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Herald

Jennifer Carvalho
Em Kettner
Simon Petepiece

curated by Brittani Arnold

May 30 – August 1, 2026









I often think about my earliest memories of attending church. I was 5 years old, enrolled in a Catholic school in Michigan. I remember how it smelled: leather, wood, old books, and the faint scent of candles burning. I remember the way the skin on the back of my thighs stuck to the unforgiving wood of the pew, and the way that I would pull up my socks, so I didn't have to touch the coarse fabric of the kneelers. I remember feeling physically uncomfortable, and quite small in the grandiose room. I think about the saturated glow of the stained-glass windows, the luster of the metal objects – the large goblet at the altar, the towering candlesticks with their reaching arms ablaze. I think of the ornate robes adorned by the priest: verdant greens and rich burgundies, with opulent gold accents. I remember very little about the actual substance of the sermons, but I know that the concept of an all-knowing, all-seeing higher power terrified me. My obedience, my self-awareness, and my capacity to repent was motivated by the threat of an unending eternity of punishment. Even before I fully understood my desires as sinful, my faith was defined by a fear of retribution.

Places of worship, churches, cathedrals, and the like, have a historical commitment to beauty in their representation of the divine. While reflecting on my earliest introduction to religious iconography in the Catholic church, I've frequently contemplated how religious spaces often serve as an entry point for art, architecture, and storytelling. *Herald* was born out of a desire to further explore these shared experiences and their influence on contemporary culture and moral belief systems.

– Brittani Arnold

A herald is a messenger, a harbinger, a sign that something is already on its way. The word carries within it a sense of threshold: the feeling of standing at the edge of one moment while simultaneously announcing the next. Herald takes this sensation as both its title and disposition. Featuring works by Jennifer Carvalho, Em Kettner, and Simon Petepiece, *Herald* contemplates echoes of the past, and the broader implications that historical narratives have for society moving forward.

All three artists engage with reframing historical narratives, and the ways in which architectural spaces reflect and embody a society's cultural beliefs. Working across painting, sculpture, and mixed media, Carvalho, Kettner, and Petepiece treat this visual lexicon of religious iconography as source material that is simultaneously generative and ideologically loaded, asking what it means to carry these images and forms into the present day, and what contemporary moral beliefs (if any), they continue to quietly underwrite.

In mining source material from Antiquity to the Renaissance, Carvalho incorporates architectural elements in her paintings to serve as framing devices, relying on forms from the past to ruminate on themes of cultural inheritance and evolv-

ing social ideologies. Within images from the Renaissance, a period associated with cultural and intellectual growth, Carvalho identifies symptoms for ideological difficulties in the present day. In *Maenad*, Carvalho offers a rendition of the ecstatic female followers of Dionysus, who occupied a paradoxical position in ancient Greek mythology: revered for their closeness to the divine yet regarded with fear and moral suspicion for the wildness that such closeness required. In a cultural moment defined by renewed contests over female bodily autonomy and the policing of female rage, Carvalho's *Maenad* feels less like an artifact of antiquity than a mirror reflecting contemporary social inequities.

Similarly, Kettner's work provides a pivotal component that considers the body itself in the vast lexicon of human spirituality, and archaic superstitions that still permeate medicine and religion to this day. Kettner considers the ancient tradition of offering a talisman to an altar as a healing prayer for someone afflicted by illness or disability. Her work reinterprets this devotional object, not as an expression of suffering, but as a means to appreciate the value of every human body; of each unique mortal experience. In tracing the historical roots of bias against disabled people across Greek mythology, medieval Christianity, and contemporary medicine, her work reveals how superstition continues to influence the moral and institutional assumptions of the present day. Her sculptures frequently depict figures in states of mutual support, merged, carried, and bound together, proposing that the self does not end at its singular physical form, but expands into the networks of care that sustain it. Like the votive object placed at an altar, Kettner's work is an act of offering. A prayer, of sorts, for a different way of seeing.

Petepiece brings a particular sensitivity to the ways that sacred architecture has historically been utilized to induce a devotional state: the way that a soaring vault compels the eye upward, the way the progression from narthex to nave to sanctuary enacts a movement from the profane to the holy. Working with drywall, steel studs, primer, and joint compound, the ubiquitous infrastructure of contemporary interiors, he translates this spatial intelligence into objects that exist somewhere between sculpture and drawing. His work draws on the rich lexicon of devotional ornamentation and iconography, combining it with the innate language of industrial materials to ask what spaces we are building now, and what beliefs those spaces announce.

