

Galerie

Live Artfully



**Meet the
Women Changing
the Art World**

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Seoul's Booming
Cultural Scene**

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the Kitchen**

**MODERN
RENAISSANCE**

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FROM TOP: 2022 works by Kevin Brisco Jr.
(left): *Vertigo*. March 10, 2022.

Kevin Brisco Jr.

Serving as a light technician on film sets in New Orleans exerted a life-changing influence on Kevin Brisco Jr. “The emotional weight of lifting an 80-pound cable in a sugarcane plantation was a moment of epiphany,” says the Memphis-born artist, who worked for four years on television shows such as

NCIS: New Orleans and the Oprah Winfrey Network’s *Queen Sugar* before enrolling in Yale University’s MFA program in 2018. “My curiosity led to a very different path, revealing what a source of light can do.”

At Yale, Brisco began rendering figures in dimly lit settings, capturing them emerging from or withdrawing into the shadows. In October, his striking experiments with illumination on canvas will go on view in his New York solo debut, “Footsteps in the Dark,” at Albertz Benda gallery.

For the painter, who now lives in Queens, New York, the absence of light is a commentary on the current demand for Black figuration. “Subjects shrouded in darkness speak to my

questioning of this moment, which sometimes feels dubious in terms of the expectations on artists to produce a particular kind of work,” says Brisco, who signs a contract with each of his sitters to ensure they retain a 10 percent stake in the painting, including any potential future resales. “I’ve been dabbling with the question of what the sitter’s face, history, and body entail, especially when they’re circulated through an economy.”

“Subjects shrouded in darkness speak to my questioning of this moment” KEVIN BRISCO JR.

On the heels of a 2021 series in which Black figures are rendered in near total darkness, his new suite includes a still life of flowers glowing with a nocturnal blue and a life-size painting of a woman in an ornately decorated bar, awash in a moody red hue. “Many artists have paid deep attention to what is happening in dark spaces,” says Brisco, who is following in the footsteps of other painters who have been drawn to darkness for its promise of narrating the unseen, ranging from Caravaggio and John Singer Sargent to contemporary talents Chris Ofili and Lorna Simpson. For Brisco, what has been illuminated is always shifting. “I have pitch-black paintings about a search for intimacy and bluer works about the precariousness of daylight—my intention is to undo those assumptions about what is light or dark.” albertzbenda.com —OSMAN CAN YEREBAKAN



Artist Cristina BanBan in front of one of her works in progress.
BELOW: Her *Cuatro Mujeres* (2022).

Cristina BanBan

Cristina BanBan's lush, large-scale paintings are a triumphant celebration of the female form. Voluptuous, exaggerated bodies overlap across the canvas, as though they can hardly be contained within the frame. Autobiographical in nature, they are emotional depictions of the artist's private world. "Painting for me is a journal," says the Barcelona-born talent, speaking from her sprawling, light-filled studio in Brooklyn, where she currently resides. "It is part of me—as much as living and breathing."

Hovering somewhere between abstraction and figuration, her most recent works are composed of rapid, gestural brushstrokes broken up by fields of vibrant color. An energetic frenzy of movement lures the viewer into the artist's orbit. "I like to attack the canvas," she says with a grin. "Painting is an empowering act. When I paint, I feel like a boss, like this is my time and here I am. And the women in my paintings hold the space. They command attention."



"The women in my paintings hold the space. They command attention" CRISTINA BANBAN

Each work begins with a sketch on paper before she dives straight into the enormous canvas, quickly outlining the forms with charcoal before intuitively adding paint. After showing with 1969 Gallery and Albertz Benda in New York, she was picked up in April by international mega-galleries Perrotin and Skarstedt, the latter of which is hosting a solo exhibition of hers this November. Her debut solo show at Perrotin in Paris opened in March and sold out within the first days, and in May her paintings made a splash at the art fairs Frieze and TEFAF in New York.

Her work is beginning to gain traction at auction, too. In June, *El Sueño Va Sobre el Tiempo* (2019), a portrait of three female figures, fetched £139,000 (\$168,000)—a record for her—at Phillips London, far exceeding its £20,000 high estimate. "I never thought I would make it as an artist," BanBan says. "But I believe in consistency, and I have been consistent and disciplined the whole way through. Painting for me is an obsession but also an escape. Whatever happens in my life, there is always painting, and I am always doing better." *skarstedt.com* —LUCY REES



Mai-Thu Perret

A blue-chip art fair can be a dizzying place to discover fresh perspectives. Household names displayed by dealers often take center stage with up-and-coming voices lost in the visual cacophony. But at this year's Frieze New York, everyone was talking about Geneva-based Mai-Thu Perret, whose sculptural works include a series of luscious apple ceramics. "As an artist, you can activate deeply grounded archetypes," she says, describing her recurrent apple imagery, hearkening to the persecution of witches during the Renaissance as much as Disney princesses. "It's no accident that these pieces have very stark and almost symbolic colors."

Also on view was a goddess straddling ancient and dystopian motifs in a singular vision. At just over five feet, wearing sneakers, hands cast in bronze, with breast-like bulges around her torso, *Diana* is a portrait of feminist power—terrain Perret has mined skillfully for decades. "I've been working with figures and representations of the female body for a long time," she says.

At the 2011 Venice Biennale, Perret displayed a figure with the face of one of her best friends, singer-songwriter Tamara Barnett-Herrin, in a replica of Elsa Schiaparelli's Skeleton dress. The work nods to Edgar Degas's little dancer, which was transgressive in its time. "In the beginning I was working on the project called *The Crystal Frontier*, an autonomous commune of young women who leave modern society behind to live in the desert and be free," the artist explains, outlining the conceptual New Mexico utopia she imagined in 1999–2000, producing artifacts, fashion, and furniture for various fictional characters.

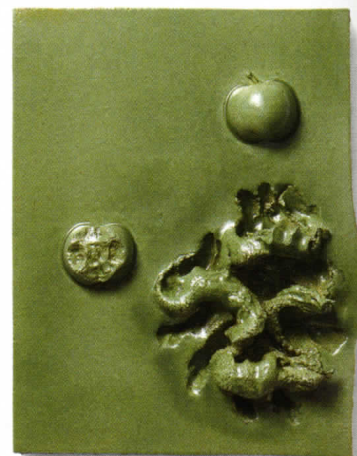


CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: *By Lamplight in the Inner Chamber They Speak of Deception and Revenge* (2019) by Mai-Thu Perret. The artist. *This Is a Slap Right in the Patriarch's Face* (2019). *Diana* (2022).



"It's no accident that these pieces have very stark and almost symbolic colors"

MAI-THU PERRET



This fall, Perret opens a solo exhibition at Galerie Elisabeth & Klaus Thoman in Innsbruck, Austria. For a two-person show at Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich, she's presenting archival material about Dada icon Sophie Taeuber-Arp's decorative arts practice.

"Taeuber-Arp is a big hero of mine," says Perret. "She had a fully modernist approach. Basically, I'm building a display inspired by her work." Meanwhile, Perret is also readying a major installation at David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles, on the horizon for March. davidkordanskygallery.com —JACOBA URIST