



Over The Influence presents
Camilla Engström
Valley of the Moon
18 October to 25 November 2023



Parallel Peace, 2023, Oil on canvas, 76.2 x 101.6 cm, 30 x 40 in

The body repeats the landscape. They are the source of each other and create each other. –Meridel le Suer

Over the Influence is delighted to present for the very first time in Paris, Camilla Engström. The exhibition *Valley of the Moon* will be on view from October 18th to November 25th, 2023.

Camilla Engström did not start painting nude figures because she was hot, but she was hot while painting them. Sweltering temperatures combined with a shoddy air conditioning unit transformed her Ojai live-work space into something of an inferno over the last few months. While there is nothing like extreme heat to remind you of your corporeal form, all its folds, functions, and fluids, exploring figuration was a natural and inevitable progression in Engström's practice. *Valley of the Moon* features five portraits and eight new landscapes that together animate a lush, luminous world, rich with iconographic and mythological allusions and only a little feverish.

Engström's figures are rutilant, at once ethereal and carnal, the creators and creations of their landscapes. Their expressions are peaceful, pensive, and their dispositions benevolent, sublime. While fluid, glowing brushwork renders skin smooth and supple, complex chiaroscuro shading begets depth and anatomical definition. Curving lines and soft contours merge with planes of lambent color in a way that portrays their nudity as sensuous rather than erotic. The intimacy, tenderness, and affection between subject and artist are absorbed into each portrait's gesture, painterly language, and tone.

Their aureate complexions and fey features grant them a mythic, allegorical quality. In this way, they transcend the specificity of identity, species, time, and place while remaining recognizable as their maker's creations, imbued with her distinctive style, aesthetic sensibility, and tendency toward the fantastical and surreal. Formed from the clay of their landscapes, they are of the earth as the earth, indistinguishable from their environments where collarbones mimic mountain peaks, hair cascades like a river, and eyes appear like the celestial bodies overhead. Water flows, light shines, and flora grows from them, suggesting a fertility of body, mind, and spirit.

Earth Dreamer features a seraphic figure reclining on a patch of mottled grass with her eyes closed, a poised, dreamy expression on her face. Beneath her, the snowy tendrils of her hair unfurl into leafy vines that fan around her body in a verdant aureole. The woman in *Nourisher* is also asleep or lost in revelry, her shoulders and elbows propped on a mountain range, her legs submerged in a cerulean lake fed by the water streaming from her pointer fingers. In the mythic portrait, *Soul of the Sun*, the celestial and terrestrial realms coalesce in the features of a woman whose serpentine locks turn to clouds about her face and to vines across her chest. A crimson sun flushes her cheeks and ears while an opalescent moon gilds her hair, her penetrating gaze affecting clairvoyance and sagacity that catches and keeps the viewer's eye.

In more ways than one, her figures emerged from her landscapes, but the exacting details, fine lines, and careful shading that figurative painting necessitated also seeped into the creation of her new landscapes to stunning effect.



Photographed by Emily Pinto -www.emily-pinto.com

Engström adroitly mimics natural textures from the crelation of petals and the lacey veins of leaves to the course hirsute surface of a dried field and the luxuriant density of a grassy expanse. Replacing the pure tones of her previous landscapes, the colors here are mottled, dynamic, shimmering, capable of reflecting depth, dimension, and the lyrical movements between light and shade. Far from subduing the distinct fantastical strangeness of Engström's world, the introduction of fine details and dappled hues further emphasize its surrealist, supernatural qualities and facilitates a fuller, more all-consuming immersion into its chimerical realms.

Written by Tara Anne Dalbow

Biography

Camilla Engström's practice encompasses painting, drawing, sculpture, and poetry. She explores autobiographical topics through humor, surrealistic landscapes, and figurative expression. Based on real life experiences and often portraying her alter-ego Husa, Engström uses her work as a diary and outlet for processing life's events. Husa is confident, gender-bending, amorphous character who offers a humorous take on the issues face by the millennial generation. Engström's work is influenced by popular culture, sitcoms and iconic female artists such as Yayoi Kusama and Marie-Louise Ekman. Born 1989 Örebro, Sweden, Engström is a self-taught painter. Her work has been exhibited in group and solo shows in Los Angeles, CA, USA and New York, NY, USA. She currently lives and works in Los Angeles, CA, USA.

Over The Influence

OTI was founded in Hong Kong in 2015 and expanded to Los Angeles in 2018, followed by Bangkok in 2022. The gallery has established itself in Europe with its first space in the 8th arrondissement of Paris, inaugurated in July 2022. Over The Influence is dedicated to championing artists who challenge traditional approaches to studio practice, presenting a dynamic program that explores the intersection of contemporary art, architecture, design, music, fashion, and other forms of visual expression. The gallery represents an international roster of emerging and established artists working in various mediums and disciplines.

Opening reception

18 October 2023 6PM - 9PM

Exhibition Dates

18 October - 25 November 2023

Address :

2 rue des Saussaies
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Open from Tuesday to Saturday from 11 AM to 9 PM

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