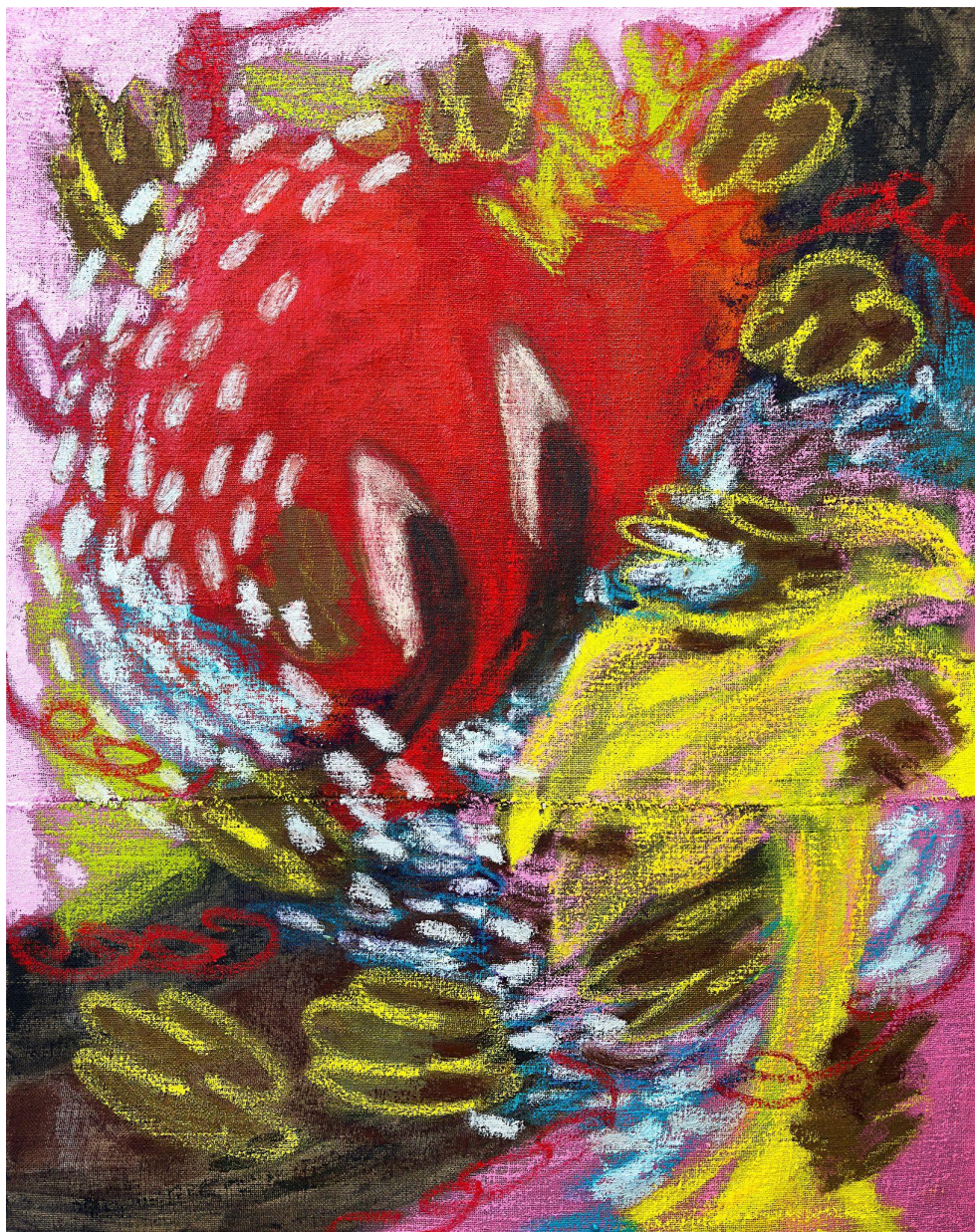


5-50



fèy palmis.

