

# *Divine Wisdom: Femme Alchemy through Contemporary Art and Performance*

Curated by Samara (Johnson) Furlong, Voyeur Ventures

Shaina Kasztelan, Sara Nickleson, Olivia Guterson, Dawn Marie Smith, and Sedona Cohen

Divine Wisdom: Femme Alchemy through Contemporary Art and Performance is an exhibition about the cultivation of feminine knowledge and power through the exploration of identity, meditation and art. Samara Furlong brings together five artists to create a celebration of feminine knowledge and occult practices with an expansive conception of femme energy: Shaina Kasztelan, Sara Nickleson, Olivia Guterson, Dawn Marie Smith, and Sedona Cohen. Partnering with women-led enterprises from the Detroit area including performance artists, Supernatural Lingerie, and floral art by Four Leaf Clover Studios, this exhibition honors women claiming space for themselves and each other.

Each of the artists in this exhibition explores the role of woman as creator, her unique capacity for sharing personal stories, and her ability to explore the mystical and reveal feminine knowledge hiding in plain sight. Shaina Kasztelan's work might initially appear colorful and sweet, but it contains darker undertones and commentary on consumerism. Sara Nickleson's work is a process of world building that is rooted in her studies of melancholia and consciousness, with care given to the fracturing of our natural environment. Olivia Guterson's work considers the idea of displacement and her complex Jewish-African identity, incorporating inspiration from her ancestors and significant objects such as her hairbrushes and afro picks. Dawn Marie Smith understands her works to be incantations, a means of communicating with the collective consciousness and exploring the experience of grief. Sedona Cohen uses her painting as a meditation that channels subtle energies, and the study of electricity, rebirth, healing, and spirituality mapped through dynamic symmetry.

The exhibition is further enlivened with scheduled activations by lingerie clad tattoo models, aerial silk performances by Dari Blythe, a unique piano and vocal experience from Vanessa Cuccia, founder of Chakrubs, a DJ set by Petra Steele, Co-Founder of FemmeDom Detroit, and a Suzy Poling light installation.

As curator, Furlong wants us to consider how feminine power can be inculcated through art, meditation, sexuality, psychedelics, and other experiences. The five artists channel energy and knowledge through their artistic processes into work that creates conversation and community. They are speaking to the collective consciousness and creating a space for growth and healing. Artmaking for these women is an alchemical process—a means for transforming the world around them and us.

Divine Wisdom: Contemporary Expressions of Femme Alchemy exhibition will take place February 16, 2024, from 6-9 PM at Jam Handy. 2900 E Grand Blvd, Detroit, MI 48202.

The space will be open from 1-4 PM on Saturday, February 17th additional viewing.

Artist talk: Feb 17th at 2 PM.

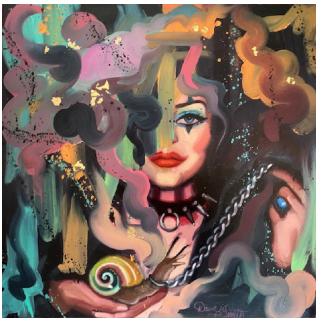


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Dawn Smith  
*Time*  
2024  
Oil on wood panel  
18 x 14 in.

**\$300**



Dawn Smith  
*Multiverse*  
Year  
Oil on wood panel  
20 x 20 in.

**\$550**



Dawn Smith  
*Hyaluronic Acid*  
2024  
Oil on wood panel  
24 x 18 in.

**\$600**



Dawn Smith  
*Partial Set*  
2024  
Oil on wood panel  
24 x 18 in.

**\$600**



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Dawn Smith  
*Flip Phone*  
2024  
Oil on canvas  
24 x 36 in.

**\$900**



Dawn Smith  
*Peach Emoji*  
2024  
Oil on canvas  
24 x 36 in.

**\$900**



Dawn Smith  
*Space*  
2024  
Oil on canvas  
18 x 14 in.

