

JARVIS ART

FAMILY STYLE

ART

The Mind's Eye

Ana Cristina's dreamlike landscapes hang alongside Louis Michel Eilshemius' early-20th-century paintings in one of New York's most compelling summer shows.

Words by Bryan Martin

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Ana Cristina, *All Is Not Butter That Comes From A Cow*, 2026. Image courtesy of artist and Jarvis Art.

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Ana Cristina's origin story is right out of a contemporary novel: At 20, she moved from Los Angeles to model in New York City, where, despite having no formal experience, she began painting at the encouragement of two artist neighbors. "I was enamored with somebody knowing you immediately through a painting without you saying anything," she recalls of the first time seeing their work. "I wanted to be understood in that way." Now in her own high-ceilinged Bushwick studio, the artist sits on her yellow armchair with a woolly, plush pink carpet beneath her feet, reminiscing on her past decade in the city.

Cristina painted her way through odd jobs, stints in bands (she's about to go on tour as the bassist for Porches), and heartbreak, as her artistic interest blossomed into a full-time practice. Today she works nine to 12 hours a day on landscapes inspired by her dreams. In a new two-person show, titled "Primitive Romanticist," at Jarvis Art in New York, her work pairs perfectly with the 20th-century modernist painter Louis Michel Eilshemius. While nearly a century apart in life, the two click in their penchant for placing strange nymph-like figures in mystical landscapes.



Louis Eilshemius, *Two Nudes in a Glade*, 1895. Image courtesy of Jarvis Art.

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Although technically skilled, Eilshemius, who was also a classically trained pianist, adopted his signature faux-naïf style to reject academic painting and explore the medium's possibilities. "He's very impressionistic, something I envy—to be a little sloppier and looser. I'm hoping someday I can incorporate that sort of style," says Cristina. On view at Jarvis Art, Eilshemius' painting *Two Nudes in a Glade*, 1895, depicts a pair of naked women standing in the woods; resembling a clunkier yet compelling Cézanne painting, the scene feels physically tense, inviting us to look inward. Nearby, Cristina's *The Killing Moon*, 2026, shows two nude women heading towards a pool of water, where a menacing python awaits and an enigmatic moon hangs overhead.



Ana Cristina, *The Killing Moon*, 2026. Image courtesy of Jarvis Art.

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Cristina's works harken back to an older, ideal aesthetic of nature, especially with their dark blues and greens, but they also seem unreal, out of reach. "After a world-shattering life event in 2022, I connected to the paint in an emotional way that I'd never done before," she recalls. As a result, she immersed herself in New York museums and began looking back at bygone moments in art history. She studied the serene, atmospheric colors of 17th-century Dutch landscapes and the 19th-century American painter George Inness' transcendental depictions of the natural world. "It's also all the old masters, like Titian and Poussin, their allegorical narratives, mixed with their technique," she says.

The influence of Romantic poets, like William Blake, is also apparent, but it's what she draws from her own subconscious that sets her practice apart. "My dreams are critical for this show," she says, explaining that she keeps a meticulous journal. These tiny narrative elements anchor each work with a sense of ambiguity that's sometimes foreboding: a looming tower in the background, naked figures in the water, a bovine with a lizard-like tongue licking a woman's hand, or a woman wrestling with an octopus—the latter, the artist shares, was inspired by her first adolescent sex dream.



Ana Cristina, *To Fall for the Octopus*, 2026. Image courtesy of Jarvis Art.

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Cristina's paintings carry a throughline between her other interests, like music and apothecary. "Feeding off the energy of other people in a room and making noise that moves people to tears, moves me to tears, is extremely gratifying," she says. As for scent, Cristina makes all her skincare and perfumes, and keeps record with a detailed journal. "Previously, I was so obsessed with the medicinal powers and was such a hippie... I hated the idea of having to buy everything from a store, so I made it myself," she says as she pulls out a vintage suitcase of apothecary materials. Wafts of bergamot, vetiver, and tobacco evoke the pastoral greens of her paintings hanging above us, a sign of the artist's capacity to assert her creative will over anything.