

**Becky Kolsrud: *Antechamber***  
**January 15–February 28, 2025**  
**Level One**

Magenta Plains is pleased to present *Antechamber*, a solo exhibition of new paintings by Becky Kolsrud. This will mark her first with the gallery. Kolsrud's painting practice encompasses a lexicon of allegorical imagery relating to cycles of life and death, spiritual conceptions of femininity, and a contemporary engagement with the surreal. Eggs, skulls, fish, and mirrored images recur across the work, as iconographic touchpoints for the complex intellectual lineage which Kolsrud is engaging.

*Antechamber* showcases Kolsrud's focus on an allegorical library of imagery, which she utilizes to demonstrate how the concepts first explicated by the Surrealists can be applied to a contemporary investigation of identity, and how that identity is broken down and reconstituted through painting. Kolsrud suggests associations between these grand themes and the embodied feminine experience—as a universal exploration of the dualities which shape our day-to-day lives.

In *Antechamber*, Kolsrud's surreal imagery investigates the duality of life and death, the sacred and profane. One salient motif in the exhibition is a skull, wreathed in intestines, superimposed over an egg. In the painting *Eternal Return*, Kolsrud uses this image as a sculptural portrait bust, sitting in front of an abstracted landscape. A symbol of death, the skull is encased in a symbol of birth, the egg, presented to the viewer as a single object—the cycle is enclosed within this one image. In *Marriage*, Kolsrud utilizes the skull for different purposes: here it sits inverted atop the head of a nude female figure, emerging from a primordial, abstracted pool, wrapped in her hair. Emerging from the very top of her hair is a red apple, a symbol of knowledge and also life—the figure's hair is now the vessel for this surreal cycle. Kolsrud triangulates her iconography to explicate a narrative through relation—differing images serve related but distinct purposes in each composition.

Central as well to Kolsrud's exhibition is imagery drawn from George Bataille's surrealist journal *Acéphale*, which published only five issues from 1936 to 1939 but had an outsized influence on the early surrealist movement, which centered sex, op violence, and death in opposition to reason as a primary principle. In Kolsrud's painting *Acéphale (After Masson)*, she appropriates the cover image from Bataille's journal, originally authored by Andre Masson, for her own purposes: a headless figure, modeled after Leonardo's *Vitruvian Man*, holds a dagger in her left hand and a flaming heart in her right. Her entrails are exposed to the air, and a skull sits at her groin. The key distinction between Kolsrud's image and Masson's is that Kolsrud's is female, floating in front of a ghostly image of a wrought-iron gate, which has been shaped into the form of wings floating behind the figure. While Masson's figure is a rebuke to Leonardo's humanist portrait of man as both the object and arbiter of Reason, Kolsrud's figure both pays tribute to the surrealist legacy of *Acéphale* while suggesting a transition to something beyond the dichotomy it proposes. Kolsrud relates the aesthetic philosophy of Bataille's *Acéphale* to the feminine form, complicating Bataille's narrative by alluding to an alliance between femininity and the viscosity of historical surrealism, one which exists beyond the binaries of modernist thought.

Becky Kolsrud's (b. 1984, Los Angeles, CA) practice explores art historical and vernacular depictions of the human form—namely women—throughout advertisements, signage, bather paintings, Japanese prints, surrealism, and abstraction. Her figurative paintings and wholly invented “inscapes” (interior landscapes that depict contained worlds of pink bodies against swaths of blue) are very much rooted in the real world, specifically her hometown, Los Angeles, and its complex relationship with nature. Kolsrud draws on motifs and imagery from the city's history—and her own family's place in that history—as well as religious and architectural iconography to explore the tension between artifice and reality; patterns planned and random; the observed and the observer; scale, place, and perspective; and how human desire fills in the gaps between what is seen and what is obscured. Her playful fascination with incomplete beauty (floating limbs, disembodied feet) falls in a continuum that starts with the degraded works of art handed down from ancient Greece, through the Catholic relics that imbue toes and wooden splinters with holy power, to the fragmented landscapes between concrete and mountain, palm tree and rubber, found today in Southern California.

Kolsrud received a BS from New York University and an MFA from The University of California, Los Angeles. Selected solo exhibitions have been held at Morán Morán, Los Angeles; JTT, New York; Tif Sigfrids, Athens, GA, and Karma, New York. Selected group exhibitions include Aïshti Foundation, Beirut; Asia Art Center, Taipei; Magenta Plains, New York, and Atlanta Contemporary, Atlanta, among many others. Her exhibitions and practice have been covered in Artforum, Interview Magazine, Mousse, The New Yorker, The New York Times, Vogue, and numerous other publications worldwide. Her work is held in the collections of The Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, The Aïshti Foundation, Beirut, The Bunker, Beth Rudin deWoody Collection, Miami, the Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami and the Karpidas Collection in Dallas. In 2026, she has upcoming solo exhibitions with Magenta Plains, New York and Morán Morán, Los Angeles. Kolsrud lives and works in Los Angeles, CA.