
KELLI VANCE
With My Eyes Closed
Nov 07 - Dec 19, 2026
cris worley
FINE ARTS

KELLI VANCE
With My Eyes Closed
***November* 07 - December 19, 2026**

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, ***She Kept Her Hands Perfectly Still,*** **2026, oil on canvas, 40h x 30w in, detail**



Kelli Vance, ***With My Eyes Closed,*** **installation view**







Kelli Vance, ***With My Eyes Closed,*** **installation view**



Kelli Vance, *Everything She Touches,* 2026, oil on linen, 48h x 36w in, detail



Kelli Vance
Everything She Touches, 2026
oil on linen
48h x 36w in
KV078
$15,000
SOLD



Kelli Vance, *With My Eyes Closed,* installation view



Kelli Vance, ***She Kept Her Hands Perfectly Still,*** **2026, oil on canvas, 40h x 30w in, detail**

Kelli Vance
She Kept Her Hands Perfectly Still, 2026
oil on canvas
40h x 30w in
KV082
$14,000





Kelli Vance, *With One Strangling Golden Hair,* 2026, oil on canvas, 40h x 30w in, detail



Kelli Vance
With One Strangling Golden Hair, 2026
oil on canvas
40h x 30w in
KV085
$14,000



Kelli Vance
With My Eyes Closed
installation view

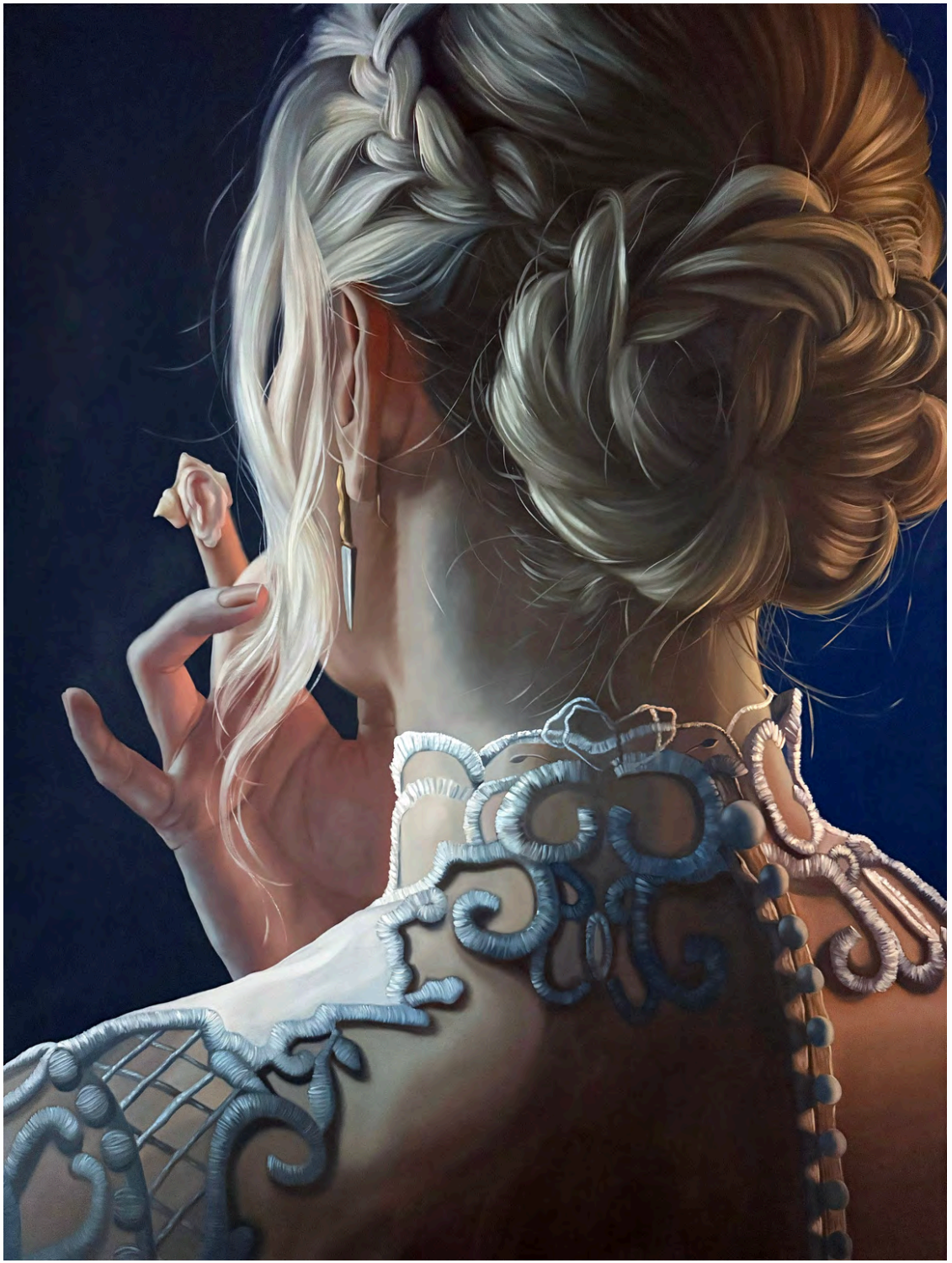


Kelli Vance, ***With My Eyes Closed,*** **installation view**



Kelli Vance, *She Just Smiled And Turned Away*, 2026, oil on linen, 48h x 36w in, detail

Kelli Vance
She Just Smiled And Turned Away, 2026
oil on linen
48h x 36w in
KV081
$15,000
SOLD





Kelli Vance
With My Eyes Closed
installation view



Kelli Vance, ***With My Eyes Closed,*** **installation view**



Kelli Vance, *We Both Know How This Ends*, 2026, oil on canvas 30h x 40w in, detail



Kelli Vance
We Both Know How This Ends, 2026
oil on canvas
30h x 40w in
KV084
$14,000



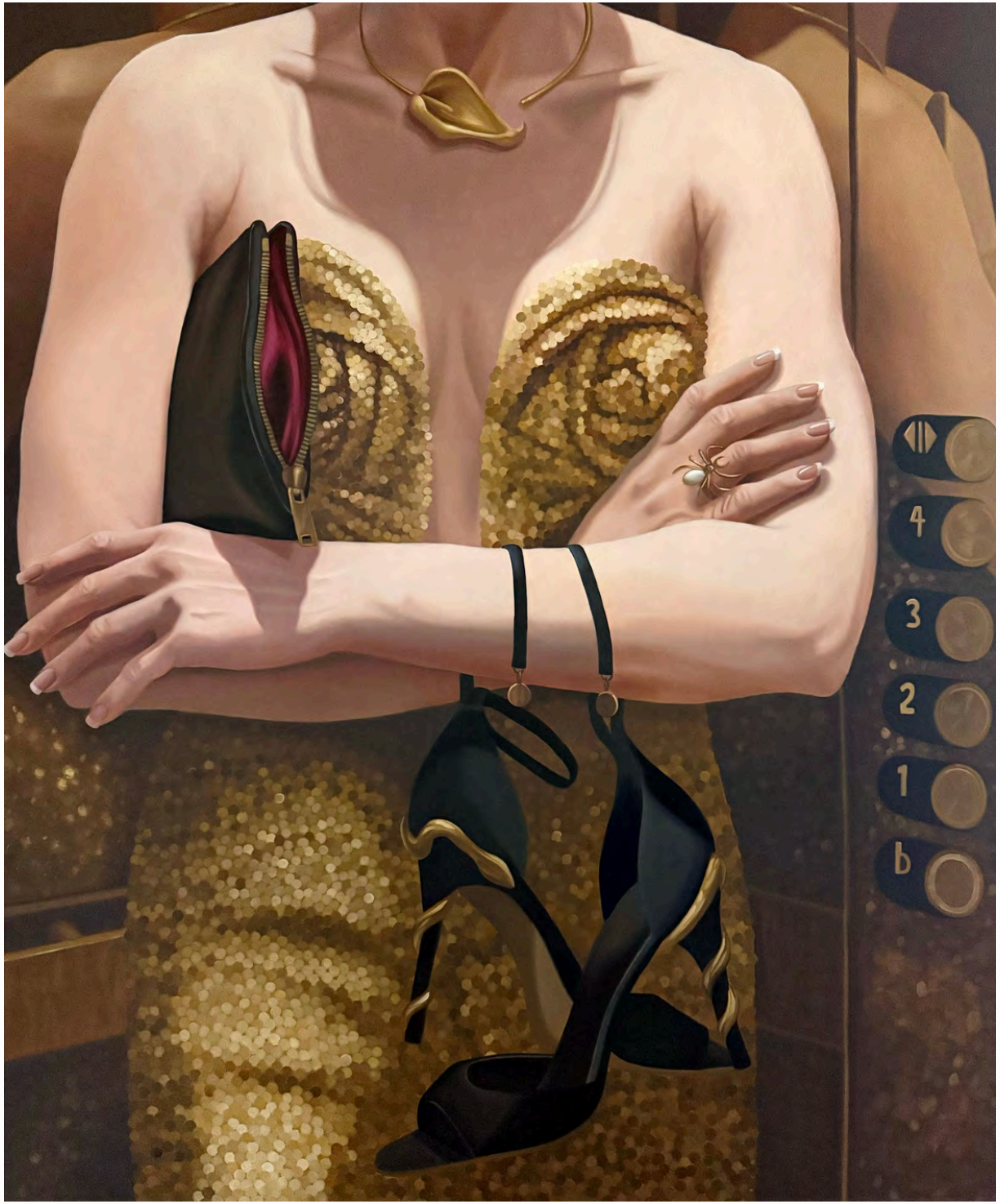
Kelli Vance, ***With My Eyes Closed,*** **installation view**