While all three artists cull from historical narratives, they also create works that incorporate contemporary materials and ideologies. Together, they approach the gallery as a sanctuary in its own right: a contemplative space in which visitors may seek solace, reflection, and connect with themes of memory, mythology, and shared personal histories. *Herald* does not simply look to the past with nostalgia. Rather, it views the past as a sign of what is already becoming and poses the question about what we choose to carry forward.



Jennifer Carvalho
Maenad, 2026
Oil on canvas
20 (H) x 16 (W) in.
50.80 (H) x 40.64 (W) cm
JECAR0001



Jennifer Carvalho
Mourning women (Garofalo), 2026
Oil on canvas
16 (H) x 20 (W) in.
40.64 (H) x 50.80 (W) cm
JECAR0004



Jennifer Carvalho
Study of natural motifs (garden fresco with brocade robe and honour cloth), 2026
Oil on canvas
9 (H) x 12 (W) in.
22.86 (H) x 30.48 (W) cm
JECAR0003



Jennifer Carvalho
Predella with figures removed and weeping eyes, 2026
Oil on canvas
9 (H) x 12 (W) in.
22.86 (H) x 30.48 (W) cm
JECAR0002



Em Kettner
The Pig Run, 2026
Glazed Porcelain embedded in oil-sealed Cherry
13 (H) x 33 (W) x 1 (D) in.
33.02 (H) x 83.82 (W) x 2.54 (D) cm
EK0004



