

WILDING CRAN GALLERY

Michelle Blade *Into the Forest*

November 14 - December 19, 2020



Wilding Cran is pleased to announce *Into the Forest*, a solo exhibition of acrylic ink paintings on poplin, and drawings made with a rainbow pencil by Los Angeles based artist Michelle Blade.

Set against the backdrop of a global pandemic and fraught political times, *Into the Forest* is an amalgamation of experience and emotion made while sheltering in place. Taking note from her most intimate and immediate surroundings, Blade's paintings depict a collection of quotidian scenes: the last blush of day, her children in the garden, the remnants of a meal, flowers in stages of decay, mountainous landscapes and towering trees under radiant moons. These meditative moments of solitude within a California landscape take note from the natural world and closely examine its stillness, strength, persistence and metaphysical qualities.

Using exploration and the human condition as a broad starting point, Blade draws from the theories and visual vernacular of Transcendentalism, Magical Realism and Romanticism. Her images are full of divine light, and portraits of totem-like individuals submersed in psychedelic color-fields. Her aesthetic, which endows the simple and mundane with preternatural qualities, is made by applying numerous atmospheric layers of acrylic ink that bleed, bloom and pulse with mystical tones. Her luminous landscapes and figures are often pushed toward abstraction by the essence of the water based media. Blade believes this limbo serves as a physical placeholder for the mysterious, thus creating an opportunity to reinterpret and draw into question the essence of the everyday.

Driven by the inescapable qualities of the natural world this exhibition is about curiosity and one's search for meaning and place within the cosmos. The perceived energy Blade depicts lays behind physical appearances. It's a world of benevolent energy flowing through and protecting life. The title of the exhibition "Into the Forest", is not simply an escapist fantasy but also a rallying call to dive more deeply into ones reality and reassess our connection to the health of our afflicted world. In the words of Mary Oliver, using "Attention as devotion".

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Michelle Blade is a visual artist working in painting, sculpture and installation. Her work has been shown nationally and internationally, including exhibitions at the Center for Contemporary Arts; Santa Fe, The Bonnefantenmuseum; Netherlands, Jack Hanley Gallery, Southern Exposure; San Francisco, Western Exhibitions; Chicago, Roberts & Tilton; LA and The Torrance Art Museum, among others. Her work has been featured in The NY Times Magazine, The LA Times, The Paris Review, Juxtapoz, The California Sunday Magazine, and Art Maze Mag. Blade holds a BA from Loyola Marymount and an MFA from the California College of the Arts, San Francisco. She currently lives and works in LA.