**\$300**



Sedona Cohen  
*Green and Gold Flowers Growing*  
2022  
Oil on canvas  
48 x 36 in. ea

**\$8,000 (Sold)**



Sedona Cohen  
*Ecosystem Temples I and II*  
2023  
41.5 x 23.5 in. and 40 x 24 in.

**NFS**



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Shaina Kasztelan  
*My Guardian Angel*  
2024

Precious Moments woven tapestry, Precious Moments quilt, Joann Fabrics fabric quarter, gel medium, acrylic paint, glitter, flat-back pearl cabochons, plastic beads, fringe trim, sand  
80 x 41 x 1 in.

**\$1,000**



Shaina Kasztelan  
*I'd Burn Alive To Keep You Warm*  
2024

Fabric scraps, Joann Fabrics pre-quilted fabric, lace trim, plastic clown faces, plastic hands, polyester stuffing, heart-shaped resin lollipops, house paint, glitter, acrylic paint, gel medium, plastic beads, styrofoam ball beads  
75 x 70 x 10 in.

**\$1,600**



Shaina Kasztelan  
*You Are Always There For Me*  
2024

3 identical Precious Moments tapestries, acrylic paint, glitter, sequins, gel medium  
87 x 64 x 2.5 in.

**\$2,000**



Sara Nickleson  
*Three Graces (The Mysteries)*  
2023

Oil on canvas  
72 x 60 in.

**\$6,000**



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Sara Nickleson  
*Venus Murcia*  
2023  
Oil on canvas  
48 x 36 in.

**\$3,500**



Sara Nickleson  
*Castor and Pollux*  
2024  
Oil on canvas  
48 x 36 in.

**\$3,500**

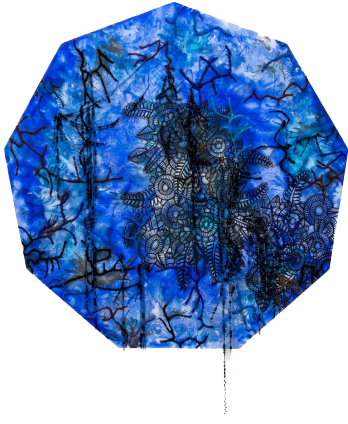


Olivia Guterson  
*Midnight's North Star*  
2023

Oil, acrylic, glitter, glass seed beads, pumice, bone,  
gunmetal, and black sand on canvas  
60 x 60 in.

**\$6,000**

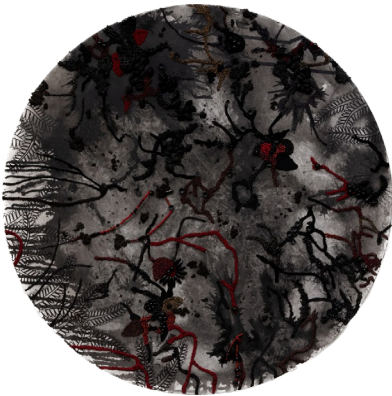




Olivia Guterson  
*Even The Sky Is Crying*  
2023

Oil, acrylic, glass seed beads, glitter, and breath on cotton canvas  
48 x 48 in.

**\$5,000**



Olivia Guterson  
*Closer to Quiet, #1*  
2023

Oil, acrylic, steel nails, glass beads, pumice, cowries, African fish bone, glitter, and cotton thread on cotton canvas  
36 x 36 in.

**\$3,000**



**Sedona Cohen** is a Detroit born; Brooklyn based painter who recently graduated from the Rhode Island School of Design. She creates spaces where self-sustaining ecosystems thrive. These are evolving systems where energetic and visual information emanates from a mysterious divine source. The information is transformed and transmuted through processes that reflect her own personal alchemy. She has created her own set of symbols and forms which are constantly evolving at a pace similar to that of a flower blooming or a seed sprouting. She explores how a painting can be a parallel world, a meditation, a calculation, a living organism, a system of networks, storage for information, a tool for posing questions and seeking answers, and a time traveler.