Kelli Vance, ***With My Eyes Closed,*** **installation view**



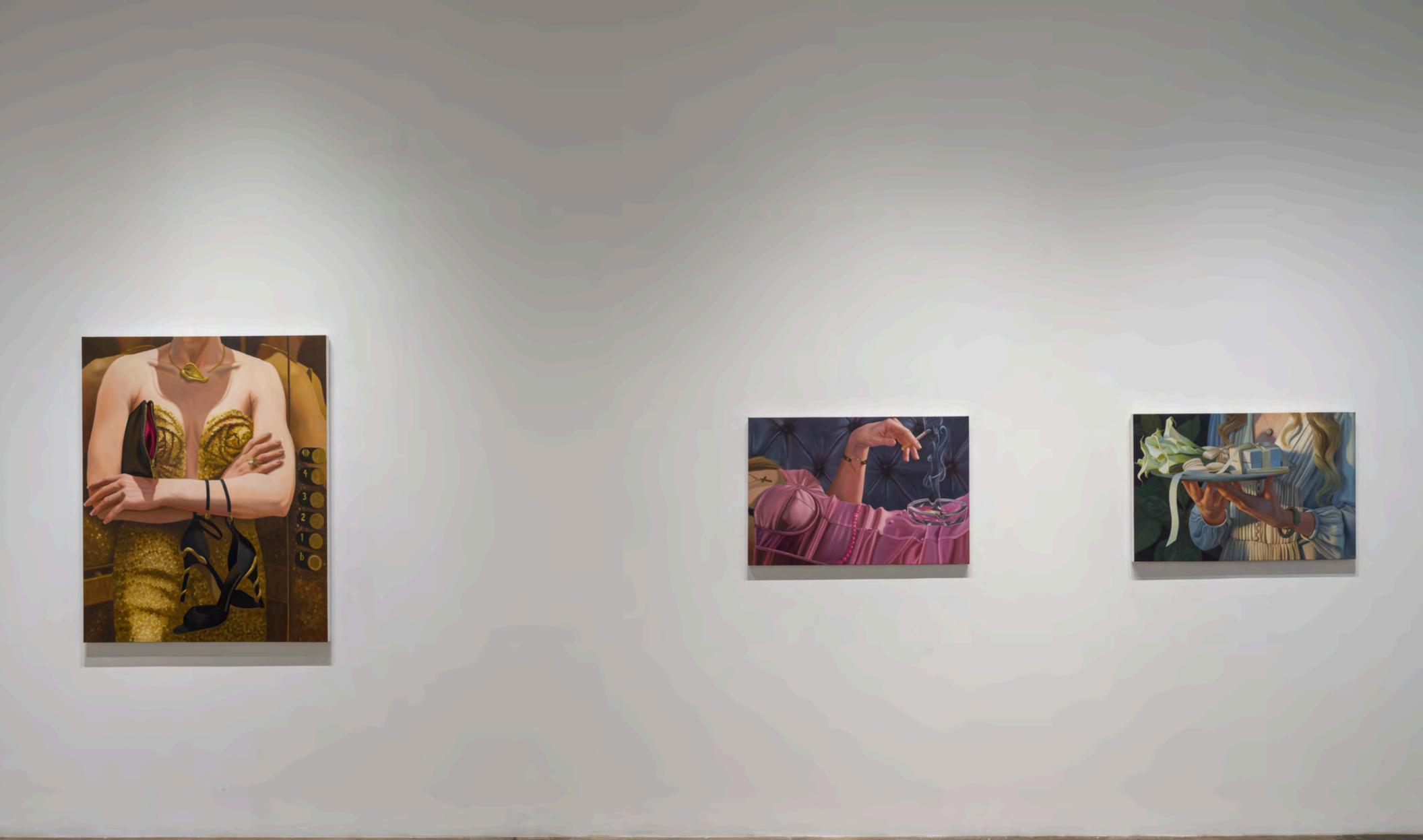
Kelli Vance, ***But Not A Word Was Spoken***, 2026, oil on linen, 50h x 40w in, detail



