

von Racknitz + Baer Gallery

Presents

Lewinale Havette

Playing with Fire

8th of November 2025 – 15th of February 2026

Vernissage: November 8th, 4-10 PM



Lewinale Havette, *Femme à La Peau Bleue*, 2025, oil on canvas, courtesy of the artist

Von Racknitz + Baer (VRB) Gallery is pleased to present **Playing with Fire**, the inaugural solo exhibition of recent paintings by **Lewinale Havette** in **Berlin**, in partnership with Palo Gallery New York.

Lewinale Havette's inaugural Berlin exhibition features eight paintings and eight works on paper exploring the body as both medium and message — a field where emotion, memory, and power intertwine.

Across cultures, the body has long been seen as more than flesh; it is a vessel, a threshold where power, memory, and spirit converge. This exhibition treats the body as such: an active field where desire and dominance, love and violence, are inscribed.

These works traverse a spectrum of human emotions: tenderness and wounding, intimacy and control. Love appears here as a double force capable of binding, sheltering, and transforming, yet also of restraining and undoing. It echoes the artist's struggle with those closest to her, men and mother alike, where affection was entangled with power, protection with dominance.

In this terrain, the question of who holds power and how is never neutral. The works evoke the charged tension of women who resist erasure, figures who stand at the edge of fire and refuse to be consumed. Like mythic heroines and modern icons, they embody strength in the face of control, vulnerability turned into sovereignty.

Here, fire is not cast only as ruin but as clarifier, an alchemy that refines what persists when form collapses. Each piece becomes a vessel for this transformation, carrying what cannot be spoken: ancestral echoes, unyielding memories, and the quiet persistence of the spirit.

Suspended between fragility and resilience, submission and defiance, these works do not narrate but invoke. They inhabit the space where the body becomes both medium and message, where the unseen is felt as atmosphere, an invocation that lingers like breath between realms.

Playing with Fire opens **November 8th, 2025**, at **VRB Gallery**, Clausewitzstraße 2, 10629 Berlin. The opening reception with drinks starts at 4pm until 10pm. The artist will be present.

Notes to Editors

For press interested in attending please reach out to leonie@vrbgallery.com. Further, an artist talk and multiple events are scheduled and will be announced through [Instagram](#).

Artist Statement

My recent works are led by intuition, shaped by feeling and instinct. I've turned to oil for its fluid nature, it yields and resists, with a will of its own. It's a language tied to mastery, one I've chosen to speak and reshape from a different root.

About the Artist

Lewinale Havette (b. 1990, Monrovia, Liberia; lives and works in New York City, NY) is a painter whose work intricately explores suppressed indigenous spirituality and the impact of migration on female identities. Her practice combines abstract painting with portraiture to offer profound insights into the physical and spiritual dimensions of migrant experiences. Havette's art often features self-portraits, spirits, water deities, and ancient prophetesses known as Sibyls, using these elements to delve into themes of power dynamics, spirituality, sexuality, religion, gender, immigration, and cultural displacement.

Working primarily in oil paint yet grounded in a history of diverse materials, from ink and photography to graphite and acrylic, Havette channels a spectrum of emotional and spiritual states, revealing the layered complexity of her subjects' lives.

As a West African woman, Havette is dedicated to redefining the portrayal of womanhood as a site of spiritual reclamation. Her practice draws from the suppressed languages of West African spirituality, ancient ways of knowing that were buried beneath colonial and religious systems. In reawakening these traditions, her work speaks to women who have migrated across worlds, often estranged from the spiritual lineages that once guided them. Each painting becomes a gesture of remembrance and return, a quiet act of empowerment through self-knowledge.

By confronting these narratives, Havette invites viewers to engage with a more nuanced understanding of Black femininity and migrant identity, offering a rich, multifaceted perspective on the human experience.

Lewinale Havette's work has been recognized through exhibitions in leading museums and galleries across the U.S. and Europe, including Art Cologne, Wehrmuehle Museum, the Houston Museum of African American Culture, Masur Museum of Art, 1-54 Contemporary African Art Fair, Christie's London, Delphian Gallery, PALO Gallery, Black Cultural Archives, Launch F18, and The ROOM Contemporary Art Space in Venice. She was also represented by the Pérez Art Museum Miami at Art Basel Miami.

About Von Racknitz + Baer Gallery

Von Racknitz + Baer Gallery positions itself as an intermediate between the established art market and Berlin's creative community of emerging creators, curators and collectors who consciously question and redefine how art interacts with and is embedded in our rapidly evolving world.

Founded in 2020 by Leonie von Racknitz and Moritz Baer, VRB Gallery represents emerging and established artists with interdisciplinary, concept-oriented, and space-based approaches in various media, including painting, sculpture, culinary experiences and photography.

Media Contact

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