

THE SONGS OF ★ H E C A T E ★

Ornella Pocetti // Renin Bilginer // Hannah Lim
Chantal Powell // Johanna Seidel // Rithika Pandey // Maddie Yuille

23rd March - 26th April 2023

Pictorum Gallery is excited to present 'The Songs of Hecate', a group show of seven women artists working across painting, drawing, installation, sculpture and textile. Taking the writings of feminist critic and author Sylvia Federici as inspiration, The Songs of Hecate looks at how cultural knowledge-sharing, rituals and stories are powerful tools used to create a sense of community and support amongst women. In Federici's writings, she highlights how women have been silenced (at the very least) since the early medieval period and the development of the Witch Hunts. Federici points out that through villainising women and especially groups, or 'covens', of women, there developed a drain of women-centred cultural knowledge. Drawing on medieval, classical, mystic, and cultural practices, Songs of Hecate shines a contemporary light on the power of storytelling, showcasing it as a way to dismantle, re-envision and understand different cultures as well as each other.

ABOUT THE GALLERY

Pictorum Gallery London is a contemporary art gallery that presents exceptional artists from around the world, based in Portman Square. The Gallery presents up-to-date and highly curated exhibitions, with a specific focus on Women and POC artists. Pictorum Gallery embraces a transparent, unique and highly researched curatorial approach, maintaining a strong relationship with the artists it showcases. The gallery also fosters strong relationships with institutions, collectors and curators worldwide. Pictorum Gallery seeks to nurture and incubate new talent by offering artists a dynamic, inclusive and supportive environment through which they can be introduced to both our London-based and international collectors. Working closely and alongside the gallery are the Pictorum Advisors, who are based between London, and America. Our advisors work with clients to develop outstanding collections of both emerging and more established artists, whilst also furthering relationships with other museums, galleries and institutions. Pictorum Gallery London will launch its first annual Incubator Art Prize in 2023, and will expand its presence within London and Europe through new spaces and the attendance of art fairs.

THE ARTISTS

Ornella Pocetti's works draw on her Argentinian heritage, creating strange and unsettling landscapes featuring powerful, and often dangerous, women. These women, forever in control, are deeply rooted in Pocetti's fascination in finding beauty in unusual places. In her works, Pocetti juxtaposes traditionally beautiful motifs – stunning backdrops, soft colour palettes – with a darker aesthetic to explore gender, sexuality and even horror. In an almost surreal composition, her work turns on magical realist concepts to generate surreal worlds that force the viewer to analyse what 'femininity' really entails.

As a woman of mixed Singaporean and British heritage, Hannah Lim's works explore the relationship between her two cultures, delving into how this has been reflected historically in furniture design, objects and architecture. Chinoiserie, an 18th century design trend, is threaded throughout her practice, integrating elements of both European and Chinese design, culture and taste into her works. Working mainly with sculpture and painting, Lim's current works also analyse the way in which Classical Chinese literature focuses on enchanted creatures, objects and mythic storytelling. The resulting works are consequently a direct response to these texts, which are often coded with complex cultural meanings, and highlight a unique and highly personal storytelling that explores identity, femininity and culture.

Renin Bilginer's practice is created in the context of her mixed Turkish and British heritage. Interrogating what it means to exist as a woman between eastern and western cultures, her practices confronts issues around non conformity, womanhood, and the embodiment of multiple identities. The textile installation exhibited in Songs of Hecate draws heavily on Bilginer's research on Eastern miniature painting and Turkish textile practices, and as a result holds a rich cultural narrative. Showcasing three tapestries, Bilginer analyses the eponymous Hecate's three forms (maiden, mother, crone), taking this as a viewpoint to further consider the different stages in the female cycle.

Maddie Yuille and Johanna Seidel use mythology as a vehicle to explore their lived experiences, focusing on the relationships women have with nature, as well as a discussion around femininity and colour. Yuille's paintings are decidedly green – commenting both on the ecological relationship women, and traditionally women-healers, have had with the natural world, but also the negative association that green has specifically in depictions of women and witches. Seidel also includes green heavily in her exhibited work, but associates it more with a naivety and sense of wonderment and companionship.

Rithika Pandey has a nomadic practice that is rooted somewhere between her home in India and the UK. Drawing from the personal, mythological and scientific, Pandey foregrounds issues around displacement, futurity and femininity. The two drawings showcased in Songs of Hecate present gender-less bodies in a surreal and almost intangible world, filled with potent psychological tropes and metaphors. The lucid dreamscapes created by Pandey generate unique narratives where the viewer feels disassociated from reality, having fully engaged in Pandey's hazy, richly imaginative and symbolic dreamscapes.

Chantal Powell's works are made in response to her personal journey into understanding our subconscious. Deeply rooted in Jungian theory and informed by 'inner alchemy', Powell's intricate sculptures draw on imagery found in 15th and 16th century alchemical manuscripts and notebooks, transforming these two-dimensional drawings into tangible objects of symbolic and mythological magnitude. Powell's practice also hovers on the relationship mythology and the unconscious have with personal trauma – the act of collaboration and community lead directly into this line of research.