



Vivian GREVEN

Art Basel,

The untouchable bodies of artist Vivian Greven

April 2024



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Melding classical motifs with contemporary digital aesthetics, the painter captures our eternal longing for intimacy

'I feel that my body is never the same,' painter Vivian Greven says, speaking from her studio in Düsseldorf. 'That it's always in a state of transformation; I might have a stony body in the morning, but then I get up, embrace my son, and suddenly I'm fluid or becoming merged with another being.' Greven's paintings pair classical forms with digital aesthetics to address intimacy and disconnection, myth and metamorphosis. Her large-scale works show fragmented figures in smooth, glowing colors punctuated with breaks that look like technological glitches. The images have a timeless quality but are

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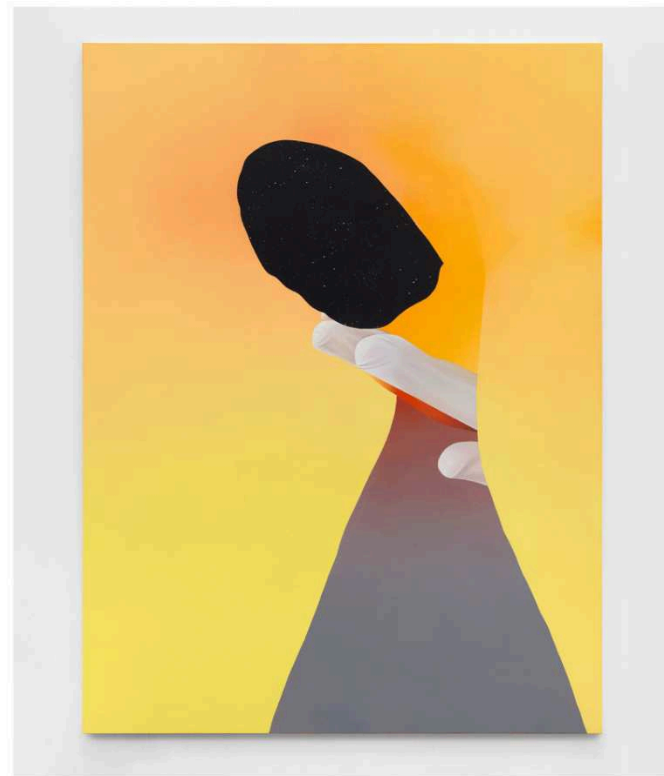
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all about the body in transition, often capturing figures in the moments just before contact or connection.



Vivian Greven, Wh Ole II, 2024. Photograph by Ivo Faber. Courtesy of the artist and Perrotin.



Vivian Greven, <O> IV, 2024. Photograph by Ivo Faber. Courtesy of the artist and Perrotin.



Portrait of Vivian Greven, 2024. Photograph by Judith Wagner. Courtesy of the artist and Perrotin.

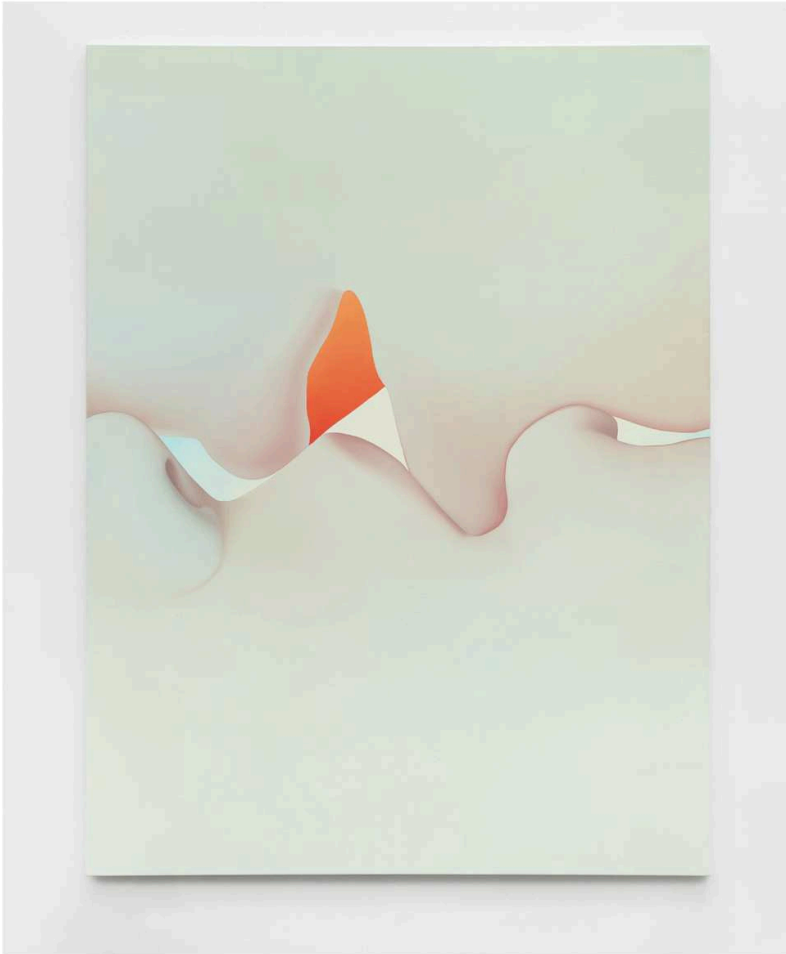
Several of the paintings premiering in ‘When the Sun Hits the Moon’, the German artist’s inaugural show at [Perrotin](#), New York, home in on the almost-kiss between Eros and Psyche depicted in the neoclassical sculpture by Antonio Canova. Eros can’t permit his mortal lover to see him in the light; the moment Psyche holds a candle to the god of love’s face, the pair permanently disconnects. ‘I like that imagery because the moment I catch is the one when they’re still looking at each other without objectification,’ Greven says. ‘They’re still in darkness, in inner looking and an inner embrace.’

