

BECKY KOLSRUD



Born in 1984, Los Angeles, CA

Lives and works in Los Angeles, CA

Becky Kolsrud's practice explores art-historical and vernacular depictions of the human form—namely women—throughout advertisements, signage, bather paintings, Japanese prints, surrealism, and abstraction. Her figurative paintings and wholly invented “inscapes” (interior landscapes that depict contained worlds of pink bodies against swaths of blue) are very much rooted in the real world, specifically her hometown, Los Angeles, and its complex relationship with nature. Kolsrud draws on motifs and imagery from the city's history—and her own family's place in that history—as well as religious and architectural iconography to explore the tension between artifice and reality; patterns planned and random; the observed and the observer; scale, place, and perspective; and how human desire fills in the gaps between what is seen and what is obscured. Her playful fascination with incomplete beauty (floating limbs, disembodied feet) falls in a continuum that starts with the degraded works of art handed down from ancient Greece, through the Catholic relics that imbue toes and wooden splinters with holy power, to the fragmented landscapes between concrete and mountain, palm tree and rubber, found today in Southern California.

The artist received an MFA from University of California, Los Angeles (2012) and a BA from New York University (2006). Important solo exhibitions include *Elegies*, JTT, New York, NY (2021); *As Above, So Below*, Make Room, Los Angeles, CA (2020); and *Yackety Yack Girls*, Karma, New York, NY (2011). Her work has been included in group exhibitions at Aïshti Foundation, Beirut, Lebanon; Gavlak Gallery, Los Angeles, CA; Stephen Friedman Gallery, London, UK; Magenta Plains, New York, NY; Nino Mier Gallery, Los Angeles, CA; and Fredericks & Freiser, New York, NY. Kolsrud's work is in the permanent collection of the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA.

The New York Times
January 29, 2026

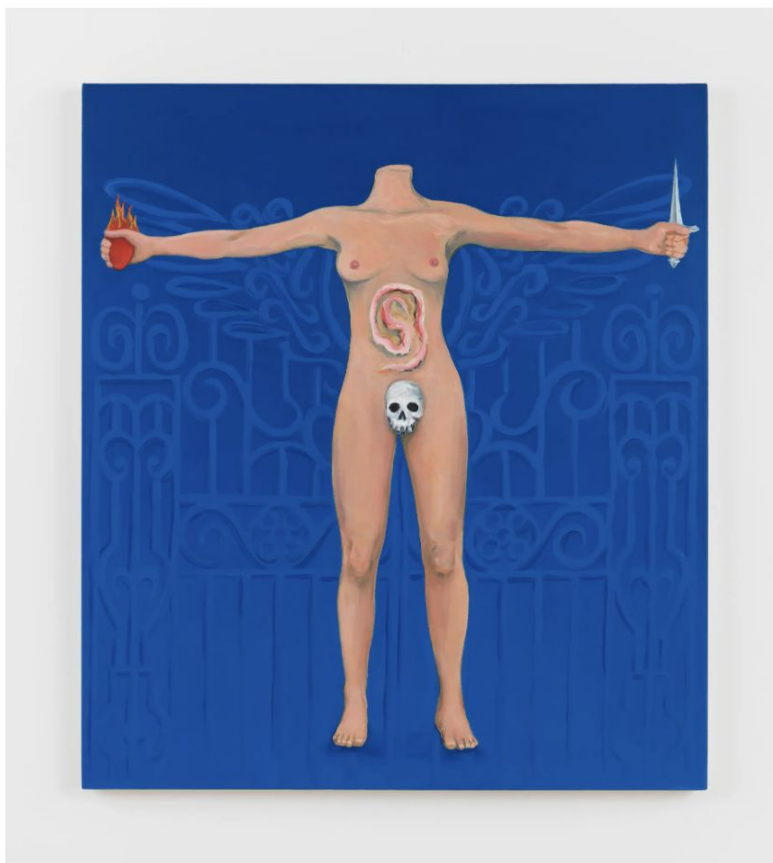
The New York Times

Art Gallery Shows to See in January

CHINATOWN

Becky Kolsrud

Through Feb. 28. Magenta Plains, 149 Canal Street; 917-388-2464,
magentaplains.com.



Becky Kolsrud, *Acéphale (after Masson)*, 2025, oil on canvas. via Becky Kolsrud and Magenta Plains, New York.

In the 1920s and 1930s, competing strains of surrealism pitted André Breton's cadre of poets and visual artists devoted to Freudian ideas against Georges Bataille's more anarchic, bodily approach. Both strains were pretty misogynist.

Nearly a hundred years later, the Los Angeles painter Becky Kolsrud remakes surrealism with tough nudes, human skulls, Venuses and orbs that suggest protean creativity, as well as fertility. Kolsrud leans toward the Bataille camp, remaking André Masson's "Acephale" figure from the 1930s, a headless Vitruvian man. In Kolsrud's hands, Masson's figure is female.