**Olivia Guterson** is a Detroit-based multidisciplinary artist and mother working primarily in painting and sculpture to explore personal and ancestral narratives with a curiosity around refusal, world building, liberation, and fugitivity. Currently pursuing her MFA in Painting at Cranbrook Academy of Art, she was a resident artist at McArthur Binion's Modern Ancient Brown; an alum of Sibyls Shrine residency; a recipient of the Gilbert Fellowship and a founding member of ArtMamas Alliance. She was the featured visual artist for Governor Gretchen Whitmer's Juneteenth Proclamation in 2022. Her work has been shown at the Arab American National Museum, Louis Buhl Gallery, Prizm - Art Basel, Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, Jewish Artist Salon, Scarab Club, Janice Charach Gallery, Forum Gallery and more.

**Shaina Kasztelan** is a multidisciplinary artist based in Detroit, Michigan. She was raised in a midwest suburb surrounded by rows of identical houses, half empty strip malls, and endless fast food franchises, all of which have influenced the materials and visual signifiers used in her work. Combining painting, sculpture, collage, and installation, Kasztelan creates psychedelic dreamscapes of kitsch commodities that shuffle between curated control and disheveled mess. Through humorous juxtapositions, her work emphasizes the pleasure and disgust many of us feel simultaneously as a result of excessive consumption of manufactured goods and media. Kasztelan is currently an MFA candidate at Cranbrook Academy of Art. In addition to her formal education, the artist has worked as a muralist, built theater sets, worked as a prop maker, and spent years building floats for America's Thanksgiving Day Parade. Her work has been exhibited in many places including the Detroit Institute of Arts (Detroit, MI), Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit (Detroit, MI), and University of Michigan Institute for the Humanities (Ann Arbor, MI). Notable murals include those painted for the NXNE Music Festival (Toronto, ON), Facultad de Artes y Diseño UNAM (Mexico City, MX), and as an assistant for the Glass City River Wall (Toledo, OH) which is currently the largest mural in the United States.

**Sara Nickleson** is a painter and curator who lives in Detroit, Michigan and is getting her MA at Cranbrook Art Academy. In search of a departure from prevailing ideas around figuration. Nickleson imagines the body as impermanent, morphing and changing as a representation of complex human emotion and cognition. Rooted in her own longtime battle with depression—and significant reprieve through psychedelic therapy—the artist finds solace in world-building that draws from her studies in consciousness and melancholia, as well as theories around 'deep adaptation' in the face of climate crisis. Nickleson begins each painting by amassing a multitude of disparate elements to create her imagery through digital collage, a process she feels is representative of a human condition that is awkward, expansive, and fragmented.

**Dawn Marie Smith** is a painter and tattoo artist born and raised in the Detroit area. Born to a blue-collar tradesman and Italian immigrant father, Dawn's earliest memories include sleeping in the used tires of a body shop. "My father taught me how to use a brush," she recalls. "I would watch him swish the enamel paint back and forth onto an old phone book, getting the paint just right to be applied to glass, while he practiced lettering." That early influence would shape a lifelong art practice where she would pursue art in many forms. Smith received her BFA from CCS in 2011. Her skill for painting landed her a Lenawee County judicial portrait commission in 2015. Smith has won awards for her paintings and has been featured in several publications including a 2018 feature with Beautiful Bizarre Magazine. Her art is imaginative, stylized, and expressive. Her figurative paintings explore themes of magic and mystery through a study of femininity. Smith's work often speaks to us about the ideal of feminine beauty with the undertone of a twisted psychology.

**Samara (Johnson) Furlong** is an independent curator and art experience facilitator from the Detroit area. She holds an MA in Contemporary Art from Sotheby's Institute of Art in New York, and a BFA. She has worked at MOCAD, the Detroit Institute of Arts, and Dia Art Foundation. Furlong recently founded Voyeur Ventures, a Detroit based art company and she serves on the Museum Committee of Cranbrook Art Museum.