Exhibition Reception:

August 29, 5 - 8 pm

Exhibition:

August 29 – October 11, 2026

5-50 Gallery is pleased to present *fèy palmis.*, a two-person exhibition featuring the work of Eilen Itzel do Espírito Santo and Emily Manwaring. The exhibition's title emerges from a spiritual and material affinity shared between the two artists: the figure of Ayizan, a revered Vodou lwa and Yoruba Orisha associated with sacred knowledge, initiation, ancestral wisdom, and feminine spiritual authority. Traditionally honored through offerings of woven palm leaves, Ayizan is also symbolized by the palm frond itself. For both Eilen and Emily, the palm leaf functions as both a material language and a conceptual framework, offering a means to explore narratives of community, ancestry, and reclamation.

Eilen is an Afro-Dominican artist from the South Bronx whose highly saturated color palette and intuitive mark-making embody the maximalist energy and aesthetic traditions that have often been quieted by Eurocentric society. Eilen's paintings on hessian and soft pastel drawings on Mayan paper operate as deeply spiritual invocations of a visual language entirely her own. Within these compositions, rainbows, hearts, flowers, and clouds function as nouns within a personal lexicon, while expressive marks, gestures, and painterly movements operate as verbs and adjectives within this visual syntax.

Disembodied extremities serve as spiritual extensions and are therefore adorned with lashes, acrylic nails, bright lipstick, and other markers of beauty and self-fashioning. Much like adding flash to a fishing lure to attract attention, these embellishments operate as radiant signals, celebrating the practices of adornment, self-love, and care embedded within femme communities throughout the African Diaspora and Latin America. Through this convergence of spiritual symbolism, material experimentation, and visual excess, Eilen transforms adornment into invocation and beauty into a form of power.

Emily Manwaring is a Queens-born, Brooklyn-based interdisciplinary artist whose practice is deeply informed by Haitian and Trinidadian cultural histories, exploring the intersections of identity, materiality, and collective memory. In this exhibition, Manwaring presents a series of oil-painted portraits on palm bark, where the natural fibers of the material extend the figures' hair beyond the confines of the painted image.

Referencing the imagery of 1990s and early 2000s hair advertisements, Manwaring mirrors the sculptural qualities of Black hair through the organic textures and cascading forms of palm bark. The material operates as a physical and symbolic extension of the body. By allowing the material to complete the portrait, Manwaring collapses the boundary between painting and sculpture, creating an uncanny illusion in which the figures appear to emerge from the surface and occupy physical space. The negative space within each composition becomes an active field of representation, challenging conventional notions of absence and visibility through the presence of brown skin against the raw material.

In *fèy palmis.*, Eilen and Emily reveal the palm leaf as a site of transformation, where ancestral traditions, feminine power, and contemporary artistic practice converge. Through gesture, material, and portraiture, the artists create a visual dialogue between the visible and invisible, honoring the enduring presence of cultural memory and spiritual connection.

Eilen Itzel do Espírito Santo (b. 1994, USA) is an Afro-Dominican American artist and writer from the South Bronx, NY. She holds a BA from the USC Roski School of Art & Design (Los Angeles, CA) and an MFA from the UCL Slade School of Fine Arts (London, UK). Her practice explores how individuals within the African Diaspora and Latin America seek joy and purpose, while reflecting on themes of community, ancestry, and colonial history. She has shown work internationally, participated in numerous artist residencies, and has received grants and awards for her practice. In 2025 do Espírito Santo was an artist-in-residence at ACME's early careers program in London, UK. In 2026 she will participate in the Fountainhead Artist Residency in Miami, FL.

Emily Manwaring (b. 1999, USA) is a Brooklyn-based interdisciplinary artist whose practice explores identity, materiality, and cultural memory through painting, sculpture, and assemblage. She received her BFA in Fine Arts from The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art (New York, NY). From an early age, Manwaring developed a distinct visual language, with her artwork on clothing featured in BET runway shows at age 16, curated by June Ambrose. Her work has been exhibited internationally and featured at institutions and galleries including The Brooklyn Museum (Brooklyn, NY), the Venice Biennale (Italy), Canada Gallery (New York, NY), and New Image Art Gallery (Los Angeles, CA). Her practice has been recognized by publications including *Forbes 30 Under 30*, *JUXTAPOZ*, *It's Nice That*, *ArtDaily*, *Artnet*, *Office Magazine*, and *The New Yorker*. Manwaring's work has also been featured in Usher's "Ruin" music video and the publication *The Nameplate: Jewelry, Culture, and Identity*, held in The Metropolitan Museum of Art Library.