In some ways, Kolsrud's work is a niche project. (Bataille fans, rejoice!) However, her bold, blunt feminist paintings offer a new chapter in the enduring popularity of Surrealism and its critique of Western so-called rationalism and Enlightenment. *MARTHA SCHWENDENER*

Artsy
June 26, 2023

ARTSY

Art

Contemporary Artists Are Reviving Vanitas, Reflecting on Death and Decadence

Charlotte Jansen



Becky Kolsrud, *As Above, So Below*, 2020. Photo by Jeff McLane. Courtesy of the artist and JTT, New York

Oysters, lobsters, Louboutins — and death. At Cecily Brown's current exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, "Death and the Maid" (through December 3rd), the trappings of capitalist society seem to slip into oblivion under her lively, vigorous brushwork and lucid tableaux. Skulls, mirrors, and references to paintings of the past remind us of the madness of materialism and the certainty of death, recasting the classic theme of *vanitas* for the contemporary age.

Historically, the aim of a *vanitas* painting was to point out the vain pursuits of our mortal existence. Evolving out of a distaste for decadence and wealth, fueled by Calvinist attitudes in 16th-century Europe, these paintings imparted a clear moral message. The burgeoning middle classes had suddenly been able to afford jewels, quills, luxurious fabrics, sheet music, and books. But, these paintings warned, no matter how much pleasure those material possessions may bring, all is futile in the face of death. In these still-life compositions, the transience of life was commonly represented in depictions of skulls, burning candles, flowers, and soap bubbles.

Unlike *memento mori* — another genre of painting designed to remind the viewer of their mortality — *vanitas* works can be distinguished for their inclusion of displays of luxury and collections of items alluding to pleasure. It's perhaps no surprise that *vanitas* is making its way into the works of contemporary artists — especially in bodies of work produced during the pandemic that are now being seen in public for the first time.

For Becky Kolsrud, an American figurative painter known for her parabolic depictions of women with flat planes and scintillating blues, vanitas is a recent theme: “The first time I included an image of a skull in a large painting was in early 2020. I was living in a historic house where George Hodel, the alleged Black Dahlia murderer, lived as a child when his parents built it in 1921. I was excited by the confluence of themes that touched George Hodel’s life, including Los Angeles history, film noir, Surrealist artists including Man Ray and Marcel Duchamp, and true crime, of course.”

That reference made its way into the triptych *As Above, So Below* (2021), which evokes a strange and symbolic narrative: In a lake, a woman holds a ghostly man’s head, in a romantic tryst; a skull sits in the foreground, while disembodied feet seem to dance on the water, as fire blazes in the background and a body, semi-nude, sprawls on a verdant hillside.

In a suite of recent works presented at the artist’s solo exhibition “Ghosts of the Boulevard” at Morán Morán’s Mexico City gallery earlier this year, motifs of the moon, skulls, and disembodied figures appeared throughout. These symbols have taken on a very personal meaning for the artist and her own confrontations with grief and loss.

“The skull felt like an alternate self, and a way to address my fear of death,” Kolsrud said, reflecting on the illness and subsequent death of a friend. “I saw [her body] transform as she was dying....I started to paint skeletons in the bath, thinking of her. I like that a skull is the most generic face. It’s the shared, timeless face.” For her, there is no moral compass in the painting, but it is a space to contemplate what it means to be here, now.



Becky Kolsrud, installation view of "Ghosts of the Boulevard" at Morán Morán, 2023. Courtesy of Morán Morán.

In a consumerist society that for the most part ignores mortality, vanitas provides contemporary artists a way to describe the perplexing nature of our times, where the only chance at immortality might be the creative act itself.

Artillery
February 23, 2023

artillery

PICK OF THE WEEK: BECKY KOLSRUD

Morán Morán

BY LAUREN GUILFORD | FEB 23, 2023



Becky Kolsrud, "Evergreen," 2023 (detail). Image courtesy of Morán Morán.

Naked, decapitated women were a favorite amongst the macho surrealists of the 1930s, projecting their desire and power onto phantom breasts and bellies. The female figures in Becky Kolsrud's surrealist paintings might also be missing heads and appendages, but they are ghosts and muses of a different kind. In *Ghosts of the Boulevard* (2023), a gaggle of headless women perch leisurely on a lush hillside, appearing blissfully blind, as if they never needed their heads in the first place. The painting alludes to various art historical subjects and works depicting nude women such as Matisse's *The Dance*, Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger*

and Manet's *Luncheon on the Grass*, (in other words, artworks commonly associated with "the male gaze"). The artist employs a color palette that feels overly saturated, artificial, manic even—colors Kolsrud refers to as "retail primaries," shades and hues embedded in our psyche as consumer capitalism invades our retinas. Two paintings installed in catty-corner positions depict gated storefront window displays with mannequins adorned in various fads and fashions. Petrified and haunted, there is something eerie and enchanting about Kolsrud's floating heads; their expressions are simultaneously blank and self-possessed, engaging and isolated. The Seinfeld episode pops into mind in which Elaine finds her doppelganger in the form of a department store mannequin, leading to a series of public sexual harassments causing her to steal the mannequin. The figures in the two paintings feel as though they are side-eying one another, or exchanging secret knowledge through the bars of their retail prisons. If I look at any of their bobbing heads for too long, I'm afraid my face will suddenly appear like Elaine's mannequin nightmare.

