

**PRESSBOOK**

Emily Mae SMITH

*Juxtapoz*

*January 2019*

## EMILY MAE SMITH OPENS FIRST MUSEUM SHOW @ THE CONSORTIUM IN DIJON

Nov 24, 2018 - Apr 19, 2019  
Le Consortium, Dijon, France

Shortly after her milestone debut with Perrotin in NYC, Emily Mae Smith flew to France for the opening of her first ever institutional exhibition with Le Consortium Museum in Dijon. Bringing together about forty artworks made between 2014 and 2018, the show was a retrospective presentation that focuses on the great diversity of the artist's body of work.



Born in Texas and living in NYC, Smith was determined to make it in the art world, but patiently waiting for her moment while creating noncompromising work that hardly fit any genre or style. "I didn't know enough about what I wanted out of my artwork, I didn't want to get committed. I was after something that a scene didn't exist for," she says about those early years living in NYC after graduating from Columbia. Switching between imagery, aesthetics, and appearance of her work, yet keeping the visual language recognizable and coherent, there is still hardly any current art scene that her works fit into.

Influenced by the 1960s Chicago Imagist as well as working within Surrealist genre and often adding a pinch of Art Nouveau to her pieces, the work is characterized by vibrant colors, sharp, almost graphics rendering, flawless execution, and endless ways of mixing and reinventing diverse imagery. Sort of obsessed with gradients, she often uses them in her work to the point of evoking the airbrush art aesthetics. The results are surprising images that vary from magazine cover-like composition all the way to remakes of art history classics. "It started with my laboring in the art world, doing random jobs to get by while making my work. I thought, 'I feel like that broom in *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*.' And then the ideas took off from there," she remembers the source of some of the most iconic elements in her work. Working with visual vocabulary elements that include stilettos, teeth, candles, eyeglasses, mustache, etc, and a list of recurring characters such as the broom or phallus-like female character, Smith images conceal rich and well-informed narratives regularly built around notions of gender, femininity, or feminism. —  
*Sasha Bogojev*