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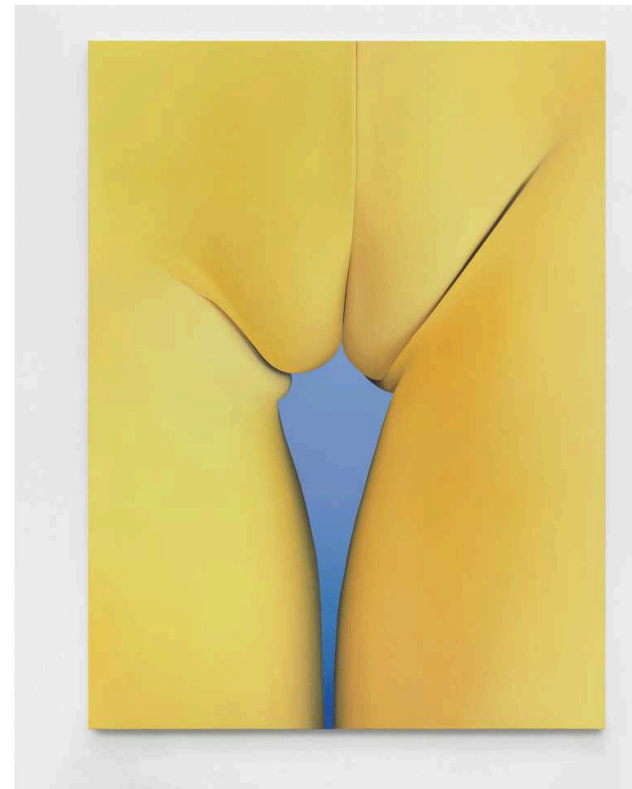
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Vivian Greven, <O> IV, 2024. Photograph by Ivo Faber. Courtesy of the artist and Perrotin.



Vivian Greven, X XIX, 2024. Photograph by Ivo Faber. Courtesy of the artist and Perrotin.

The luminous bodies of Greven's figures, however, read as untouchable. She considers them 'avatars' whose perceived perfection derives from ancient beauty ideals and is sourced from the screen. Yet, Greven's works are not digital, and neither are the tools she uses to make them. 'I really like the idea of giving them back their physicality by painting them,' she says. 'To really feel this stroking over the surface and to understand: Oh, this is a form; it's not just a screen.' In the end, Greven gives us back

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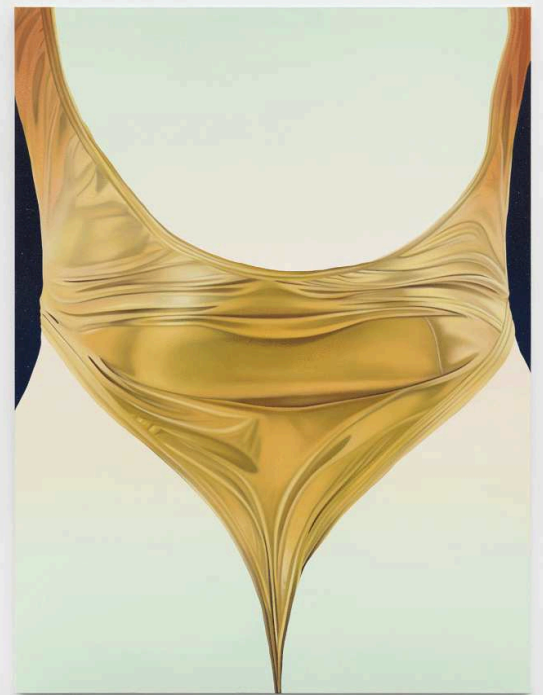
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the body in the form of a painting. Her canvases reveal varied depths beneath a skin that was constructed through accumulated moments of painstaking touch. In the translation from flesh to stone to pixels to painting, we end up where we began: in an encounter between one body and another.



Vivian Greven, *Sphinx IV*, 2024. Photograph by Ivo Faber. Courtesy of the artist and Perrotin.



Vivian Greven, *Y O I*, 2024. Photograph by Ivo Faber. Courtesy of the artist and Perrotin.

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Vivian Greven, Ae Tha, 2024. Photograph by Ivo Faber. Courtesy of the artist and Perrotin.