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Cristina BanBan's strong and complex women in New York

The artist opens a new exhibition at the New
York headquarters of the Skarstedt gallery

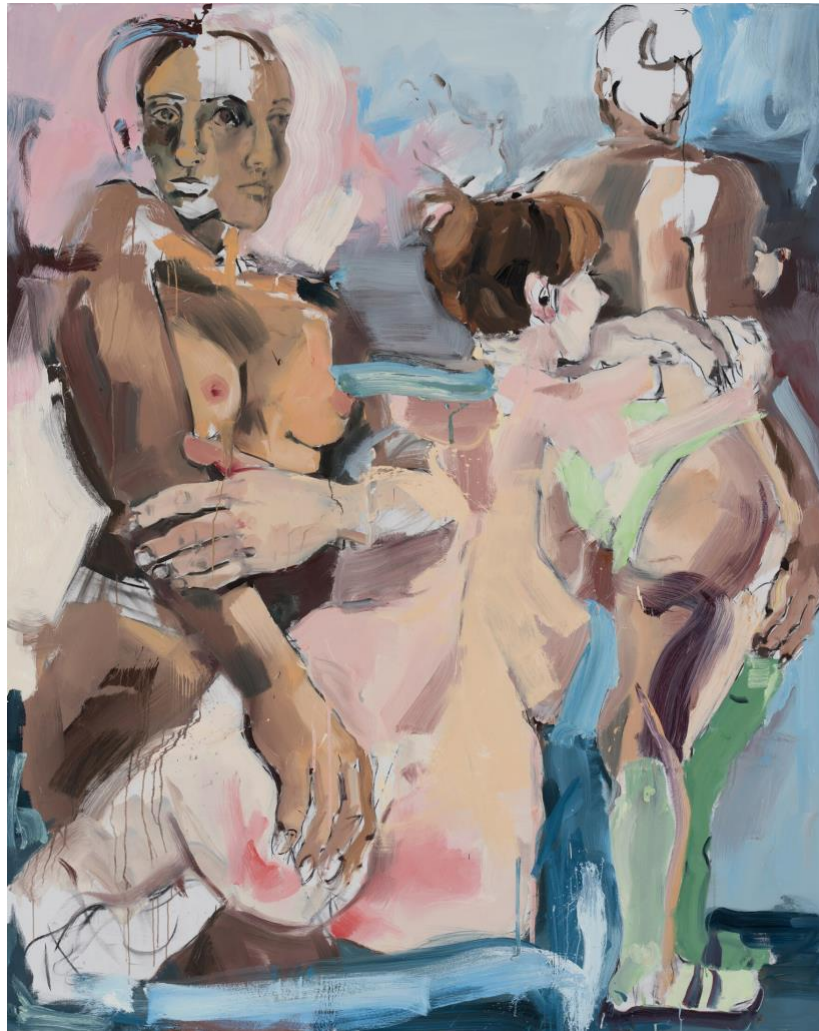
Antoni Ribas Tur



Cristina BanBan among some of the paintings in the '14th Street Madonna' exhibition Adam Kenner /
Cristina BanBan

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Cristina BanBan (Prat de Llobregat, 1987) moved from London to New York shortly before the Covid pandemic broke out. BanBan says that the accelerated pace of New York has made her grow personally and artistically, and in recent days she has experienced a cold and a hot: the defeat of Kamala Harris and the opening of an exhibition at the New York headquarters of the Skarstedt gallery . "I was crossing my fingers for common sense to win. I believe in the idea that climate change is real, I unquestionably believe in women's rights, in the unity of the people and in a better educational system," reflects Cristina BanBan in an interview with the ARA via email.



'Three Women and the Horizon' by Cristina BanBan. Cristina Banban / Skarstedt Gallery

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In the new exhibition, entitled *14th Street Madonna* (open until December 21), BanBan continues to delve deeper into her search between figuration and abstraction, drawing out new nuances in her female figures. She has often used herself as a model, but now BanBan has worked with other women, whose bodies sometimes eschew the patriarchal canon of beauty. "I chose my own image because I am the figure I know best and have the most at hand, but in recent months, and more specifically for this exhibition, I have used images of my models, some of whom are friends, and I have collected images from the internet," says the artist. "The women in my paintings are strong, powerful, they have their place, they are complex and different, they cannot be classified with labels or put in a drawer," she explains.



'Two standing women', by Cristina Banban. CRISTINA BANBAN / SKARSTEDT GALLERY

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The exhibition includes thirteen large-format paintings. The women who star in them, as BanBan says, are "more individualized than ever." "I am interested in exploring these women in greater depth, although without falling too far into a narrative. In these paintings there is an interest in contextualizing the figures, the backgrounds are more recognizable, both that and the architectural elements and the furniture." One resource that BanBan has used more than before is clothing. "Accessories and clothes appear that give these women a more contemporary character," says the artist.



'14th Street Madonna', by Cristina BanBan. CRISTINA BANBAN / SKARSTEDT GALLERY

The influence of Almodóvar and Sofia Coppola

Beyond the visual arts, BanBan acknowledges the influence of cinema, music and fashion, although he does not consciously seek it. The women of 14th Street Madonna have two cinematic references by established authors: Pedro Almodóvar and Sofia Coppola. "During the winter I spent more time watching films, and I was captivated by the *femme fatales*, the supermothers and the heroines of Almodovar," says the artist. BanBan finds the universe of the director from La Mancha "exquisite and colorful," and believes that it has been reflected in his paintings "in the red of the lips and the heels that the models wear, the dramatic compositions and the combination of colors." As for Sofia Coppola, the influence is more introspective. "I was caught by how she interprets femininity, how she talks about this stage between childhood and adolescence, and the complexity of the world of women in the scenes of fantasy and escape that exist in her films."