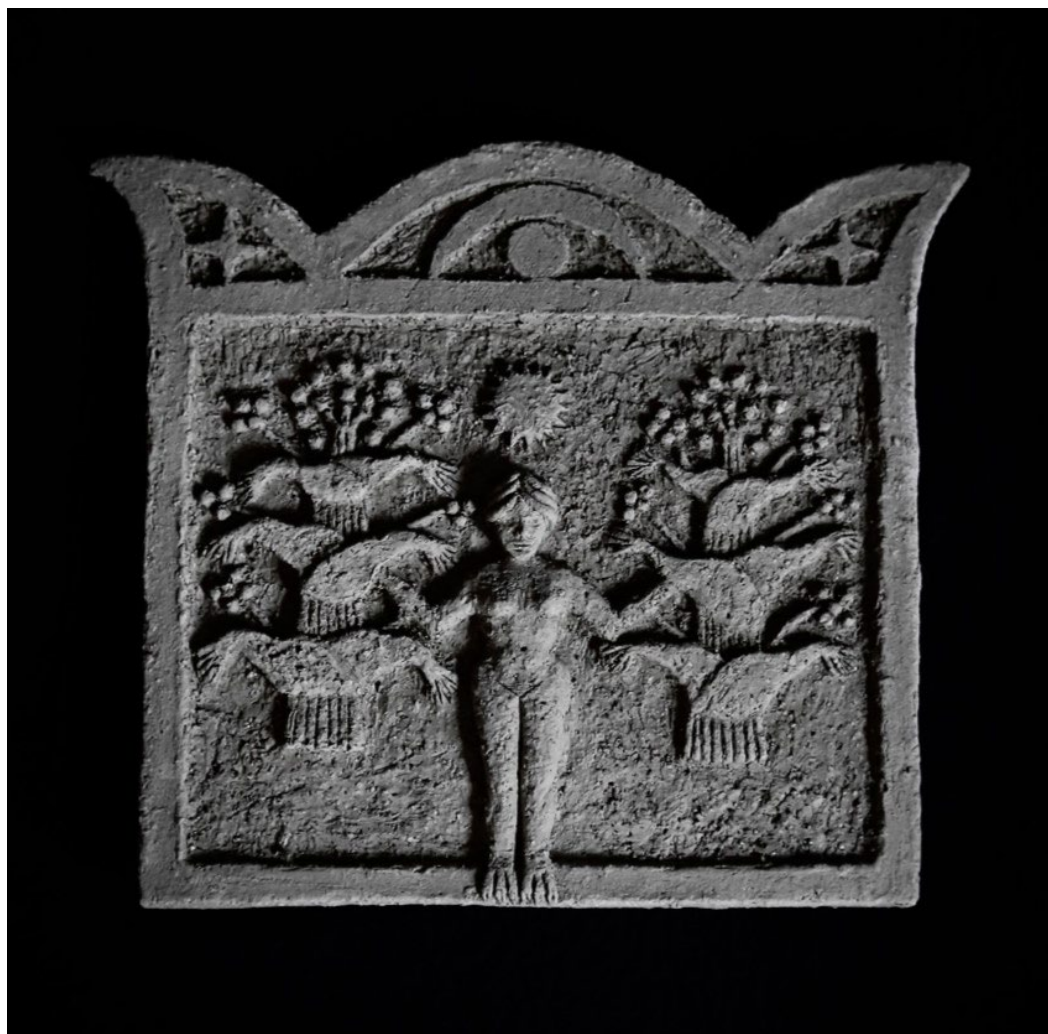


Rosie McLachlan (b. 1982) holds a Masters of Fine Art with Distinction from Newcastle University, and a First Class BA in Archaeology from the Institute of Archaeology, University College London, during which time she also studied at the Slade School of Fine Art, London.

Through a range of symbolic processes and materials, McLachlan engages with the liminal and the chthonic to create sculptural works that draw upon feminine power and the mythologies of life and death.

Her narrative-led ceramic works are informed by an ongoing study of archaeology, comparative mythology, folklore and thanatology.

