



IMPERIAL

Erotic Crystallization Inertia

Nora Berman

September 10th - October 22nd, 2023

Imperial is pleased to announce Erotic Crystallization Inertia, an exhibition of paintings and video by Nora Berman. Originally Anton Lavey's description of the psychological mechanism of desire, Berman adopts the phrase "erotic crystallization inertia" as an open poetic image, applicable to the experiences of life as well as the processes of art. The surrealist leader André Breton wrote that art is the product of the projection of unconscious erotic desire onto the chance-driven material world. In his view, art is the mode by which the sublimity of nature, the mysticism of dreams, and the intoxicating aroma of love might be externalized.

In Berman's paintings these elements churn together. Her feminine figures are seductive and archetypal. They approach narrative but evade precise meaning. Berman's paintings communicate coded experiences, visions and dreams, without eclipsing formal autonomy. Berman has achieved a syzygetic relationship between her content and form.

In her performances, captured here in a compilation of excerpts from her ongoing regular live-streaming practice, Berman occupies a state of childlike naïveté, at times taking on a persona of innocence, at other times that of a diviner. She improvises for hours, willfully careless of ego-motivated parameters for technical precision. Her paintings often appear as background settings and she utilizes her ceramic sculptures as unexpected tools: an ornamental pedestal becomes a reverb generator, a scroll-themed pillory is used as a drum for thunderous waves of noise. Through her oscillating personas, musical interludes, the cameos of her other words, and a slew of visual effects, Berman's broadcast performances condense into a totalized improvisational theater, her own live-streamed Gesamtkunstwerk.

Like surrealism, the measuring stick for Berman's work lies in its imaginative originality, their ability to synthesize personal fantasy with transcultural symbology. She invokes mythic images from a variety of sources, ultimately faceting them into a playfully original tapestry. Berman has developed her own mode of interactive automatism, a register of playful participation which serves as a conduit for her originality. Her performance, paintings, sculpture and video all flow from this adopted mode of engagement. In experiencing her works, the viewer is invited to partake in this suspension of the ego and set out exploring a forest of symbols.

Nora Berman (b. 1990) lives and works in Los Angeles. She received a BFA from UCLA in 2013 and a MFA from Kunst Institute Basel Switzerland in 2018. Her work has been shown at Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin; Kunstmuseum St. Gallen, St. Gallen; Kunsthaus Baselland, Basel; Marta Herford Museum, Herford, Germany; dépendance, Brussels; Isabella Bortolozzi, Berlin; High Art, Paris; Stars Gallery, Los Angeles; Mickey Schubert, Berlin; Weiss Falk, Basel; Longtang, Zürich; Le Maximum, Los Angeles; Downs & Ross, New York; and Ellis King, Dublin.