

NICODIM

katherina olschbaur: horses

June 30–August 18, 2018

Opening Reception: Saturday, June 30, 6–8pm



*I was standing there with my legs spread like a sailor in a sea of possibilities
I felt his hand on my knee
And I looked at Johnny and handed him a branch of cold flame
The waves were coming in like Arabian stallions
Gradually lapping into sea horses
He picked up the blade and he pressed it against his smooth throat
And let it deep in the veins
(Dip into the sea, to the sea of possibilities)
It started hardening
It started hardening in my hand
And I felt the arrows of desire
— excerpted from “Land” by Patti Smith*

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In a frenzied excitement, Katherina Olschbaur picks up her brush and presses it to her palette round. She paints fiercely, rejoicing in her strength and charges into the primed void, afraid of nothing when the trumpet sounds.

The horse, to Olschbaur, is a banner of freedom, but also one of constraint. Some of her subjects are galloping unbridled, powering through surreal, fluorescent landscapes as the ground bows, its surface giving willfully to the weight of each hoof. Other equines are restrained, bound to human figures—occasionally draped over human figures—erotically reinterpreting dressage as fetish play, begging the question who's riding whom?

Horseshoes are juxtaposed with abstractions of high-heeled shoes, each meant to enable forward movement and free transportation, but emblematic of a certain bondage as well; both species must return to some farrier when their tread wears thin. With a deliberate economy of brushstrokes and a muscular femininity, Olschbaur's paintings playfully jockey between the conflicting longings to gallop bareback naked into the sunset and a desire to be broken, saddled, and mounted with blinders on.

Her wild horses will drag you away, but not too far. They revel in being harnessed and tamed.

[Katherina Olschbaur](#) (b.1983, Bregenz, Lake Constance, Austria) recently relocated from Vienna, Austria to Los Angeles. Recent exhibitions include *BioPerversity*, Nicodim Gallery, Los Angeles (2018); *Formal Encounters*, Galeria Nicodim, Bucharest, Romania (2018); *SEED* (curated by Yvonne Force Villareal), Paul Kasmin Gallery, New York, NY (2018); *Wilde Reiter*, Oof Books, Los Angeles (2018); and *A Painters Table* (organized with Bianca Regl), Blackbridge OFF Space, Beijing, China (2017).