She wood fires her work over four days and nights in an anagama kiln, and forages wild clays and pigments to connect her work to the land and rivers where she lives in Northumberland, UK.



Silphium

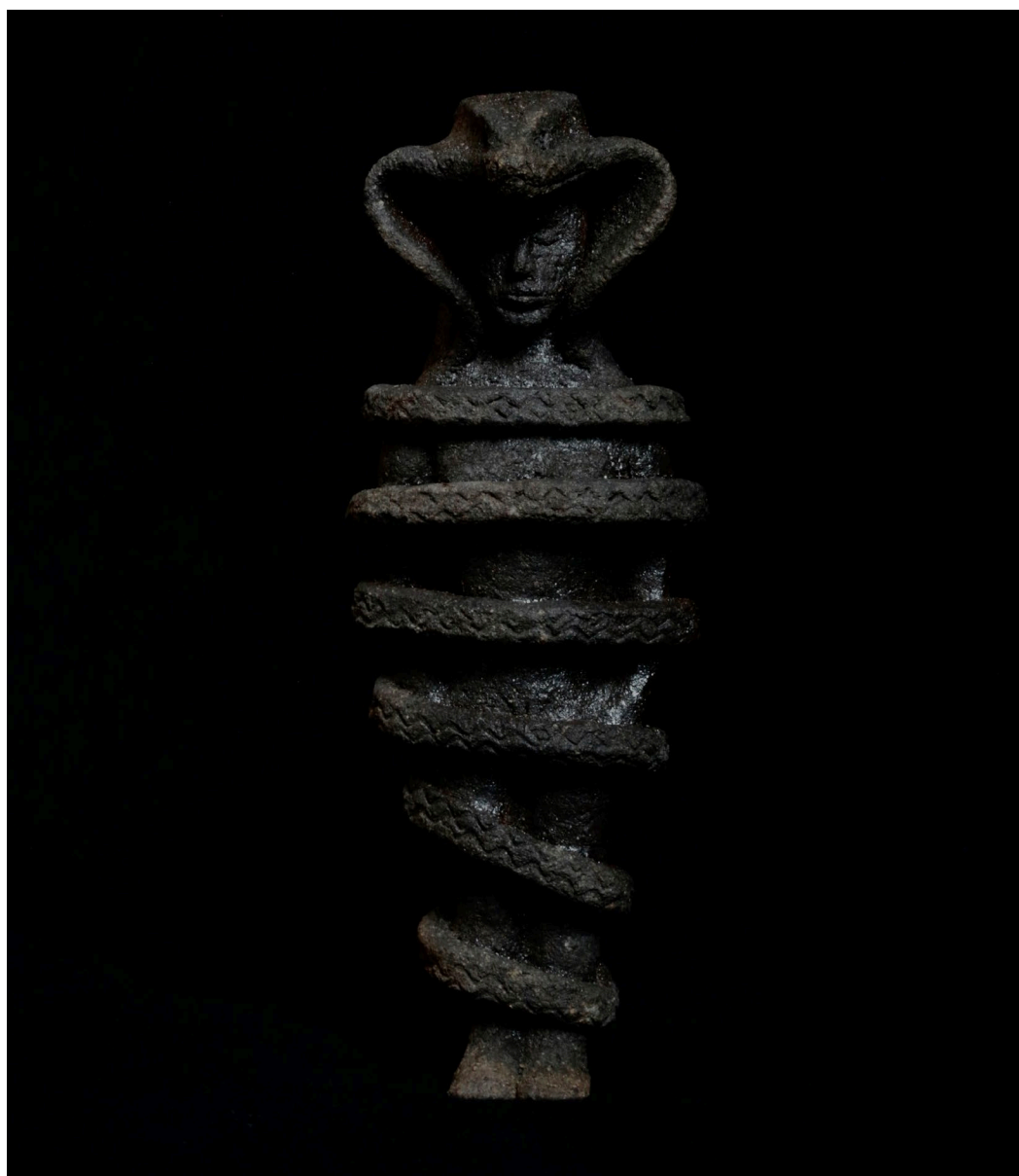
Ceramics | South Tyne River Clay

20 x 17 x 2cm

£950.00

2022

By Rosie McLachlan



Eurynome

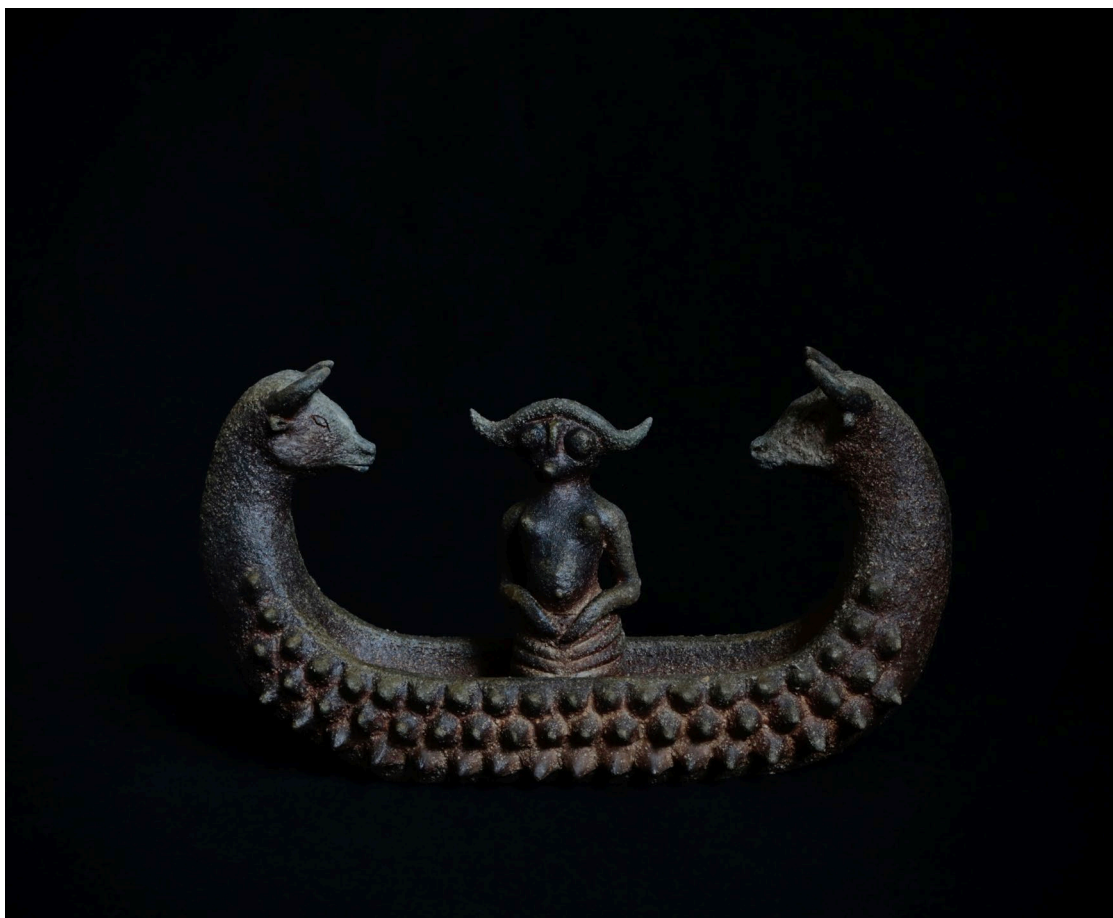
Ceramics | South Tyne River Clay & Anagama Natural Ash

18cm x 8cm x 8cm

£850.00

2022

By Rosie McLachlan



I Have Sunk Beneath the Bosom of the Mistress
Ceramics | South Tyne River Clay & Anagama Natural Ash
14 x 25 x 9cm
£1,050.00
2022
By Rosie McLachlan

ANNA SEBASTIAN



Anna Kay Sebastian is a drawer and painter who works with archetypes, myths, and other worlds. Her images depict the ordinary in fantastical and symbolic ways. In the exploration of memory and lived experience, Anna's work seeks to understand 'the void' and aims to find transcendence, borrowing from the occult and science fiction. Anna has participated in exhibitions internationally, including at the Ghetto Bialie in Port Au Prince and Libertine Gallery in Los Angeles, and her work is currently on view in Somerset House Studios in London. She is currently studying for an MA in Painting at the Slade School of Fine Art.



