

**Katherina OLSCHBAUR**

*Juxtapoz,*

*Live Flesh: Katherina Olschbaur @ Nicodim, Los Angeles*

*%041 %2022*



# JUXTAPOZ

Art & Culture



## Live Flesh: Katherina Olschbaur @ Nicodim, Los Angeles

Nicodim Gallery // December 16, 2021 - January 29, 2022

January 25, 2022 | in Painting



**Fans of large figurative painting, intense, vibrant color, monumental scales, and imposing compositions, please drop**

everything you're working on and head over to [Nicodim](#) in LA to see the latest solo exhibition by [Katherina Olschbaur](#). Running until the end of the week, *Live Flesh* is a breath-taking presentation comprising mostly large scale paintings in which mythical meets retro, violence meets passion, and religious meets erotic.

Some year and half since [her last exhibition with the gallery](#) and less then a year since [her last solo show in London](#), the Austrian-born artist created her arguably largest and most impactful body of work to date. Imposing with their size as well as the color choices and the grandiose compositions, the work is often revolving around the destruction and reconstruction by interlocking a variety of references. From religious iconography (Gravitation, Sub Red, Angels and Avatars, all 2021), renaissance or baroque elements (The Gift, 2021), social realism-like ways of building the narrative (After Venus and Adonis (Live Flesh) and Picnic of Two Suns, all 2021), to elements evoking the modern day life and subjects (Karyatide, The Pearl Earring, and Saturn, all 2021), the interruption of the elements extends to the narrative sequencing. This approach also allows for construction of gender-fluid characters with skirts, chest hair, high heels, and phalusoid shapes appearing at otherwise unassuming moments. Misleading the eye and mind, this approach alternates otherwise archetypal baroquesque or religious-like compositions in which Olschbaur's protagonists are rising above the ashes of preceding disaster.



For the last few years the color has been the continuous strongest aspect of the work, and with this show it feels to get further emphasised with the scale of the works as well as the variety of paint manipulation techniques. Capturing the energy of Olschbaur's process, these various techniques complement the bold color choices which enable the artist to play with unexpected shifts. Diving deeper into the possibility of color and how it influences the ambience of the depicted scenes, some of the works are taking a cheeky step away from the commonly dominating purples, blues, and pinks, playing with the different ways of constructing the ambience of new beginnings. *Young Hermaphrodite*, 2021, successfully embraces the happiness and optimism of yellow, while the raw passion of blood red permeates the affection depicted in *Lovers*, 2021. On top of that, there is a certain nod to the European kitsch and exuberance in everything from the vibrant color choices, over the various brush styles that construct lush surfaces, overtly grandiose scenes and compositions, all the way to the physical attributes and the attitudes of her subjects. Regardless if nude, topless, or dressed, portrayed in a passionate embrace of a lover, accompanied by an animal, or holding a child, her gender-fluid muses are depicted with an almost mythical amount of confidence, determination, and effortlessness. Dominated by such centrally positioned figures, these monumental scenes and compositions seem to be shedding new lights, both figuratively and literally, on the familiar mythological or pseudo-historical scenes. —*Sasha Bogojev*



*All photos courtesy of the artist and Nicodim Gallery, Los Angeles. Photography by Lee Tyler Thompson.*