

SKARSTEDT Galerie

ARTISTS TO WATCH

Artist Cristina BanBan in front of one of her works in progress. BELOW: Her *Cuatro Mujeres* (2022).

Cristina BanBan

Cristina BanBan's lush, large-scale paintings are a triumphant celebration of the female form. Voluptuous, exaggerated bodies overlap across the canvas, as though they can hardly be contained within the frame. Autobiographical in nature, they are emotional depictions of the artist's private world. "Painting for me is a journal," says the Barcelona-born talent, speaking from her sprawling, light-filled studio in Brooklyn, where she currently resides. "It is part of me—as much as living and breathing."

Hovering somewhere between abstraction and figuration, her most recent works are composed of rapid, gestural brushstrokes broken up by fields of vibrant color. An energetic frenzy of movement lures the viewer into the artist's orbit. "I like to attack the canvas," she says with a grin. "Painting is an empowering act. When I paint, I feel like a boss, like this is my time and here I am. And the women in my paintings hold the space. They command attention."



"The women in my paintings hold the space. They command attention" CRISTINA BANBAN



Each work begins with a sketch on paper before she dives straight into the enormous canvas, quickly outlining the forms with charcoal before intuitively adding paint. After showing with 1969 Gallery and Albrecht Benda in New York, she was picked up in April by international mega-galleries Perrotin and Skarstedt, the latter of which is hosting a solo exhibition of hers this November. Her debut solo show at Perrotin in Paris opened in March and sold out within the first days, and in May her paintings made a splash at the art fairs Frieze and TEFAF in New York.

Her work is beginning to gain traction at auction, too. In June, *El Sueño Va Sobre el Tiempo* (2019), a portrait of three female figures, fetched £139,000 (\$168,000)—a record for her—at Phillips London, far exceeding its £20,000 high estimate. "I never thought I would make it as an artist," BanBan says. "But I believe in consistency, and I have been consistent and disciplined the whole way through. Painting for me is an obsession but also an escape. Whatever happens in my life, there is always painting, and I am always doing better." *skarstedt.com* —LUCY REES

FROM TOP: RAFAEL RIOS; COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND SKARSTEDT. NEW YORK; COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND SKARSTEDT, NEW YORK