



GOWEN

GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

REVIVAL II - THE RENAISSANCE

Ann Agee
Waseem Ahmed
Helen Flockhart
Philippe Fretz
Ayana V. Jackson
Vladimir Kartashov
Sylvie Lambert
Giuliano Macca
Sébastien Mettraux
Anastasia Norenko
Bryan Rogers
Ella Walker

Press Release |

December 4, 2025 - February 7, 2026

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December 4, 2025 – February 7, 2026

Public Opening: Thursday December 4, from 5pm to 8pm with live music performance

In the presence of the artists



Courtesy of The Artist and GOWEN © Sylvie Lambert.

Sylvie Lambert, *Ego-Construction*, 2025, Acrylic on canvas, 120 x 200 cm.

REVIVAL II – THE RENAISSANCE is the second exhibition in GOWEN's ongoing *REVIVAL* series, following the inaugural presentation in 2023. Building on an original concept conceived by founder, director and curator Laura Gowen, the show brings together twelve international artists whose works explore how contemporary practice reimagines and transforms imagery from the art historical canon.

For this edition, the show devotes itself to the Renaissance, a period defined by classical revival, knowledge and innovation, and a heightened focus on the human figure. This renewed invitation to look backward and forward at once considers how artists continue to turn their gaze toward the Old Masters, and underlines how the Renaissance is not simply a historical moment, but a living point of reference – one that remains fertile ground for investigation, reinvention, and dialogue.



Ann Agee, *Red Hot Madonna*, 2024, Porcelain slip and ceramic stain on white stoneware, 153.7 x 55.9 x 61 cm.

Artistic returns to the past frequently reveal shifting dynamics of power, vision, and belief. Centred on these transformations, the exhibition suggests that revisiting art history through contemporary creation becomes a means to critically examine the conditions of our own time. Embracing Renaissance references to conceive new aesthetic vernaculars seeking harmony, proportion, and a new image of humankind at the centre of the world, the show unfolds against the backdrop of an epoch that witnessed the profound intellectual, scientific, and artistic transformations marking the transition from the medieval to the modern world.

A time of humanist inquiry and revived interest in classical antiquity, the Renaissance was an age of both rebirth and rupture, a period that redefined notions of knowledge, creativity, and representation. It was also an era of expanding horizons, marked by cultural and political forces - early explorations, the consolidation of power by emerging nation-states, and the complex interplay between discovery, domination, and desire.

Now, through highly experimental approaches to their chosen media together with deep, critical inquiry, the participating artists engage such legacies in diverse ways - reframing ideals of beauty and harmony, reworking allegory and myth, or reflecting on the traditions of identity and representation within art history - and the voices these legacies have conventionally

emphasized. Their intentions are deliberate, raising essential questions surrounding the nature of their engagement: Is it homage or reverence? Subversion? Or a way to interrogate, expand, or challenge inherited narratives? By seeking in historical forms a way to confront contemporary concerns, the works in the exhibition evoke universal themes found across cultures and eras: the human condition, spirituality, identity and belonging, and humanity's evolving relationship with nature.

Spanning painting to photography, and sculpture to newly commissioned installations, the presentation includes a unique, late 15th century illuminated manuscript by French scribe Johannes Francigena. The rare *Book of Hours*, produced in Italy on parchment in tempera, ink and gold and of Roman and Franciscan use, has been loaned specifically for the show.

Across the practices of the artists, a shared engagement with historical imagery emerges. The enduring pull of mythology, theology, and Renaissance visual culture, whether in Ann Agee's feminist reinterpretations of the Madonna, Waseem Ahmed's neo-miniature reconfigurations of

sacred iconography, Helen Flockhart's retellings of ancient myths, or Giuliano Macca's Titan allegories, finds further echoes in the practices of Ella Walker, Vladimir Kartashov, Philippe Fretz, and Anastasia Norenko, all of whom recast classical narratives within novel frameworks.

Invocations of the Old Master traditions - from Renaissance composition to medieval themes - appear in the practices of Fretz, Sylvie Lambert, Sébastien Mettraux, and Norenko, who draw on earlier visual lineages while expanding them through experimental or conceptual approaches. The tension between tradition and technological innovation is addressed by Kartashov and Mettraux, whose practices bridge handmade craft with digital lexicons, or computer-generated imagery. Explorations of identity and representation surface prominently in the work of Ayana V. Jackson, Bryan Rogers, and Agee, who examine the politics of race, gender, queerness, or domesticity through reimagined bodies and symbolic environments. Uniting Lambert, Flockhart, Kartashov, and Rogers is a shared interest in constructed worlds and space for storytelling, their settings oscillating between the fantastical, the psychological, and the mythopoetic.



Anastasia Norenko, *Campa cavallo che l'erba cresce*, 2025, Oil on canvas, 80 x 60 cm.

Courtesy of The Artist and GOWEN © Anastasia Norenko.

By bringing these artists into a common dialogue, their works reveal a broad contemporary impulse to weave past and present into layered visual languages that revisit, question, and transform the inheritances of art history.

REVIVAL II – THE RENAISSANCE includes approximately 30 works, with several on loan from private collections. A particular thank you to Monya Rowe Gallery, New York and La Gabrielle Fine Arts SA, Geneva for their kind cooperation.

For more information visit:

Website: gowen.art

Instagram: @gowencontemporary

[> ABOUT THE ARTISTS](#)