In the epically large painting *Evergreen* (2023), Kolsrud's grid motif takes the form of a sprawling cemetery on a hillside, a sublime landscape overrun with headstones stacked in neat rows that crawl endlessly into the distance. Pink severed limbs crop up between the graves like splintered yoga positions—spines twisting and thighs planking for eternity. A fleshy pink sun vibrates at the landscape's horizon line evoking the history of sublime California landscape painting with a sense of irony. Time collapses in the ambiguity of the sun, which appears to be rising and setting, straddling the past and present. This spatial-temporal disruption and psychological tension permeate Kolsrud's fragmented bodies of seemingly contradictory female forms that are simultaneously trapped and emerging.

Observer
June 17, 2021

OBSERVER

ARTS

Becky Kolsrud's 'Elegies' Explores The Poignancy of Pandemic Grief

Ultimately, her work poses questions about how we can cope with grief constructively, even when communal displays of it continue to be lethal.

By [Christina Elia](#) • 03/06/21 10:00am



'Elegies' by Becky Kolsrud at JTT Gallery installation view Becky Kolsrud / JTT Gallery

Los Angeles based artist [Becky Kolsrud](#) turns mourning into a metaphor for metamorphosis in her solo-show "Elegies", on view until March 13th at [JTT Gallery](#) in Manhattan, New York. Conceived in the seclusion of her studio, the exhibition features twelve large-scale canvases tackling themes of mysticism, isolation, and introspection, interpreted through the context of the global pandemic. Ultimately, her work poses questions about how we can cope with grief constructively, even when communal displays of it continue to be lethal.

What does it mean to mourn in the age of COVID-19? A proper elegy would probably read hundreds of pages long. Mass death looms like an impenetrable fog, meanwhile millions face unemployment, declining mental health, and the exacerbated effects of disability or illness. Prolonged isolation from friends or family continues to leave us bereft, with nowhere to turn but our own solitude. Kolsrud explores this mutual melancholy in “Elegies” through a series of semi-abstract paintings, each of which plays with loss as a physical and psychological sensation. Her fourth solo-show with JTT, the exhibition demonstrates a maturation from fantasy to fully-realized surrealism. Sadness infuses her paintings down to Kolsrud’s primary color choice: a distinct, deep shade of blue. Her subjects are neither dead nor truly alive, obfuscated by the overpowering feeling of vacancy that lingers in every composition. Through this interplay of dream and reality, the artist’s requiem takes a visual form.

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Kolsrud pulls from a wide aesthetic vocabulary to articulate her anguish. Consider her painting *Inscape (Face/Figures)*, for example, which subverts the art-historical motif of bathers. Pioneered to naturalize the female form, previous iterations of the trope have typically reflected the male gaze. However, in Kolsrud’s disjointed version, she represents women attuned to their own tenderness. Three featureless figures wade through an opaque ocean, their bodies blurred, covered by an overlay of feminine facial features. It’s impossible to avoid locking eyes with this penetrating stare, forcing viewers to confront our innate voyeurism. As the title suggests, the painting doesn’t depict an ordinary bathing scene, but rather offers a glimpse at an “interior landscape.” Eschewing passivity, Kolsrud grants her subjects awareness, autonomy, and consequently, complete control of their grief. Implicit within the work is the idea of renewal, how it feels to finally reclaim your sense of self following a tragedy.

Multiple paintings allude to the Ancient Greek myth of *Cyparissus*; wherein a boy is so grief-stricken after losing his stag, he asks Apollo to transform him into a cypress tree. Immortalized through tears of sap, he laments his companion forever. Kolsrud cites this Western tradition in her work *Inscape (Dryad)*, which shows a bushy cypress tree with two bare human legs. A hot pink sky severs the mountain landscape to signal the subject is drifting through space, consumed by woe. A similar cypress makes an appearance in *Dryad (Cypress)*, this time standing beneath a collection of pale blue clouds. Reminiscent of Georgia O'Keeffe's *Sky Above Clouds*, a series created shortly after O'Keeffe's husband's death, Kolsrud wields color as a method to set a somber mood. In her flat picture planes, despair isn't just a fleeting emotion – it's an all-encompassing, inescapable atmosphere.