Kelli Vance
But Not A Word Was Spoken, 2026
oil on linen
50h x 40w in
KV077
$16,000



Kelli Vance, *With My Eyes Closed,* installation view



Kelli Vance, ***With My Eyes Closed,*** **installation view**



Kelli Vance, *Guilty On The Other Side*, 2026, oil on canvas, 24h x 36w in, detail



Kelli Vance
Guilty On The Other Side, 2026
oil on canvas
24h x 36w in
KV079
$12,000
SOLD



Kelli Vance
With My Eyes Closed
installation view



Kelli Vance, *The Giver*, 2026, oil on canvas, 24h x 36w in, detail



Kelli Vance
The Giver, 2026
oil on canvas
24h x 36w in
KV083
$12,000
SOLD



Kelli Vance, *With My Eyes Closed,* installation view



Kelli Vance, ***With My Eyes Closed,*** **installation view**

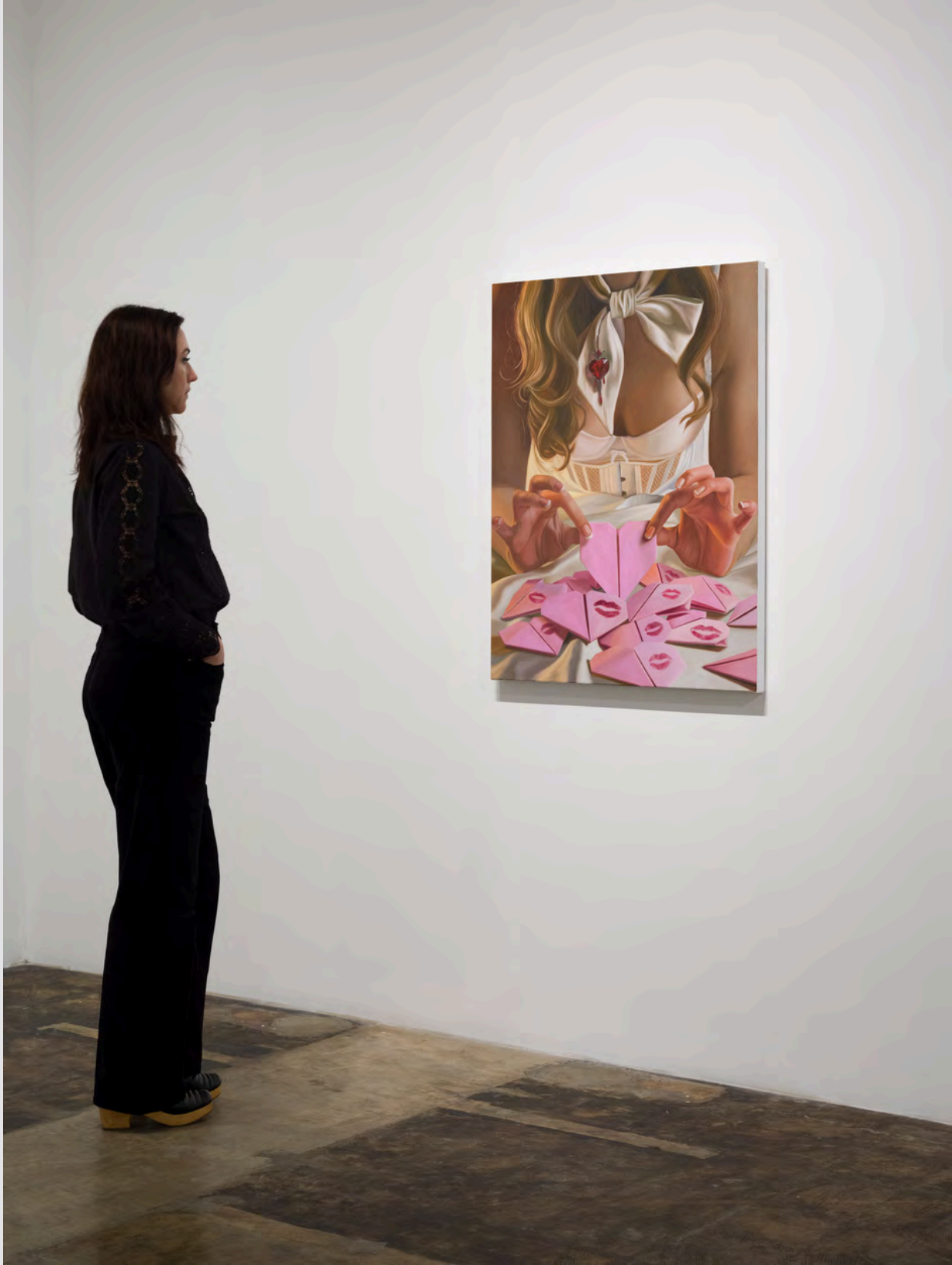


Kelli Vance, *Just To Feel The Weight Of It,* 2026, oil on canvas, 40h x 30w in, detail

Kelli Vance
Just To Feel The Weight Of It, 2026
oil on canvas
40h x 30w in
KV080
$14,000



Kelli Vance
With My Eyes Closed
installation view





Kelli Vance, ***With My Eyes Closed,*** **installation view**

Kelli Vance b. 1983

Working from staged photographs, Kelli Vance's paintings borderline on cinematic. Vance's style is realistic, yet there is something else that creates this dreamlike effect. This combination of technique already results in feelings of disorientation before we even look at Vance's subject. She muffles provocative shouts existing within her compositions by depicting only portions of their narratives, keeping actions hinted by the titles relegated outside the frame. When paired with her photorealistic style, the cropping of the canvas only further eludes the viewer, as we are given a small piece of one specific moment in time.

Recently, Vance has stated that her female subjects are all reflections of herself — physically, psychologically, and emotionally. Her paintings often speak to what she herself is going through, whether they are all pictured with talismans to ward of grief or depict a number of women whom she lived with when she was younger. Vance seems to live out her life through these paintings —using her paintings to work through her personal experiences.

