

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Klaire Lockheart, *Grande Brodalisque II*, Oil on Canvas, 40 x 60 inches

# Klaire Lockheart

*Brodalisque*

# Wes Hempel

*You Invitation*

SEPTEMBER 18 - NOVEMBER 7, 2026

**Opening Reception**, Friday, September 18, 5 - 8 pm

**Artist Talk**, Saturday, September 19, 12 pm

With Klaire Lockheart

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**WILLIAM HAVU GALLERY**

1040 CHEROKEE STREET, DENVER, CO, 80204

PHONE: 303-893-2360    INFO@WILLIAMHAVUGALLERY.COM    WWW.WILLIAMHAVUGALLERY.COM



Wes Hempel, *Your Invitation*, Oil on canvas, 24 x 20 inches

## Wes Hempel

"I consider these new paintings like a hinge. For many years I was motivated to focus imagery through an art historical lens, my goal to deploy subject matter as an infiltrator into an arena where gay stories were historically lacking. Over the past decade or so it's been gratifying to see other artists pick up that assignment and carry that ball forward. With these paintings, however, I've been happier to simply indulge my love of color and the lusciousness of nature in addition to the figure. The nice thing about being a hinge in this case is that I am looking forward to an expansion of new ideas and techniques that carry my own story further."

Wes Hempel splits his time between Colorado and Arizona. He was born in El Monte, CA, and received his BA from Cal State Northridge and his MA from CU Boulder. He has exhibited extensively throughout the U.S. since 1987, and his paintings are included in numerous private and public collections,

including the Denver Art Museum, National Gallery of Art in Washington, Microsoft Art Collection, and the New Britain Museum of American Art (CT), among others. Since the mid-1990s, Hempel has frequently collaborated on paintings with Jack Balas, an artist who works in both painting and photography.

## Klaire Lockheart

Klaire Lockheart's "Brodalisque" series combines a "bro" with an "odalisque," depicting reclining dudes in man caves. Detailed oil on canvas figure paintings of passive masculine forms lounging in mysterious and unknowable environments purposefully invoke a historic and academic style of art to challenge the traditional patriarchal values of Western civilization. Even though Lockheart's paintings feature men, they're not about men, but art history's endless parade of undressed women's bodies rendered by cis-men artists to satiate the male gaze. To counterbalance these arbitrary gender roles, Lockheart painstakingly paints masculine men in the same languid poses of flaccid odalisques, writhing Venuses, and other allegories represented by feminine bodies in countless famous works. Lockheart hopes that when viewers chuckle at her paintings of reclining men, this encourages them to notice the absurd ways women are usually treated in the art world.

Klaire Lockheart uses oil paint, fabric, and her snarky sense of humor to create badass artwork to challenge traditional gender roles. As Miss Art World South Dakota, Lockheart advocates for the rights of women and people of other marginalized genders in a region where feminism is often considered an "F-word." She is grateful to have received grants from the Pollock-Krasner Foundation, the Elizabeth Greenshields Foundation, and the South Dakota Arts Council. Her subversive brodalisque paintings have been published in *New American Paintings*, *DailyArt Magazine*, and *Bird in Flight*. The Dahl Arts Center in Rapid City, SD; the Norfolk Arts Center in Norfolk, NE; and the Sioux City Art Center in Sioux City, IA have hosted her recent solo exhibitions. Lockheart is also thankful to be a recipient of the Rural Regenerator Fellowship from Springboard for the Arts so she can continue to work in Vermillion, SD.