



PRESS RELEASE

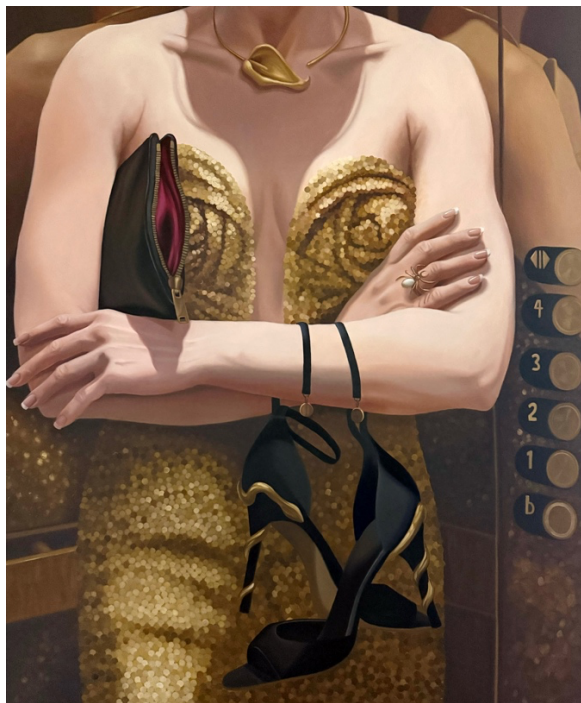
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Cris Worley Fine Arts
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Exhibition Title: Kelli Vance — *With My Eyes Closed*

Exhibition Dates: November 7 – December 19, 2026

Opening reception: Saturday, November 7, 5 – 7 pm



KELLI VANCE

But Not a Word was Spoken, 2026

oil on linen

50 x 40 inches

cris worley
FINE ARTS

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Cris Worley Fine Arts is pleased to present *With My Eyes Closed*, a solo exhibition of new paintings by Kelli Vance that reconsiders the femme fatale through questions of female agency, vulnerability, and power. The exhibition will open with an artist's reception Saturday, November 7th from 5 to 7 pm and will run through December 19th.

Drawing on the imagery of Renaissance painting and the Pre-Raphaelite movement, Vance revisits an archetype historically shaped by anxieties surrounding women's sexuality and independence. Her subjects inhabit moments of uncertainty and anticipation, their intentions unresolved and their actions suspended at the threshold of consequence.

Working from staged photographs in which she serves as her own model, Vance inhabits roles that complicate the relationship between artist, subject, and performance. She is drawn to the instant before an event unfolds, when possibility remains open and a woman has yet to be defined by what others fear she might do. In revisiting historical figures such as Judith, poised to behead Holofernes, and Timoclea, who kills her rapist, Vance explores the tension between vulnerability and agency, reclaiming a visual tradition long shaped by male perceptions of female power.

Vance's paintings combine meticulous realism with cinematic cropping and deliberately incomplete narratives. Antique garments, found objects, and carefully selected props function as clues to stories that extend beyond the picture plane. A twisting hand, the tension of fabric, or a partially obscured figure can carry the psychological weight of an entire scene. By withholding information, Vance leaves viewers to navigate the space between what is visible and what remains imagined.

The title, *With My Eyes Closed*, holds fantasy, anxiety, vulnerability, and expertise in tension. It suggests encounters with risk and intimacy that may involve not simply surrender, but calculation, desire, and control. Rather than resolve these ambiguities, Vance allows her subjects to remain elusive, inviting multiple readings of the moments she so precisely constructs.

Kelli Vance graduated from the University of Houston with her MFA in Studio Art. She received an Individual Artist Grant from Houston Arts Alliance and the City of Houston and was included in the 2009 Texas Biennial. She was a finalist for the Hunting Art Prize and was a Roswell Artist-in-Residence in Roswell, New Mexico. Vance's work has shown across Texas as well as in Los Angeles, Chicago, New Mexico, Paris, and New York. She has shown five solo exhibitions at CWFA: *Myth Maker*, *Sappers and Miners*, *Performance Anxiety*, *We Don't Sleep*, and *Don't Abandon Me*. Her work was recently acquired by The Mack Art Foundation (MAF), and the Elie Khouri Art Foundation (EKAF) and is in the permanent collection of the Anderson Museum of Contemporary Art, Roswell, New Mexico; Houston Airports, through the city of Houston; Hotel Daphne, Houston, TX; and CitizenM Hotel, Austin, TX among many prestigious private collections.

Cris Worley Fine Arts is a Dallas, Texas based contemporary art gallery located in the Dallas Design District. With over 20 years of experience, Cris Worley is dedicated to promoting innovative work by contemporary artists at various stages of their careers.