Intense grief can feel like a total detachment from your body. It splits you open from the inside out, clawing at your subconscious until you're subsumed in an abyss of nothingness. With communal rituals such as large funerals banned due to social distancing, we've learned to honor the dead however we can. Kolsrud captures this complexity in her installation *Three Graces*, comprising a canvas and an adjacent arrangement of dismembered feet. Featuring three headless figures huddled together, the painting's subjects are naked, beautiful, and broken, echoing the delicacy of an ancient statue. The feet form a physical boundary in front of the canvas, as we're left longing for a tangible touch, our past lives functioning like phantom limbs. *Inscape (Three Graces)*, its companion piece, showcases what's missing from the original installation: evocative eyes, disjointed lips, and misplaced noses. In a contemporary twist of fate, these two halves only harmonize in theory.

"Elegies" culminates with the exhibition's centerpiece, a triptych titled *The Chorus*. Occupying fifteen-feet of the gallery's largest wall, the panoramic painting portrays several cypress trees with lanky human legs, balancing on patches of land parted by a rippling sea. Different perspectives bonded in collective trauma overlook the same vanishing horizon. At the composition's focal point, a corpse lies afloat in an open casket, uniting all in shared sorrow. An obvious comparison can be drawn between *The Chorus* and how helpless it feels to live through a global pandemic. To mutate permanently into a tree, enduring the organic recycling and rebirth of matter, symbolizes a cosmic connectedness. Likewise, going through the motions of grief together, virtually or distanced, has proven a tiny solace amid larger catastrophes. By cutting her subjects open, dissecting them to reveal their innermost vulnerabilities, fears, and anxieties, Kolsrud positions her paintings as blank vessels to project onto.

What renders "Elegies" so potent is its characterization of bereavement through a broad spectrum. With a vast examination of death, the exhibition holds space for simultaneity, allowing us to take comfort in common circumstances. Memento mori in the shape of detached limbs, bulbous clouds, and crashing waves provoke a deep reflection on our own mortality, weighing loss of life against more fragmented forms of distress. Perhaps, like nature, grief will remain an omnipresent muse. If the last year has taught us anything, though, it's to find poetry in these parallels.

Contemporary Art Review LA
June 17, 2021

Contemporary
Art Review .la

(L.A. in N.Y.) Becky Kolsrud at JTT

June 17, 2021
Text by Anthony Hawley



Stuff gets stranded elsewhere, too. *Inscape (Relic)* (2021), depicts a disembodied foot wearing a kind of transparent high-heeled boot. The booted foot stands as the sole occupant in this work, holding still on solid ground in patches of green grass. A low horizon line underscores the vastness around the poor lost appendage. Nearby, the painting-installation *Three Graces* (2021) stages another form of isolation. The work brings together a large canvas depicting three mannequin-like forms and several dozen life-sized sculptures of feet that also don transparent heels. Made of Hydrocal, paint, and plastic, this smattering of feet highlights the segmented reality of the shipwrecked and stranded beings in Kolsrud's universe. In previous bodies of work, Kolsrud walled characters behind chain-link fences; here, she casts them ashore inside an almost cosmic vastness, leaving them to discern reality anew in isolation.

Color is key to effecting Kolsrud's destabilized, out-of-time atmosphere. Voluptuous blues shift between the color of a dark starless night, a benevolent sunny day, and the lighter-toned gradients of a big western sky. Lustrous day-glow pink ignites the sky in *Inscape (Dryad)* (2021), the painting featuring the largest tree-with-legs figure. In two paintings flanking this large Dryad, the same pink hue illuminates two skulls, making them appear either aglow with radiation or lit by the sun of this iridescent non-place. Elsewhere, pill-like cumulus clouds hover in *Inscape (Clouds)* (2021), floating around a blue rectangle, part-sea and part-sky. The pink returns to form a neat border around the blue. Looking at the odd flatness of the composition, with its bright border and inflated masses encircling a hovering landscape, is almost like peering at an old computer monitor's screensaver. Suddenly, the same pink that might once have been associated with 1980s neon signage conjures non-human phosphorescent ecologies or the glow of a hue plucked from the digital realm—yet another detail that makes the scenes' temporal states difficult to pin down.

Pastoral, hymn-like, melancholy, and forward-looking, Kolsrud's new paintings manage to feel both ancient and urgent in their speculative imaginings. While viewing this exhibition, I felt the collective and personal solitude of this past year, but also the knowledge that as humans we will come to pass. I felt a little like I'd walked unknowingly into an arena of figures who had come to collect us, having come from a not-so-distant future, not to warn, but to assure us that our time was up. *It's time to go. Take only what you must.* There's a surprising calm about Kolsrud's humanoids, as if they've found tranquility in this altered state and place. They've shrugged off the burden of history, holding onto only its shards—a few aged computer screens, a little bit of Athens—but have ultimately found an unexpected levity in their evolved lifeways. The featureless blue figures in *Inscape (Face/Figures)* have already transformed beyond our simple fleshy condition; they gaze back at us from some near-time, a post-human future, perhaps beckoning us to join them.