The Blue Cave
Oil on Canvas
60 x 45cm
£450.00
By Anna Sebastian



Magic Mountain

Oil on Canvas

165 x 120cm

£3,500.00

By Anna Sebastian

OLIVIA MANSFIELD



Olivia Mansfield's multidisciplinary practice is rooted in classical painting, iconography, theology, historic culture, ritual and symbolism. Themes of myth, legend and folklore intertwine vividly in a playful balance of the abstract, botanical, celestial and figurative elements she encompasses.

Considering Mansfield's growing figurative practice, we see grand, idyllic beings morph between states, teetering on the apex of abstraction and the more considered, descriptive structures within the paintings. These bold, bare-skinned figures brazenly dominate the canvas, striding, squatting, dancing, both explicitly and unashamedly, they leap untethered over the glades and caverns, writhing upon the fiery hot stones, forged and held within the splintering, emotive landscapes. They move and agitate, cradling, caressing the supple surface, paying homage to all who've been before; The Mother; The Sorceress; The Divine; they shine a light upon and channel the return to an animalistic, primordial, ancient power.

A penetrating and unrelenting examination of the flesh and of the female archetype pushes through the pulsating, dense terrain Olivia builds in her worlds; as a viewer you're lured in, invited over the threshold, to step onto this hallowed, portentous ground. Visitors here are held, mesmerised, seduced and finally fully immersed into the dramatic, cabalistic imagery of the painting, you feel yourself falling into the sumptuous arms of someone or something powerful, evocative, reassuring. These works encourage you to tap into a primal force within, that empowering pulsating urge to revel in the chaos around you. Her practise displays the ultimate exploration of self, questioning the human condition, tugging at the veil we sometimes fear to gaze through as we navigate this journey called life.



Regaining Our Eternal Power

Oil on Canvas

120 x 100cm

£1,800.00

By Olivia Mansfield



We Voyage Between Thought and Reality

Oil on Canvas

120 x 100cm

£1,800.00

By Olivia Mansfield



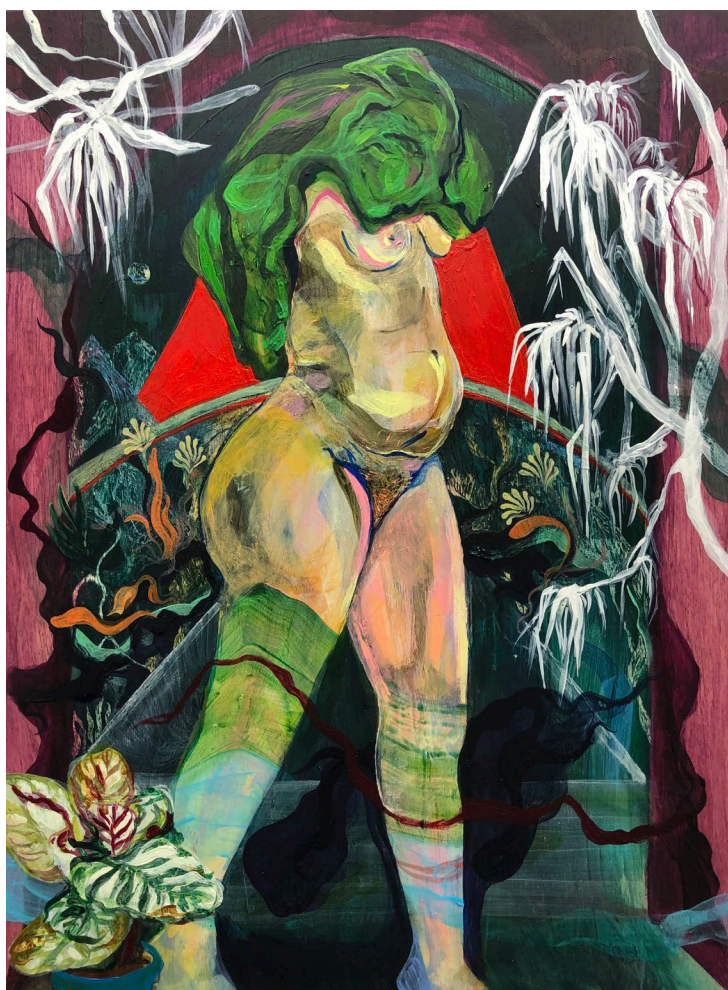
To Be Loved

Acrylic & Ink on Handmade Cotton Rag Paper

21.5 x 16cm | 30 x 25cm (F)

