

Proto Grove

Michelle Wasson

August 27 - October 1, 2022

Public Opening Reception: Saturday, August 27, 6-8 PM.

Galleri Urbane welcomes back Chicago-based artist Michelle Wasson for her debut solo show with the gallery, *Proto Grove*. Following her inclusion in *RIFE*, the gallery's 2021 summer group exhibition, Wasson migrates into a lighter and breathier environment with this body of work, offering a refuge from reality.

Bosque, 2022, reminiscent of her past work, contains a figurative tree-like silhouette that Wasson echoes throughout the exhibition. Golden, sienna, and amber hues lay upon a deceptively dark background. Simultaneously painted variations of one another, her recreations allow her to explore a process and color theory in its entirety, commencing a conversation.

From the modest tabletop, Wasson layers her canvases with rich glazes of single colors to build a history. She portrays surreal scenes reminiscent of supernatural spaces in her blended genre of still life and landscape painting. The colors, in harmony, create a visual poetry between works through color and contour.

A punch of color, *Spirito Rosso*, 2021, captures the transition from Wasson's darker paintings into the more colorful domain of *Proto Groves*. With deep crimsons and violet accents, she creates an environment of dream-like depth, questioning the subjective perception of reality.

In ethereal pieces, Wasson infuses playful nods from art history and floral growth into the work. Each painting exemplifies the duality of human nature through her gossamer of colors upon the deep backdrops. Generative creations, the paintings demonstrate good versus evil, unveiling human nature and its inherent tensions.

Anointing the show with a much more brilliant piece is *The Birth of Hermes*, 2022, with pale mauves, purples, and accents of flaxen petals reminiscent of the namesake Greek god's winged sandals. Wasson's abstracted and ambiguous shapes throughout create an emotional experience for the viewer.

The paintings encapsulate warring ideas that persuade destruction and relentless recreation. *Proto Grove* is a narrative of nature's fertility, providing a hopeful gesture of light that celebrates the need for relentless recreation from destruction.

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Michelle Wasson is an internationally exhibiting artist based in Chicago, IL. Her work has most recently been included in exhibitions at Hyde Park Art Center, Aspect/Ratio Projects Chicago and Brand Library Art Center in Glendale, CA. An independent artist, she has served as faculty at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Columbia College Chicago and The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. In 2016 she co-founded the artist run exhibition space Tiger Strikes Asteroid Chicago. Wasson received her MFA from Washington University in St. Louis, MO.