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The New Yorker
February 21, 2021

THE NEW YORKER

ART

BECKY KOLSRUD

By Johanna Fateman

February 25, 2021

With a limited palette and a strict lexicon of images, this Los Angeles-based painter brushes into existence a mythic, metaphysical realm of O’Keeffian horizons, blobby clouds, high heels, and salmon-colored women. The centerpiece of her exhibition “Elegies,” at the JTT gallery, is a fifteen-foot-long panorama, completed in 2021. Titled “The Chorus,” it can be read as an allegory of the past year of isolation and mourning. A body of water is dotted with small islands, populated by cypress trees whose trunks are human legs; an open casket floats in the center of the composition. In another, smaller landscape, bordered by a band of sky blue, a neon-pink skull rests on the curve of a green planet as a lemon moon blares from the corner. On the floor, Kolsrud has installed a sculptural counterpart to her canvases—an expanse of mannequin feet in clear plastic mules—as if to suggest that every utopian Eden or Lesbos has a dystopia lurking beneath. (*JTT*; Jan. 30–March 13.)

Vogue
February 19, 2019

VOGUE

As Frieze Los Angeles Opens, Three Young California Artists Are Reinventing What Figurative Painting Can Be



"My goal was to use the figure in a way I hadn't seen before," says Becky Kolsrud, 34. *Three Women*, 2017. Photo: Becky Kolsrud. *Three Women*, 2017. Oil on canvas, 76" x 90". Courtesy of the artist and JTT, New York. Photograph: Charles Benton.

As the international art fair Frieze makes its first appearance in Los Angeles, the stalls are packed with people—not just the crowds that streaming into the Paramount Pictures lot but on the canvases as well. No city captures the current drive toward figurative painting with more

diversity and élan than Los Angeles. The work is often narrative—connecting, perhaps to the town’s industry—but can also be surreal. “It’s an escape,” says independent curator Ali Subotnick, who organized the project section for the inaugural edition of Frieze Los Angeles. “It’s a way to have some control when you have no control over what’s happening in this chaotic world we’re living in.”

If the southern California city has become the launch site for a new movement of body-oriented painters, its representatives have been drawn from all over the globe. Njideka Akunyili Crosby explores her Nigerian family history in domestic settings that bridge two cultures. Iranian-born Tala Madani likes to give men the finger in her cartoonish, hilarious, and disturbing paintings and animations. Latvian artist Ella Kruglyanskaya throws female bodies together in aggressive combinations. And then there’s German-born Katja Seib, who trained with Tomma Abts and was a visiting student of Peter Doig at the famed Arts Academy of Düsseldorf. Her lucid, moody figure paintings, on rough burlap or found fabrics, mix realism and fiction in unexpected ways—one just made its L.A. debut in Sadie Coles’s booth at Frieze.

Not that the bigger names have remained oblivious to L.A.’s figurative boom. Forced out as director of L.A.’s Museum of Contemporary Art in 2013, Jeffrey Deitch bounced back with his own gallery last September, a 15,000-square-foot showcase in Hollywood. “Unrealism,” the big new group show he’s been developing for 2020, will trace the new approaches to painting the figure and include many of the young L.A.-based groundbreakers. “The unifying theme,” Deitch tells me, “is that conventional realism cannot depict contemporary reality, where fact and fiction are confused.” A fitting subject for the city where dreams are made.

Becky Kolsrud

“I feel that L.A. has become more of a painter’s city in the past five or ten years. My goal was to use the figure in a way I hadn’t seen before in the canon of art history, using images of women that were familiar in advertising.

My last show was called ‘Allegorical Nudes.’ There are so many incredible bather paintings, and so often the vantage point is peeking through on a scene of women who don’t know you’re looking at them. I wanted to create paintings that felt more within my own world, with images of women of my time who gaze out of the picture, women who are not sexualized, women who pose with a sense of confidence. They know they’re being seen—you’re not catching them off guard.

“Painters are drawn to L.A. because of the light, just as the filmmakers were. Walking down the street to my studio, I see graffiti, garbage, broken-down cars, and parking lots. But then I look up and see purple snow-capped mountains. The landscape is this combination of beautiful and ugly, natural and urban, and that really is a good space for painters to be.”

Artforum
October 2017

ARTFORUM

REVIEWS LOS ANGELES

“Fleeting Impressions and Abundance of Detail”

