AVERY WHELESS

ECHO

OCTOBER 17, 2026 – NOVEMBER 14, 2026

OCHI, LOS ANGELES

OCHI is pleased to present *Echo*, an exhibition of new paintings and fragrance by Los Angeles-based artist Avery Wheless. This marks Wheless's second solo exhibition with the gallery. *Echo* will be on view at OCHI, located at 605 N. Western Avenue in Los Angeles. An opening reception will be held October 17 at 6-8 PM.

In *Echo*, Wheless pushes her traditionally figurative practice toward something more ephemeral and fleeting, allowing the figure to loosen into abstraction. Bodies emerge as afterimages, forms already in the process of disappearing and rematerializing. The paintings consider the instability of memory: how beauty and terror can coexist within a single recollection, and how the mind obscures and reshapes experience as a means of protection. What remains is never a complete record, but something continually altered by time and desire.

Throughout the exhibition, Wheless draws from Greco-Roman mythology and its long history of representation in Western painting, fragmenting compositions associated with figures such as Echo, Mnemosyne, and Morpheus. Together, they form a loose mythology of perception: Echo, what reverberates; Mnemosyne, what is remembered; Morpheus, what is imagined. Rather than illustrating these myths directly, Wheless repositions them as psychological landscapes, pairing their imagery with contemporary figures and experiences to explore the slippage between what is lived, what is remembered, and what is imagined.

Across these mythologies runs a question central to Wheless's practice: how much of what we understand as the self is constructed through memory and the gaze of another? Wheless approaches this question through her position as an artist, a woman, and a performer—simultaneously subject and object. Her work considers the ways women learn to experience themselves through the eyes of others, becoming both the surveyed and their own surveyor. Identity, in this sense, is not simply felt from within, but continuously formed through performance and the accumulation of remembered experience.

Drawing from her background in ballet, Wheless approaches the canvas as a kind of stage: a constructed psychological space in which the female figure is exposed yet entirely at ease in her own presence. Rather than performing for the viewer, she seems absorbed within her own interior world. Wheless treats the painted surface as an extension of the body, using the female form as a charged and unstable site of perception. They occupy a space as though caught in the process of becoming memory.

Echo extends these concerns beyond the visual and into the functional sculpture of scent. Developed with multidisciplinary art agency Goliath and the largest privately-held flavor and fragrance producer in the world, MANE, the fragrance becomes another medium through which memory is activated and distorted. Where painting attempts to hold an image, fragrance resists

being held at all; it moves through space, changes on the body, disappears, and unexpectedly returns.

Avery Wheless is a Los Angeles-based multidisciplinary artist whose practice spans painting, performance, photography, and film. Informed by her background in dance, Wheless explores the body as an unstable site of perception, examining movement, desire, performance, and the unreliable nature of self-representation. Her figurative paintings often depict bodies caught between gestures, using abstraction and distortion to explore the space between presence and disappearance. Wheless has exhibited internationally and is represented by OCHI.