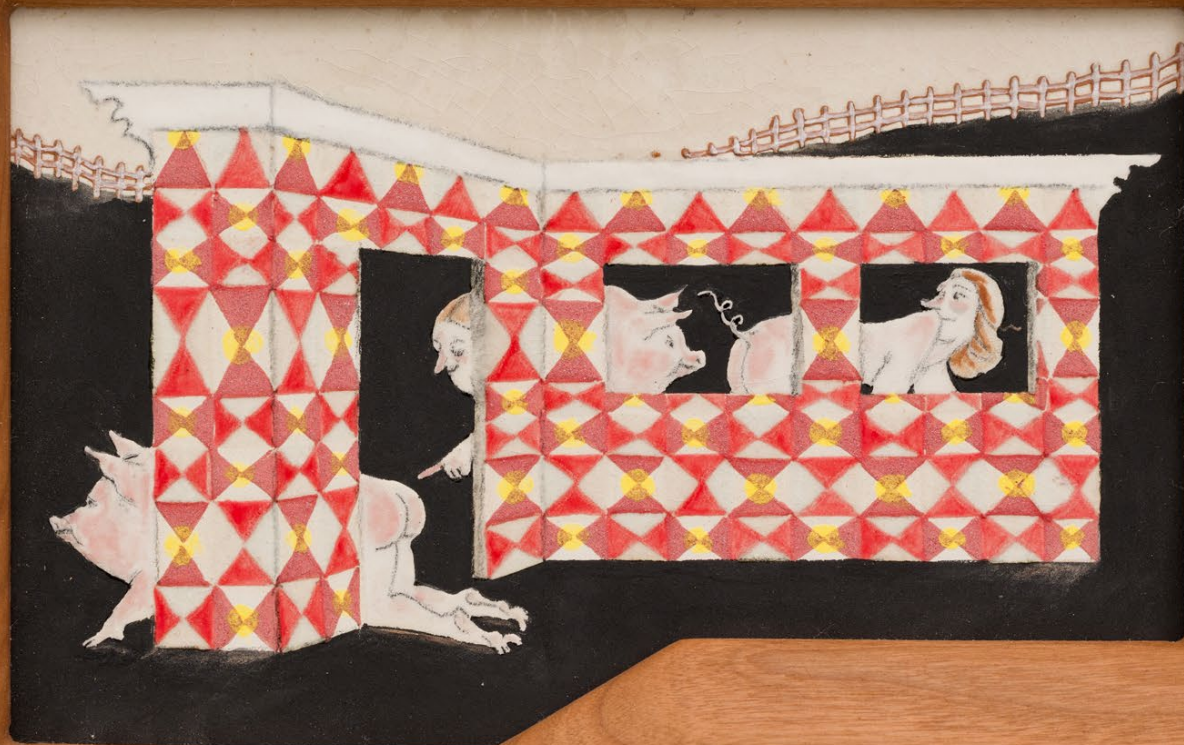
Em Kettner
The Pig Run, 2026
detail



Em Kettner
The Pig Run, 2026
detail

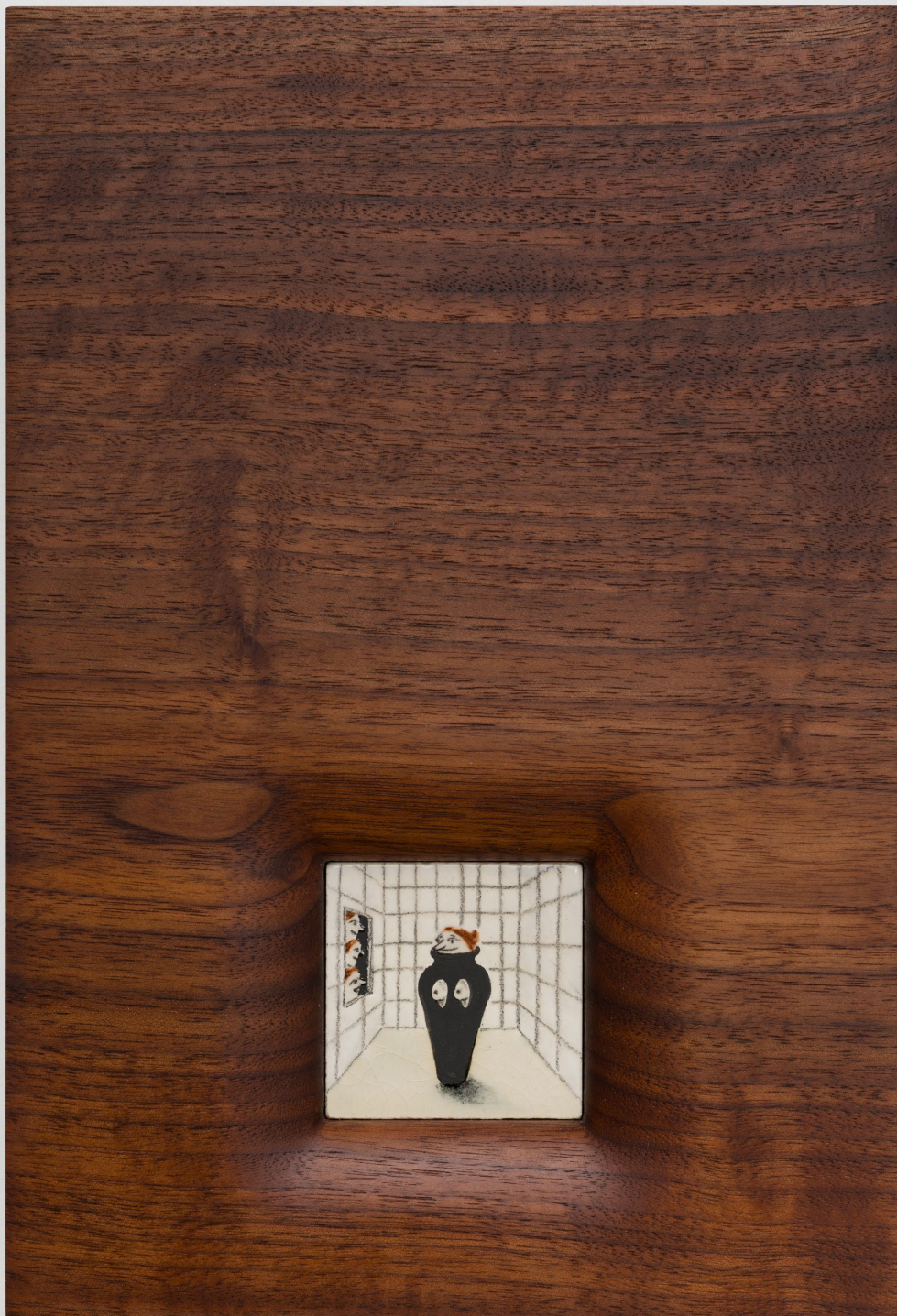


Em Kettner
Circe's House, 2026
Glazed Porcelain embedded in oil-sealed Cherry
13 (H) x 24 (W) x 1 (D) in.
33.02 (H) x 60.96 (W) x 2.54 (D) cm
EK0002