TIF SIGFRIDS

By Leland de la Durantaye ☿

Like the room in Norway, Sigfrids’s show gave a serene blue backdrop to the works on display. Here, however, all the works were hung closely in a single corner. Many appeared to comment on others: The arrangement highlighted connections and oblique symmetries among the works. The blue of a lake in three portraits of women by Becky Kolsrud on the right-hand wall was counterbalanced on the left by the vivid pink backdrops of three portraits, also of women, by Mari Eastman. Ulrich Wulff’s untitled portal seemed to lead out of the anarchic spaces of Alexander Nolan’s paintings. Mimi Lauter’s *Bird in and on a Mountain*, 2016, with its Paul Klee–like infolding of bird space and bird sound, set off the casual grace of Adrienne Rubenstein’s *Untitled Broccoli*, 2017. Gracie DeVito’s three painted palettes seemed to try and soothe the four paintings by Nolan, each a beautifully bizarre world unto itself. The most joyous of these was *Spanking Serenade*, 2017, a surreal nocturne for trumpet, piano, and spanking. *Tuscan Landscape*, 2017, meanwhile, is an allegory of aesthetic action, as a painter paints not the Italian countryside in front of him, complete with perfectly placed chapel, nor the more immediate enticements of a naked woman wildly embracing a tree, nor even any of the other strangely delighted characters his activity has attracted, focused as he is on a single strange squirrel.

double
Autumn/Winter 2017

double

Becky Kolsrud

DOUBLE 34

Where are the women? For Becky Kolsrud, a Los Angeles native and UCLA graduate, they are in an undefined location, unnamed, and the framework of her portraits confines or frees them.

One or the other. It's a vision that removes them to a place untouched by the present, and remote from their initial reason of being. They are charming, elegant, yet seem entrapped in a gilded jail, like in Douglas Sirk or Todd Haynes movies, filmmakers who like to constrain their female victims in a pretty straightjacket that might burst. As we view these women's portraits, Feud, the latest TV series comes to mind, with its actresses, its celebrities from a bygone era, Faye Dunaway and Bette Davis, forced to put on a brave face, the face of their gender, feminine and cheerful, while their private lives were going down the drain.

Here lies the decorative ambiguity of the positive vibes that Becky Kolsrud's paintings exude. Since they have been eroticizing the world since the dawn of time, women, those women do not shy from pleasing viewers, even if it means ending up together on a shelf in one of Becky's exhibitions. If they wish to, they may strip, eat or pose in the nude. Here's a whole army of women who in Becky Kolsrud's pictures raise the question of the object: how we grasp it, how we desire it.



These women are also archetypes. But where does Becky unearth all these female characters: “Inspiration comes to me as I stroll, as I drive through Los Angeles.” One day, we will have to address the issue of the creative power we feel as we drive through Los Angeles. A topic in its own right.



Cultured Magazine
December 2016

CULTURED

BECKY KOLSRUD: 30 UNDER 35

December, 2016
By Maxwell Williams



Becky Kolsrud. Portrait by Jeff Vespa.

L.A. artist Becky Kolsrud's unsettling portraits, sometimes painted with security gates in the foreground, call to mind eras past, in which women played coy and suits were always tailored. At Art Basel Miami Beach, she'll exhibit works in the Positions section with JTT Gallery, and is currently at work on a solo show at Tif Sigfrieds next spring.

How do you find inspiration? I find inspiration walking and driving around L.A. looking at advertisements, storefront signage, packaging, merchandising, magazines, books, everything. I'm inspired by photo studios, Sears portraiture, school photos, glamour photos—images of people trying to look their best, but have an awkwardness or authenticity to them.

What was your first gallery experience?

When I was in college, my friends and I made our own shows in New York City. We would do a show in a space for a night and put up our own work, and offer beer. That segued into gallery experiences that were non-profit DIY. But my first real show was in New York at Karma in the West Village. I remember Bruce Springsteen walked by.

If you could trade with anyone, who would it be?

Probably Hildegard von Bingen—one of her psychedelic illuminated manuscripts.

How did you fund your first works?

I had my first studio in New York in a building where I worked for a couple of the artists. I traded the landlord gallery-sitting for a free studio that I had to build out myself, and cut out a door with a Sawzall. I collected the trash and extra supplies of the people in the building, and cobbled together enough to make my first paintings out of school.

When you aren't in the studio, where are you?

I'm hanging out with my son, Tito.



Becky Kolsrud's *Gymnasts with Security Gate*, 2016. Courtesy of JTT.

Modern Painters
October/November 2016

MODERN PAINTERS

NEW YORK

“Mal Maison”

Maccarone // June 7–August 12



Becky Kolsrud

Group Portrait with Security Gate, 2015. Oil on canvas, 56 x 88½ in.

The works in the show almost unanimously straddle a space between being haunted and doing the haunting themselves. Be it in Shinique Smith’s *Drumstick (Ode to Lelanya)*, 2016, an ominous larger-than-life cloth drumstick that hangs from the ceiling, or in Becky Kolsrud’s *Group Portrait with Security Gate*, 2015, haunting becomes a tool for reinvention. Kolsrud’s unnerving and seductive painting deftly questions how we view, watch, survey, desire, differentiate, scrutinize, enclose, exclude, and surround subjects in both our physical and virtual worlds. Beneath a tight interlocking system of crisscrossing gray lines, the hint of two faces set apart peeks through. Each gray diamond has a black shadow, creating an uncomfortable depth between the viewer and what’s behind the galvanized steel chain-link fence: flesh-like forms amidst the thin zones of blue and yellow. It also positions us behind the security gate, encouraging viewers to rethink how we allocate, define, and colonize not only the body, but also space—domestic space, penal space, bound space, “free” space.

