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Gagosian to Exhibit New Paintings by Ewa Juskiewicz in Beverly Hills

In a Shady Valley, Near a Running Water Opens November 3, 2023



Ewa Juskiewicz, *The Letter (after Adélaïde Labille-Guiard)*, 2023, oil on canvas, 57 1/8 × 45 1/4 inches (145 × 115 cm)
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BEVERLY HILLS, October 3, 2023—Gagosian is pleased to announce *In a Shady Valley, Near a Running Water*, an exhibition of new paintings by Ewa Juskiewicz in Beverly Hills. On view from November 3 through December 22, 2023, this will be Juskiewicz’s first solo exhibition in California and her second with the gallery, following *In vain her feet in sparkling laces glow* in New York (2020–21).

Juskiewicz’s oil paintings of women begin with historical portraits, appropriating their style while subverting their conventions through fantastical and discomfoting pictorial interventions. Emulating representations of women painted in the Grand Manner style popular in Western art from the eighteenth through the early nineteenth century, she re-creates the poses, fashion, and settings of her sources while transforming their scales and palettes and adding details that point to the artifice of femininity’s stereotypical markers.

In the paintings exhibited in Beverly Hills (all works 2023), Juskiewicz obscures her subjects' faces, substituting passages of tightly coiffed hair, swaths of fabric, arrangements of flowers and foliage, and other additions that meticulously maintain the style of her sources while subsuming their recognizable features. These surreal elements estrange the viewer's expectations and challenge the means by which women's identities have long been obscured, idealized, and marginalized. "My intention is to free expression, emotions, and vitality," the artist notes. "These paintings balance between ideal and distorted, elegant and wild, beautiful and grotesque, human and inhuman."

The exhibition is titled after an eighteenth-century verse by English poet William Shenstone that Juskiewicz alludes to again in her painting *In a Shady Valley, Near a Running Water (after François Gérard)*. Substantially expanding the scale of Gérard's original 1803–04 portrait of Countess Katarzyna Starzeńska posing with a lyre-guitar in a wild landscape, she represents the subject's head as covered entirely with vibrant cloth wrappings that sprout an incongruous sprig of leaves. The cultural coding of nature as feminine and the image of the hunt as a metaphor for the male gaze are both of interest to Juskiewicz; she incorporates elements of hunting still lifes into *The Hunting (after Marie-Denise Villers)* to reflect on how portraits of women often reduce their subjects to trophies, while the works' idyllic backdrops function as signifiers of beauty and social status.

In *The Summer (after Jean Baptiste François Désoria)*, Juskiewicz transforms Désoria's 1797 portrait of Constance Pipelet by enshrouding the figure's face and adding a large, inverted straw hat topped with an abundance of fruit and lilies. This cornucopia points toward the absurdity of how women were idealized and treated as allegories. In *The Letter (after Adélaïde Labille-Guiard)* and *The Promenade (after Joseph Wright)*, she extends the sitters' dresses to cover them almost entirely, the elaborately piled and knotted headdresses pointing to the oppressive strictures of fashion.

Among the European and American paintings interpreted in *In a Shady Valley, Near a Running Water* are two portraits, one by Adélaïde Labille-Guiard and another by Marie-Denise Villers. Along with Élisabeth Vigée Le Brun and other female artists, Labille-Guiard and Villers advocated for recognition and equal opportunity amid the cultural and political revolutions of the era in which Mary Wollstonecraft published *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792). Inspired by these early feminists, Juskiewicz asserts their foundational importance to contemporary culture. Deconstructing signifiers of beauty and gender, her works disrupt stereotypes, liberating the individuality and vitality embedded within traditional representations.

Ewa Juskiewicz was born in 1984 in Gdańsk, Poland, and lives and works in Warsaw. Collections include the Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami; Long Museum, Shanghai; Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris; Muzeum Sztuki Nowoczesnej w Warszawie, Warsaw; and Muzeum Narodowe w Gdańsku, Gdańsk, Poland. Solo and two-person exhibitions include *How It Is, Asks Agnisia, That We See a Teddy Bear in the Painting*, Otwarta Pracownia, Kraków, Poland (2011); *Rosamunde, the Princess of Cyprus*, Centrum Kultury Katowice, Poland (2012); *Things We Don't Talk About*, Bałtycka Galeria Sztuki Współczesnej, Słupsk, Poland (2013); *Descent Beckons*, Galeria Bielska BWA, Bielsko-Biała, Poland (2015); and *Giacinto Cerone | Ewa Juskiewicz*, Cabinet, Milan (2019). Group exhibitions include *Face à Arcimboldo*, Centre Pompidou-Metz, France (2021); *Fire Figure Fantasy: Selections from ICA Miami's Collection*, Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami (2022); *Des corps, des écritures*, Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris (2022–23); and *The Echo of Picasso*, Museo Picasso Málaga, Spain (2023–24).

EWA JUSZKIEWICZ

In a Shady Valley, Near a Running Water

Opening reception: Friday, November 3, 6–8pm

November 3–December 22, 2023

456 North Camden Drive, Beverly Hills

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