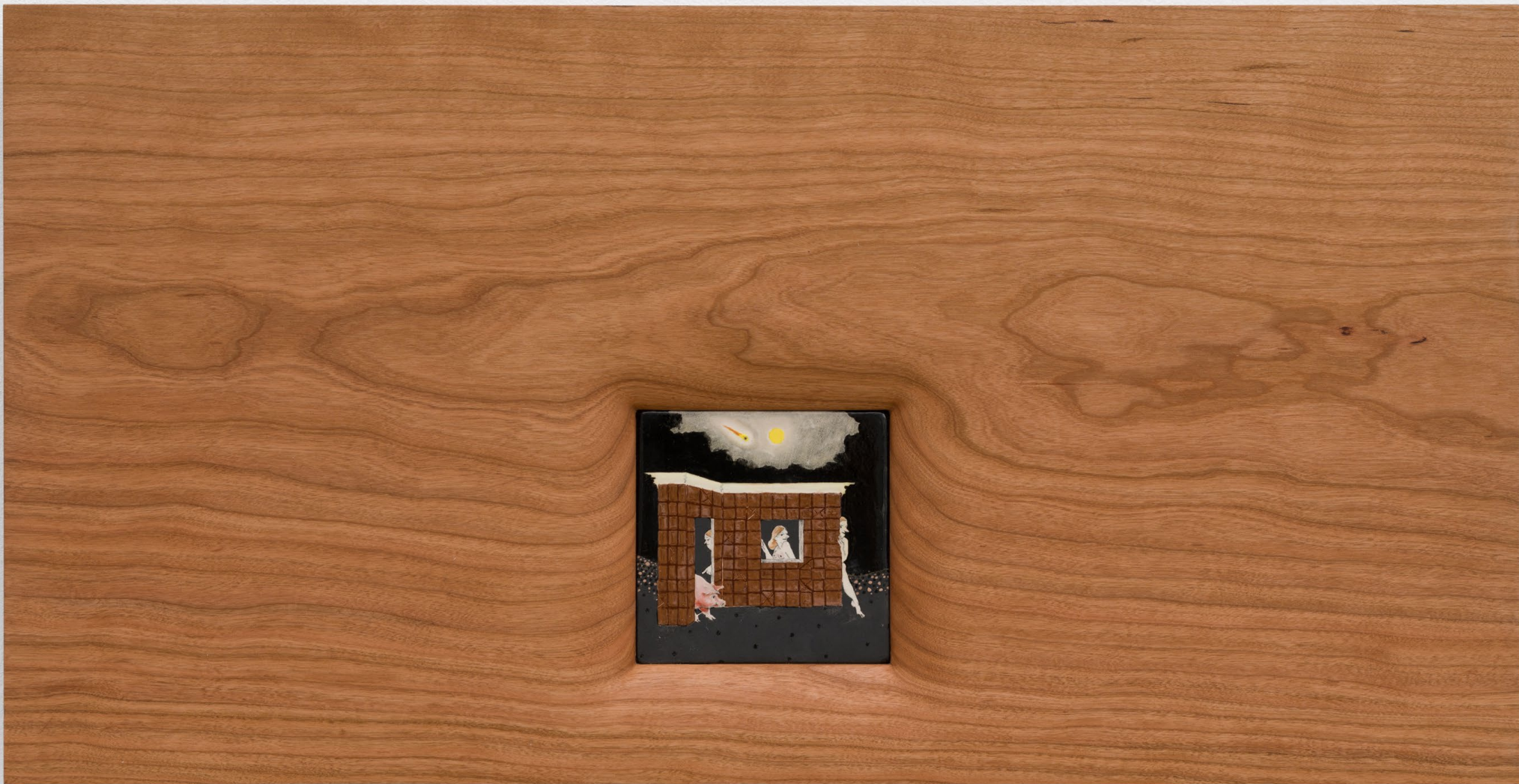
Em Kettner
Circe's House, 2026
detail

Em Kettner
Four Eyes (The Cocoon), 2026
Glazed porcelain tile embedded in oil-sealed
walnut artist's frame
10 (H) x 7 (W) x 1 (D) in.
25.40 (H) x 17.78 (W) x 2.54 (D) cm
EK0005





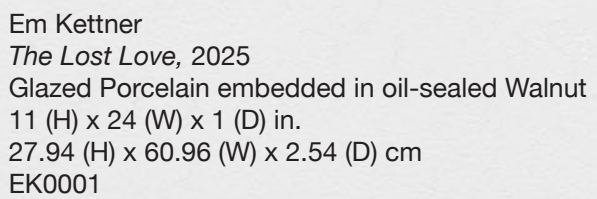
Em Kettner
Four Eyes (The Cocoon), 2026
detail



Em Kettner
The Fates in the Pigpen, 2026
Glazed Porcelain embedded in oil-sealed Cherry
13 (H) x 25 (W) x 1 (D) in.
33.02 (H) x 63.50 (W) x 2.54 (D) cm
EK0003



Em Kettner
The Fates in the Pigpen, 2026
detail



EKO001

Simon Petepiece

Trinity, 2025

Drywall, Steel Studs, Joint Compound

108 (H) x 132 (W) x 103 (D) in.