In these urgent times, “Mal Maison’s” thoughtful, potent poetics feels more necessary than ever. That a show should so successfully avoid both trendiness and backward-looking nostalgia is testament both to the curatorial efforts and these nine artists’ commitment to forwarding a conversation about control, contact, and who or what gets to do the naming for future generations.

—Anthony Hawley

Artforum
July 2016

ARTFORUM

“I Am Silver”

FOXY PRODUCTION

2 East Broadway, 200

June 26–July 29

The lovely and occasionally creepy figurative paintings by six intriguing artists take shade beneath the curatorial parasol of a Sylvia Plath poem. “I Am Silver,” the show’s title, is borrowed from the first line of “Mirror,” in which the poet assumes the titular object’s dispassionate voice. With sly, mounting despair, she/it narrates the waning of a woman’s desirability. Beauty and its cruel, ridiculous genderedness might be the metasubject here. In Plath’s tradition, the works on view mourn, satirize, cheapen, or resent beauty, or make it horrifying, without utterly eradicating it.

Chelsea Culprit’s *Watermelon Crawl*, 2016, is a funny, unsettling iteration of art-class Surrealism in a punchy Lisa Frank palette. Lavender lips hover on a damaged canvas while a disembodied arm boasts a watermelon-patterned, bubble-fingered hand opposite a green talon. Kiki Kogelnik contributes an exhilarating monster-woman in *Untitled*, ca. 1972. She’s got bedroom eyes and a pinup pout, but her face is striped in candy colors, with crimson spines sprouting from a head of helmet hair. Becky Kolsrud’s girls are phantoms—her druggy, Kilimnikesque faces peer wistfully through lattices. Justin Vivian Bond’s meticulous diptychs are full of mysterious longing: Bond pairs self-portraits with reverential homages to the iconic Estee Lauder model Karen Graham, both of them styled identically. Sojourner Truth Parsons presents a cool, grubby take on Matisse’s buoyant compositions in the forbiddingly titled *The same rope that pulls you will hang you his and hers edition I*, 2016. An angular bright-pink nude floats in a collaged environment, with a wonderfully nonchalant, dingy daub-y white poodle in the foreground. Anna Glantz dramatizes another common thread—the mirror as hallucinatory springboard. Her painted pastiches—sci-fi scenarios suggesting time travel and other worlds—are more views *through* the looking glass than renderings or distortions of its reflections.

— Johanna Fateman

The New York Times
November 30, 2016

The New York Times

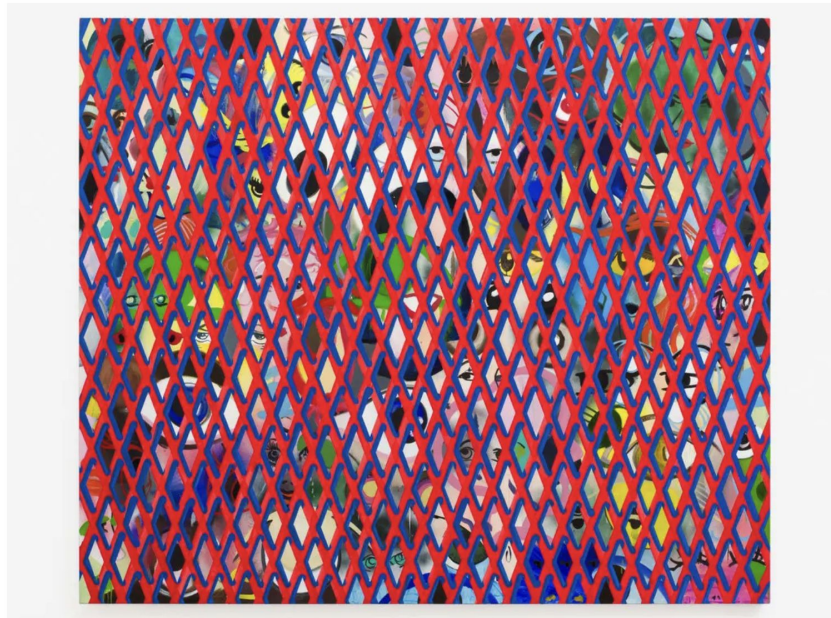
THE FRESHMEN: FOUR ART BASEL MIAMI FIRST-TIMERS TO KNOW

JTT, New York

When speaking about the relative costs of art fairs, JTT owner Jasmin Tsou echoes Moravec's holistic outlook. "Sales and collector meetings aren't the only goals. Fairs are a great time for younger dealers to communicate with more established dealers," Tsou says. "I feel accomplished when I get a young artist under the nose of a really great dealer, either in Europe or California."

