

# eric firestone gallery



**Lauren dela Roche** (b. Santa Rosa, CA, 1983) is a self-described queer punk feminist artist whose autodidactic approach integrates a broad range of references, including zines, European modernisms, and autobiography. While largely self-taught, her consumption of visual culture and art history allows her to draw upon long traditions of art history, remixing Egon Schiele's line drawing with the influence of transgressive cinema, Persian miniatures, Greek mythology, and folklore into her own iconic, fresh style. Growing up in the Bay Area of California, and living for a period of time in both Seattle and Asheville, NC, dela Roche has resided in the Midwest since young adulthood and currently lives and works near St. Louis, MO.

Dela Roche's recent work, painted on found, mended, and repurposed cotton feed sacks show multiplying and echoing views of a nude woman, who becomes a recurring central character. This form - elongated, with rouged cheeks, stockings, and long raven hair - appears in dream-like compositions. More than representing any specific person, the female form is a symbol for dela Roche, signifying, for example, Mother Nature.

Dela Roche's work has deep ties to the land and agriculture. Both of her parents come from families who originally immigrated in search of farming opportunities in the United States, growing potatoes in the Midwest. For nearly a decade, dela Roche lived off the grid on undeveloped land in Northern Minnesota, building a cabin solely out of found materials and becoming fully self reliant through farming.

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Collecting and mending cotton feedsack textiles by hand before applying paint, dela Roche reflects on her time working—and making art—during harvest time. Each surface is imbued with her enduring curiosity about their unique agricultural histories. These then become the backdrop for paintings which evoke Matissean patterns and forms, layered with archways, butterflies, snakes, and the female form. The woman is at once vulnerable, sexual, and safe, harkening back to the transgressive cinema and performance work of Karen Finley, which were formative influences on dela Roche as a teenager.

In 2012-13, dela Roche was awarded the Jerome Emerging Artist Fellowship at the Jerome Foundation, Minneapolis. Between 2013 and 2021, dela Roche exhibited with Bockley Gallery, Minneapolis, MN. Dela Roche was the recipient of the Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters and Sculptors Grant in 2018. In 2021, she was selected for the Bed-Stuy Art Residency in Brooklyn, NY. Her work is found in the collections of the Minneapolis Institute of Art and the North Dakota Museum of Art.

Lauren dela Roche is represented by Eric Firestone Gallery. Her first solo exhibition at the gallery, *No Man's Land*, opens May 1, 2024.

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