274.32 (H) x 335.28 (W) x 261.62 (D) cm

SP0006



Simon Petepiece
Trinity, 2025
alternate view





Simon Petepiece

Fan, 2025

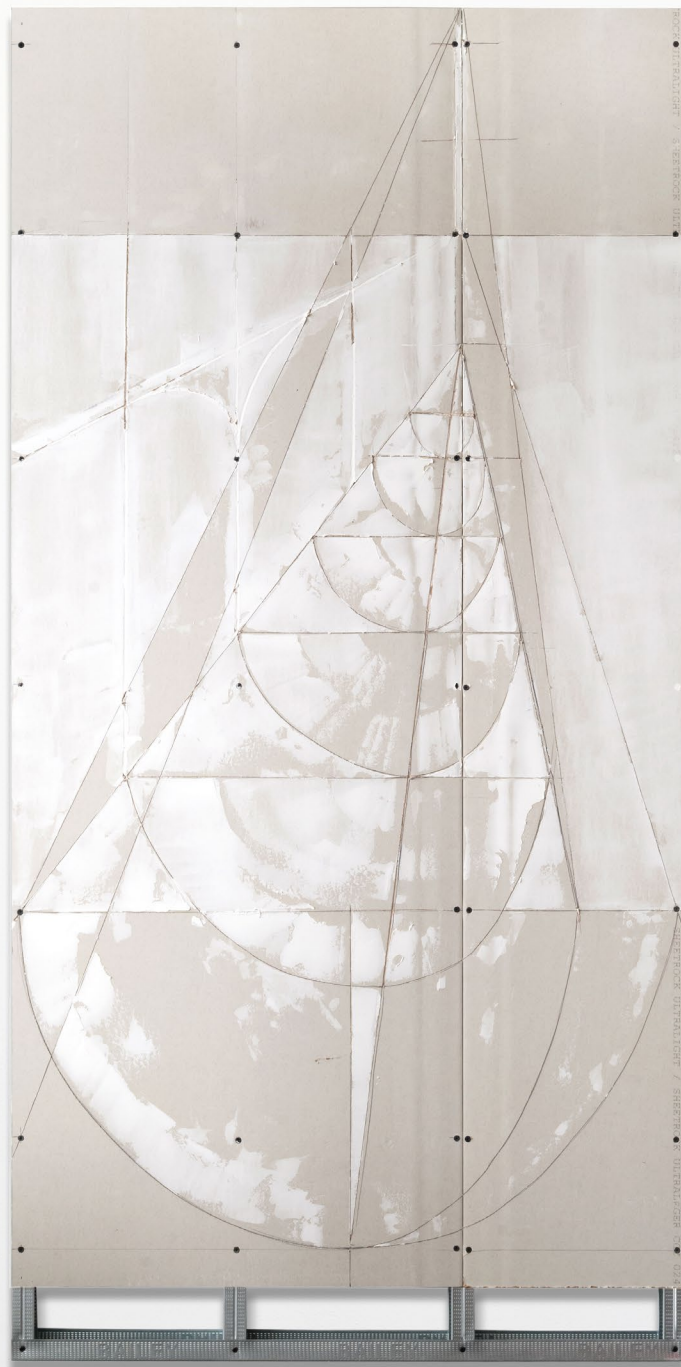
Steel studs

114 (H) x 114 (W) x 6 (D) in.

289.56 (H) x 289.56 (W) x 15.24 (D) cm

SP0005

Simon Petepiece
Cathedral , 2026
Drywall, Joint Compound
72 (H) x 36 (W) in.
182.88 (H) x 91.44 (W) cm
SP0009





Simon Petepiece
Sunflower, 2026
Drywall, Joint Compound
24 (H) x 18 (W) in.
60.96 (H) x 45.72 (W) cm
SP0007



Simon Petepiece
Christ Bridge, 2026
Drywall, Joint Compound
12 (H) x 48 (W) in.
30.48 (H) x 121.92 (W) cm
SP0008