Context is paramount to Tsou's long-term strategy. A veteran of NADA, the simultaneous satellite, Tsou acknowledges that her decision to apply to ABMB was driven by her artists rather than by finance. "As a dealer, I have always received a lot of support at NADA, and I'd like to stay," she says. "But at the same time, it's important to give your artists the opportunity to show in fairs like Basel because that puts them in conversation with huge artists."

This year, Tsou is championing the work of the figurative painter Becky Kolsrud at JTT's Positions booth. "Becky is looking at people like Sigmar Polke and Martin Wong," Tsou explains. "It felt fair to bring her to a context that would acknowledge those more traditional influences." As a painting-driven show, Tsou won't have to worry about exorbitant shipping costs. "In the past, I've brought really unwieldy sculptures," the young gallerist admits. "I still have fairs I'm paying for in terms of shipping."



Becky Kolsrud's "Eyes with Security Gate," 2016. Photograph by Coley Brown; courtesy of the artist and JTT, New York

the material." Recent works, she says, have spanned a fictional group in a corporate law office, or a more abstract take on the Three Graces (Charm, Grace, and Beauty), who were portrayed as animated figures (Dora the Explorer, Sailor Moon, and Princess Ariel).



Becky Kolsrud, *Group Portrait with Security Gate*, 2015. Image courtesy of the artist and JTT.

The New York Times
March 6, 2015

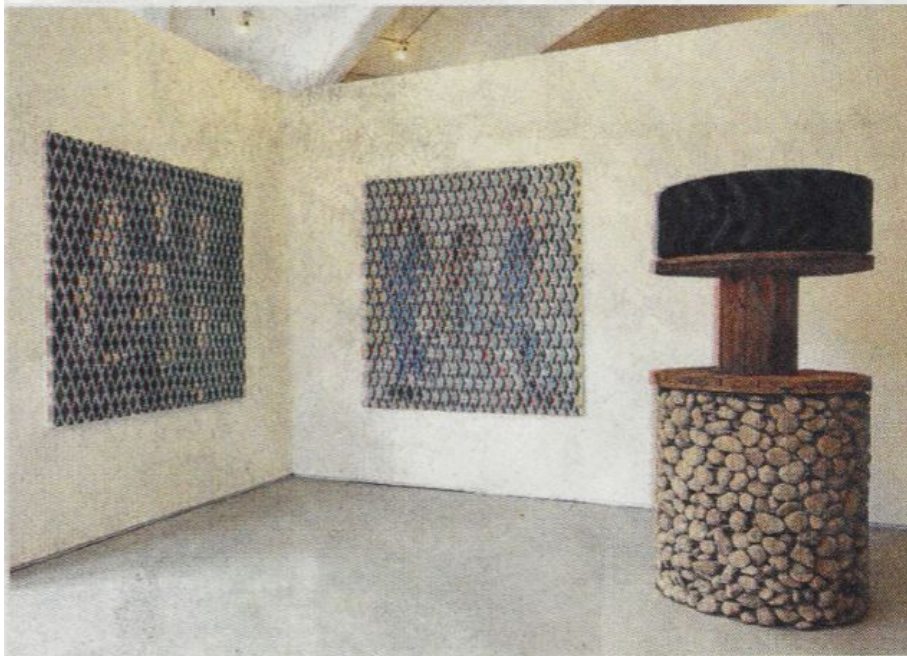
Weekend Arts II

The New York Times

An Art Fair
Combines
Less Is More
And Growth

HOLLAND
COTTER

ART
REVIEW



HIROKO MASUIKE/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Independent 2105 Two paintings by Becky Kolsrud and “Stack,” a sculpture by Charles Harlan, at the art fair, which runs through Sunday.

Interview Magazine
September 7, 2012

Interview

Ladies of the Woods: Becky Kolsrud at JTT



An awkward girl strikes an awkward pose. Now picture that same girl surrounded by encroaching vines and leaves, untamed nature, getting in the way of her opportunity to be portrayed. This playful imagery by Los Angeles-based artist Becky Kolsrud permeates her first show at the clever start-up gallery JTT, just south of Houston in the Lower East Side.

A year after her first show in New York at Brendan Dugan's [Karma Bookstore and Gallery](#), Kolsrud returns to the city to bring us delightful portraits of anonymous women, culled from her collection of photos from 1960 and 1970s. The source material for her show at Karma was one of Becky's father's 1969 yearbook, and she focused on women with newly liberated young identities. These new paintings portray the same sorts of women, but these women are a little older, their bodies awkwardly confident—ready to take on the 1970s, or the 2010s.

The women in her paintings are composites from multiple poses which she arranges; they are defined and dated by their clothing, but personality comes through in the subtle gestures that Kolsrud highlights. A tilted head, a hand on a crotch, a come-hither wrist. They inhabit backdrops that imply a specific place—but a place that remains completely unnamed. Are the women in an overgrown garden, or are they lying on the floor of a photo studio in the mall?