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NEW YORK – BECKY KOLSRUD: "ELEGIES" AT JTT THROUGH MARCH 13TH, 2021



Becky Kolsrud, *Inscape (Three Graces)* (2021), via JTT

Currently on at JTT's New York exhibition space, Los Angeles painter Becky Kolsrud has assembled a range of new works featuring flattened female figures and opaque landscapes with glowing horizons, a space of 12 works that explore a range of surreal landscapes and interiors, composed from bodies and architectural elements in tandem. Drawing a range of influences from mythology and classical antiquity, the show pulls together a broad selection of iconographies that incorporate these histories into Kolsrud's own unique world.

Drawing on the artist's solitude inside her studio, the worry on concepts of grief and collective mourning in the context of the past year's pandemic, referencing these same images to create a sense of this lost as a deeper metaphor. In classical antiquity the cypress was a symbol of mourning as it failed to regenerate when pruned too severely. Within

Greek mythology, the story of Cyparissus explains the Greek and Roman tradition of fumigating funerals with burning cypress branches or planting cypress trees beside gravesites. In Ovid's version of the myth, a boy by the name of Cyparissus accidentally killed his own beloved stag while hunting. Cyparissus is so grief-stricken that he asks Apollo to let his tears fall forever.

Mourning and magic are central to the works here, placing bodies and memento mori into delicate relations with the world around them. In *Dryad (Cypress)*, 2020, a cypress tree stands with two bare human legs. A straight horizon cuts across the center of the composition parting a pale pink sky from a verdant green landscape. Evenly shaped and distanced clouds are mirrored by dark green circles along the ground. *Inscape (Dryad)*, 2021, features another tree, this one round with soft curling leaves standing with pale blue legs on a dark brooding green that contrasts the light yellows of the foliage above. Behind the figure is a thin lake and a purple mountain painted with bold hard edges where the water, earth and

pink vibrant sky meet. As the title implies this is not a portrait of a figure in nature, but instead a deep interiority where the blue of the water and the shadow of the grass tells us more about solitude and melancholy than posture or expression.

Throughout, Kolsrud poses the body in an engaging meditation on loss and absence, and turns her pieces into remarkable emblems of a lost year.