The Pit

Kevin Sabo: In Rare Form

November 7 - December 19, 2026

The Pit is pleased to present In Rare Form, a solo exhibition of new paintings by Kevin Sabo, his first with the gallery. The exhibition will be on view from November 7 - December 19, 2026, with an opening reception on Saturday, November 7, from 5-7 pm. Across ten new works, Sabo returns to the stretched, theatrical women who recur throughout his work, posing each in profile with a cherished object: a conch shell, a strand of pearls, a rose, a dirty martini. Each is dramatic and fabulous on the surface, with more complicated emotions underneath.

Sabo is best known for paintings in which proportion carries the story. Arms stretch into long ribbons, hands balloon, and heads narrow to a sharp, beaked profile, giving his figures a springy presence between cartoon and mid-century illustration. Fashion, music videos, and beauty culture feed the work, but drag is the constant reference point, shaping a cast of divas who once appeared opposite buttoned-up corporate men. He works out each composition directly on the canvas, layering acrylic with graphite, charcoal, and conté crayon.

In Venus with Conch, the largest work in the show, a reclining figure stretches across a black ground. One long arm cradles a spiraled conch with a pink, fluted lip, while blonde hair tumbles down the other side in doughy curls. Nude with Pearls folds its burnt-orange figure into a tight crouch; an arm arcs overhead and lets a strand of pearls slip from its fingertips. In Paris Baby, a figure holds a bug-eyed lapdog up to her face while her hair billows across a cream ground in soft spirals.

In Rare Form also introduces new elements. Heaps of blonde hair, shaped like rising sourdough and shaded with softened conté crayon, appear throughout. The spiral, which Sabo calls an inescapable symbol, works its way into nearly every painting as a form of embellishment, curling through hairlines, cheeks, and soft serve and coiling most fully in the shell of Venus with Conch. A shared palette of cream, soft peach, jet black, and fluorescent pink and red ties the works together. By turning his sitters to the side and stretching or shrinking their features, Sabo breaks from the formal portrait and lets small shifts in proportion change each figure's emotional temperature. "I'm always hoping to land somewhere between earnest and ridiculous," Sabo says, and that space, borrowed from drag and burlesque, is where his characters find their complexity.

Kevin Sabo (b. 1992, Virginia Beach, VA) received his BFA from James Madison University and lives and works in Richmond, Virginia. Recent solo exhibitions include RHODES Contemporary in London, Edji Gallery in Brussels, Bim Bam Gallery in Paris, Kates-Ferri Projects in New York, and TW Fine Art in West Palm Beach, with group presentations at Hashimoto Contemporary in Los Angeles and The New York Historical. He has completed residencies in the South of France and Los Angeles, and his work has been featured in Architectural Digest and Metal Magazine.