

AUSTRALIAN PAINTER RECONSTRUCTS MYTHOLOGY: STAGING FEMININITY, WILDERNESS AND THE SHADOW SELF.

COMA will be presenting a solo exhibition of new major works by Australian painter Kansas Smeaton. Drawing from ancient mythology and nocturnal symbolism, the artist recasts Artemis as a vessel for exploring identity, performance, and power.



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Kansas Smeaton (b. 1992) is a New Zealand born artist who lives and practices in Sydney, NSW. Spending her childhood in a liberal minded community environment in New Zealand has greatly shaped her attitude towards autonomy, freedom and self expression.

Smeaton's work draws on the artist's fascination with the complicated relationship between power, identity and the notion of desire. Smeaton engages with the traditional art historical strategies of symbolism and portraiture, as well as Carl Jung's theoretical framework allowing her to fluidly comment on authenticity of self, while critiquing Christocentric ideas around sexuality.

"What fascinates me is the tension between the figure and the concept of wilderness - especially in relation to Artemis. She embodies the wild woman: untameable, instinctual, and deeply connected to the woodlands. That's where her power lies - in her refusal to be domesticated."

- Kansas Smeaton



Kansas Smeaton, Are they thinking about the grape?, 2023, oil on canvas



Kansas Smeaton, Remembering you (falling into my arms), 2023, oil on canvas

In this new body of work Smeaton draws from Carl Jung's concept of the shadow self, in relation to drag as a form of expression. Drag much like the shadow self becomes a form of performance that allows individuals to access and reveal parts of themselves that are often marginalized or silenced. **The work invites an introspective process, one that emphasizes self-acceptance and the integration of all facets of the self, even those that are uncomfortable or unconventional.**

Artemis, the goddess of the hunt, the wild, and the moon, becomes a guiding presence in the work, **a symbol of autonomy, transformation, and the refusal to be captured.** The inclusion of her myth allows Smeaton to explore queer identity as something elusive and self-determined.



Exhibition Details:

20 June - 19 July 2025.

COMA Gallery, 37 Chapel St, Marrickville NSW 2204, Australia.

For further information or press and interview opportunities, please contact zuni@comagallery.com.

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