Vance's luxurious and masterly paintings have often presented women in states of anomie or conflict — personal, social, physical. This is the feminine in a quietly hostile environment of her own making, or trapped in a set of expectations that she either works with, to maintain equilibrium, or against, with mixed results — sometimes defeated, sometimes defiant. Vance's women are in a kind of unseen, unstoppable trouble, or they are recalling it, or are bracing for it. They are often in their final minutes of innocence before the sinister shadow overtakes the narrative. Vance states "I love tension, the unknown, a good cliffhanger and quiet moments that become charged the more you look into them."

Vance often creates works where we do not see the women's face. Vance paints the fabric of a dress, that she believes can sometimes tell more of a story than the figure. She says fingers have myriad expressions. To Vance, the tension of her subjects can be found in the twisting of hands or the tightening of the bodice, it does not have to be reflected on the female's face. Within this all, each cropped painting seems to create a world of its own — where we question both what the woman is going through and sometimes even what she looks like. Vance gives a small sense of access into these painted worlds, that often leave us searching for answers that may not even exist.

Kelli Vance graduated from the University of Houston with her MFA in Studio Art in 2008. Her work was recently acquired by Houston Airports, city of Houston, and is in the permanent collection of the Anderson Museum of Contemporary Art, Roswell, New Mexico. Vance 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 is in the collections of the Anderson Museum of Contemporary Art, Roswell, New Mexico; and the CitizenM Hotel, Austin, TX.

