



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Banishment of Solitude

A Solo Exhibition by Contemporary American Portrait Artist, Elizabeth Chapin

March 6 - May 1, 2021



Elizabeth Chapin, *Froth*, 2020 acrylic on canvas, wire, plasticized gauze, satin thread, satin, lace, silk faille, sequins, glitter, steel, 101 x 125 x 63 inches.

February 2, 2021 (New Orleans, LA) - Martine Chaisson Gallery is pleased to present *Banishment of Solitude*, a solo exhibition of mixed media works by Contemporary American portrait artist, Elizabeth Chapin. *Banishment of Solitude* introduces two new bodies of work that both deconstruct crafted identities and online personas, an eponymous series and the *Social Media Cowboys*. *Banishment of Solitude* is the artist's first public presentation of her ongoing exploration into the colliding intersection of painting and sculpture. The archetypes referenced in

Chapin's work serve as a symbol to depict the performative quality of life and a culture of disconnect, judgement, and solitude. *Banishment of Solitude* is Chapin's first exhibition with the gallery and is open by appointment from March 6 - May 1, 2021.

Viewing the contemporary through a historical framework of ancient female deism to Greek and Biblical mythology, *The Banishment of Solitude* series explores themes of exile and isolation—the punitive conditions that have been assigned to women from Eve in Eden to The Birth of Venus to today's Instagram models. Chapin noticed her own addiction to social media, and the anxiety felt amongst her daughter and her daughter's friends around creating and maintaining an idealized social media self. *The Banishment of Solitude* was inspired by these performative myths, which like historical mythology, become an unconscious playbook of the stories young women tell themselves and each other. They are often creating a warped and disembodied reality, while simultaneously distancing themselves from the antidote of real and sustained action and a nonreactive mind.

The series centerpiece is *Froth*, an eight-foot free-standing Venus rising out of a giant clam lit with iridescent silk pearls and surrounded by plush pillow clouds. Ribbons of hand written comments of encouragement, sourced from Instagram, stream around her. She is larger than life and utterly herself—free of both shame and duress. Chapin evolves the traditional limits of frame and canvas by using a 3-dimensional surface that veers towards sculpture. She stuffs and decoratively embellishes painted canvas to create plush, vibrant installations.

While *The Banishment of Solitude* explores the crafted self by using historical female mythology, Chapin's *Social Media Cowboys* use the persona of the 'urban hipster cowboy crooner'. The artist first encountered this character when she moved to Austin, Texas in 1999. In the series, Chapin playfully reinterprets the archetype of the cowboy, positioning social media as the frontier. In *Radio Cowboy*, an Instagram cowboy relaxes at a favorite Austin watering hole. Undulating with a layer of long, neon fringe, he has an illusionary element, as he seemingly floats on air; solely grounded by an amorphous thought bubble...“I'm here for it”. Does the validation we find in our comment section ground or drift us as we continue to discover who we are? His thought bubble, with the copy directly sourced from his Instagram comment section, features interchangeable emojis and comments for the viewer to choose.

The Banishment of Solitude explores identity on social media, but it also exposes how mythology (both Contemporary and ancient) is capable of distorting what truth and reality are. Chapin adapts these mythological archetypes into personalized characters that inform, teach and care for her; they have become what she wants to see in the world.

About Elizabeth Chapin

Elizabeth Chapin is a Contemporary American portrait artist whose mixed media work explores and deconstructs the ideas of nostalgia, gender roles (especially those of women) and the status quo through an anthropological lens. Chapin was born in 1971 in Jackson, MS and currently lives and works in Austin, TX. She holds a BFA from the University of Virginia and has studied at the Parsons School of Design in Paris. Her work has been exhibited extensively

across the United States including in New York, NY; Austin, TX; New Orleans, LA; Nashville, TN; and Jackson, MS, among others. Chapin's next exhibition will be at Martine Chaisson Gallery in New Orleans, LA 2021.

About Martine Chaisson Gallery

With an emphasis on quality, Martine Chaisson Gallery represents emerging and established artists providing a variety of original contemporary art including painting, drawing, photography, and sculpture to enhance both corporate and individual environments.

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