

Vanessa Conte***RIDE***

September 6 – November 8, 2025

Babst Gallery is pleased to present *RIDE*, a solo exhibition of paintings and works on paper by Vanessa Conte. This is Conte's first solo exhibition since her solo museum exhibition, *BREAKNECK* at Kunstbunker: Forum fur zeitgenoessische Kunst in Nuremberg in 2023.

In this new body of work, Conte eschews geographic and scenic markers, allowing the canvas-space to remain fully open and immersive, governed by its own gravitational laws and spatial logic. Contained within this space are life-sized female figures in modern clothing that surge through and move beyond the physical and painted frames of the canvas, creating moments of tension and release.

Conte's densely layered painting surfaces behave like seismographic recordings, registering the kinetic energy of kicking, falling, and floating figures. The space around the figures reacts with bold calligraphic strokes and luminous ripples of color that reverberate to the edges of the canvas. At times, the boundaries of the body are completely dissolved, subsumed in the color-field of the surface. Other times, Conte strips the figure down to its skeletal core. This push-pull between gestural line and painterly form is as much a conversation about painting as it is the figures' narrative trajectory.

Also included in the exhibition are Conte's works on paper, where the physical qualities of the graphite and oil-stick draw attention to her active drawing process. In these works, the paper's bare surface can be seen even when the figures—either fully rendered or defined by a single line—grapple with the vibrant, muscular marks of oil stick.

Vanessa Conte studied painting and art history at New York University, where she graduated with a BS in Art History and Studio Art in 1999 and later moved to Los Angeles to study at UCLA, where she received her MFA in 2004. She began her exhibition career in Germany, where she has since exhibited at Kunstmuseum Baden, Solingen; Kunst im Tunnel at Kunsthalle Duesseldorf; Kunstverein Harburger Bahnhof, Hamburg; Halle fur Kunst, Luneberg; Sammlung Philara, Schmela Haus, and Van Horn Gallery, Duesseldorf. After moving back to Los Angeles in 2009, Conte earned her MA in Linguistics at Cal State University, Long Beach and subsequently continued to regularly exhibit in Europe. In 2023, Conte had a large-scale solo exhibition at Kunstbunker: Forum fur zeitgenoessische Kunst, Nuremberg. Conte has also exhibited at venues in Los Angeles, such as California State University, Dominguez Hills, the Torrance Art Museum, the Chan Gallery at Pomona College, Commonwealth and Council, Human Resources, and Night Gallery.