£500.00

By Olivia Mansfield



Halo

Acrylic & Gouache on Cradled Wooden Panel

30 x 23cm

£500.00

By Olivia Mansfield

MAFALDA FIGUEIREDO



Mafalda Figueiredo (b.1991, Lisbon) is a figurative painter. She graduated from the Fine Arts University of Lisbon in 2013 and has subsequently worked in Berlin and London. As a child she always felt constrained and observed. This incited within her a desire to create, in order to live the freedom she longed for, through drawings and paintings she produced obsessively.

These feelings were intensified in adolescence as the artist became increasingly aware of the gaze of the opposite gender, the objectification of that very look, and the need to either shield from it or accept it.

Figueiredo is interested in intuition, self-analysis and self-observation and believes every involuntary idea that comes to mind has meaning and comes as a message from the subconscious. She interprets spontaneous ideas as one interprets dreams: through a process of signification, looking at the visual elements as symbols and decoding their meaning according to the context and experience of the dreamer.

Through figurative painting, Figueiredo attempts to project this thought process into images. She portrays figures looking out of the painting as if they are struck by the realization of being observed.

She's interested in transitioning states, constantly questioning where and when one moves from the position of object of observation to observer, and the imaginary time and space in between.



Burn it Down
Oil on Canvas
170 x 150cm
£3,500.00
2021
By Mafalda Figueiredo



Untitled #1
Oil on Paper
42 x 30cm | 44 x 32cm (F)
£400.00
2021
By Mafalda Figueiredo



Untitled #7
Oil on Paper
42 x 30cm | 44 x 32cm (F)
£400.00
2021
By Mafalda Figueiredo



Untitled #2

Oil on Paper

42 x 30cm | 44 x 32cm (F)

£400.00

2021

By Mafalda Figueiredo

SALOMÉ WU



Salomé Wu b. 1996, is a multi-disciplinary artist whose practice involves oil painting, printing on silk, installations, and performance. As a teenager, Salomé admired a teacher who encouraged her to pursue training in calligraphy and painting. Her work examines otherworldliness through translations and ever-evolving reinterpretations of a personal mythology, formed from her observation of time, fragility, and the interplay between reality and the unseen. Understanding herself primarily as a global citizen, Salomé works to keep her art devoid of contemporary models of identification and taxonomy, relying on obliquely biomorphic figures to populate her work. Across mediums, she presents a nonlinear journey, weaving together seemingly disparate moments to unveil previously concealed narratives. Salomé lives and works in London, UK.



Pranced Like a Fire on the Snow

Oil on Canvas

153 x 123cm

£5,250.00

By Salomé Wu



Bled, Bled Then Bleed
Mixed Media on Paper
32 x 24cm | 38.5 x 31cm (F)
£540.00
By Salomé Wu



SPIRIT WITHIN

ALEXI MARSHALL | ANNA SEBASTIAN | HAZEL FLOREZ
KENDALL JONES | MAFALDA FIGUEIREDO | OLIVIA MANSFIELD
ROSIE MCLACHLAN | SALOMÉ WU

Ben Oakley Gallery | 9 Greenwich Market | Turnpin Ln | London | SE10 9JA
10am – 11pm | Wed - Sun | 03.08.22 – 28.08.22

EVENTS

Private View | 6pm - 10pm | 05.08.22 | Performances

Sales enquiries & appointments contact Curator Jack Trodd:
jack@brusheswithgreatness.co.uk
07789 172 073

Press enquiries contact Bella Bonner-Evans:
bella@lisabakerltd.com
07508 057344

www.brusheswithgreatness.co.uk