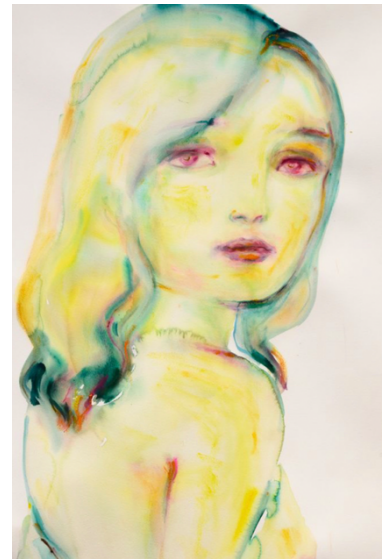


## Kim McCarty *New Work*

November 16, 2023 – January 6, 2024



Morgan Lehman is pleased to announce the opening of an exhibition of new works by Kim McCarty. This marks the artist's fourth solo exhibition with the gallery.

Over the course of her career, McCarty has fused a deep-seated interest in figuration with a propensity for material experimentation. Her paintings rely on the gauzy, aqueous blur of alla prima watercolor technique to imbue her subjects with a sense of transience, longing, and memory. Often working at a massive scale, McCarty drenches unstretched heavyweight watercolor paper with water before marking the surface with gestural brushwork that clouds and blooms as pigments disperse into substrate. Translucent paint veils overlap and interact to form luminous color networks that verge on the abstract when viewed up close. McCarty's painterly approach and ambitious sense of scale produce a powerful rawness in her work; this rawness serves as a counterpoint to the tenderness and vulnerability of her of figures.

In this latest body of work, McCarty refers to Antonio Canova's "Pauline Bonaparte as Venus Victrix," a neo-Classical marble sculpture completed in Rome between 1805-1808. Commissioned for Camillo Borghese, the historical artwork's reclining figure exudes an early Nineteenth Century notion of idealized beauty, youth, and perfection. It is a piece that was painstakingly crafted to be an object of the viewer's gaze. McCarty's reimagining of the sculpture through the fragile medium of a work on paper proved both challenging and inspiring. Homage, curiosity, and McCarty's critical feminine eye all come through. The shining solidity of Canova's marble bust melts away to reveal a series of moving female portraits that are unapologetically psychological.

McCarty's wet-into-wet watercolor process underscores the tension of attempting to hold onto a solid form that mutates or nearly vanishes when liquid is applied. The artist often attempts to capture a particular visual idea or shape countless times before achieving something that feels fully realized. This inherent material unpredictability keeps McCarty on her toes in the studio and asks her to be fully present during the act of painting. It also points to larger ideas about human impermanence, the chaos of our world, and the changes in perceptions of beauty that continue to unfold in our cultures. McCarty is also thinking about material evolution as it manifests in the aging process, to which no person is exempt. No one, except Pauline Bonaparte's marble likeness as Venus Victrix, perhaps. For the rest of us, time moves forward.

**Kim McCarty** graduated with an MFA from the University of California at Los Angeles and a BFA from the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, California. Recent solo and group exhibitions include the Santa Monica Museum of Art (Santa Monica, CA) and the Pasadena Museum of Art (Pasadena, CA). McCarty's work is in the permanent collections of the Museum of Modern Art (New York, NY); the UCLA Hammer Museum (Los Angeles, CA); and the Honolulu Museum of Art (Honolulu, HI); among others. Her paintings have been featured in major publications including The New York Times, The LA Times, Architectural Digest, and ArtForum.