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Five Female Art Shows to See in May 2021 **(<https://awomensting.org/blog/female-art-shows-may-2021/>)**

May 11, 2021 by [Morgan Everhart \(https://awomensting.org/author/morganeverhart/\)](https://awomensting.org/author/morganeverhart/).



WORKS BY PHOEBE BOSWELL (LEFT) AND MANDY CHESNEY (RIGHT).

Art Writer [Morgan Everhart \(https://awomensting.org/author/morganeverhart/\)](https://awomensting.org/author/morganeverhart/) selected five of the best female art shows to see in New York City this May.

The weather is fantastic and as we're getting closer to mass immunization, New York City is bustling with people. I've never wanted to be out and about this badly and the shows highlighted in this article underscore all of the feelings I'm having right now.

“Still Life: A Taxonomy of Being,” is Sapar Contemporary gallery’s second solo exhibition of work by Phoebe Boswell. The exhibition shows drawings and watercolors created between December 2020 and April 2021, while Boswell was sequestered at home during the UK’s third government-mandated Covid-19 lockdown. The works on paper are installed so as to create an immersive experience that also features video with a soundtrack of breathing. The works encapsulate a year in which breathing became perilous and, for many, technologies and devices functioned as the primary mediators of seeing, being, and socializing. The exhibition extends an invitation, from the artist to us all, to reflect on our shared experiences of isolation and what we will carry forward.

Underpinned by a transient and diasporic consciousness, Phoebe Boswell’s practice speaks from the porous space between here and there. She works intuitively across media, centering drawing but spanning animation, sound, video, writing, interactivity, performance, and chorality. This tends to culminate in layered installations, which affect and are affected by the environments they occupy, by time, the serendipity of loops, and the presence of the audience. Aesthetics of figuration and representation through the radical imaginary of Black feminisms become tools for contemplating the body as world, worldmaking, rather than merely as objects to be gazed at. Artmaking becomes a political act of service to the community, where labor-intensive drawing practices, immersive technologies, and calls for collective participation denote a commitment of care for how we see ourselves and each other; how we grieve, how we love, how we rest, how we heal, how we protest, how we remember the past in order to imagine the future.

Follow Sapar Contemporary on Instagram via [@saparcontemporary](https://www.instagram.com/saparcontemporary) (<https://www.instagram.com/saparcontemporary>).

2. May 5–June 12: “Del Llanto” —Works by Cristina BanBan

at 1969 Gallery, Tribeca, and Albertz Benda, Chelsea, NYC



LEFT: CRISTINA BANBAN, LA PENA DE PILAR, 2020, OIL ON CANVAS, 48 X 36 INCHES. RIGHT: CRISTINA BANBAN, DEL JARDIN DE MARIA, 2021, OIL ON CANVAS, 75 X 55 INCHES.

This comprehensive show, on view concurrently at two galleries, 1969 Gallery and Albertz Benda gallery, arrives at a pivotal moment in 33-year-old Spanish painter Cristina BanBan’s practice. Working for the first time in oil paint, BanBan debuts a new body of canvases and works on paper made over the past year furthering her exploration of the personal through exaggerated depictions of the female form. Allegorical in scope, BanBan’s newest work departs from overt narrative content while maintaining her interest in autobiographical themes. Their emotive compositional spaces communicate moods derived from the artist’s memories and private experiences. Coded personal symbols such as the stalks of Spanish wheat in *Tres dones descansant al Delta* or kitchen tiles in *La pena*

de Pilar are suggestive of a nostalgic longing for home, while the studio table lurking in the dense background of *Sentadita te pensaba* may refer to feelings of creative anxiety or doubt. BanBan's densely layered brushstrokes and large, distorted bodies advance her characteristic style and reveal an emergent, still-evolving formal language developing in response to the material properties of oil paint.

Brought together, these paintings catalog a range of psychological states experienced by the artist. BanBan explains, "I definitely focus on how I am feeling because that energy will dictate how the painting will look. I have to connect with myself. Painting is a very honest act for me."

Follow 1969 Gallery on Instagram via [@1969gallery](https://www.instagram.com/1969gallery/) (<https://www.instagram.com/1969gallery/>), and Albertz Benda on Instagram via [@albertzbenda](https://www.instagram.com/albertzbenda/) (<https://www.instagram.com/albertzbenda/>).

3. May 13–June 24: "What the Poet Said to the Painter" —Works by Emilia Olsen

at Pegasus Gallery, East Williamsburg, Brooklyn



LEFT: EMILIA OLSEN, *I WISH I WAS THE MOON TONIGHT*, 2021, OIL ON CANVAS, 48 X 36 INCHES. RIGHT: *THE LITTLE MERMAID*, 2021, OIL ON PANEL, 72 X 48 INCHES.

This solo exhibition, in collaboration with the poet Jamie Hood, is a love letter to Emilia Olsen's (b. 1989) community, and the artists and writers who inspire her practice. The show is centered around "Le Tableaux," a painting of a party with no people. A table at golden hour is set with artist ephemera: Asp and Hand glasses, food cravings, cigarettes, shells, sketchbooks, painting materials, a bird—a scrubjay—named Nufrank, and a corner 1 of Hood's 2020 book *how to be a good girl* which features paintings by Olsen on the cover.

Other paintings in the show feature a dreamlike, intimate portrait of Olsen's day to day, while borrowing narratives from mythology, fairy tales and poetry, signaled in the paintings' titles.

The exhibition also ruminates on the contextual and mutual understanding between poets and painters, via an animated reading of Hood's poem "Mourning Doves." The animation (2021) comprises over 1,300 hand printed oil monotypes.

Follow Pegasus Gallery on Instagram via [@pegasus_prints](https://www.instagram.com/pegasus_prints/) (https://www.instagram.com/pegasus_prints/).