



# fem.

*A group exhibition with Heather Benjamin, Christina Allan, and Kelly Shami*

*Extended through July 30<sup>th</sup>*

[Alchemy Gallery](#) is thrilled to present “fem” a group exhibition featuring the work of Heather Benjamin, Christina Allan and Kelly Shami. Extended through to July 30<sup>th</sup> 2022, “fem” challenges traditional notions of femininity and portraiture with a psychedelic selection of works by these female-identifying artists. Whether considering Benjamin’s punk-rock goddesses, Shami’s pierced florals or Allan’s hallucinogenic Grim Reapers – each artist in this exhibition depicts the richness of her inner life using symbols, avatars, and altar-egos. Combining the influences of digital culture and ancient mythology, the portraits in “fem” do not seek to mask feminine identity – rather, they give physical form to the psychological complexities of the female experience today.



**Heather Benjamin** (b. 1989, New York) received her BFA in Printmaking from the Rhode Island School of Design. Firmly rooted in DIY/punk aesthetics and conceptual feminism, Benjamin's work revolves around mystical female protagonists who serve as avatars for her personal traumas as well as manifestations of power, resilience, and self-embodiment. The works in this exhibition are her largest to date, allowing Benjamin's squad of superhero goddesses to grow to a size that truly embodies their power. By creating visions of new female archetypes that break the patriarchal grip and gaze, she in turn hopes her work can inspire viewers to harness their own power.

**Christina Allan** (b. 1995, Toronto) received her BFA in Painting from Parsons the New School for Design in 2017. Informed by her fascination with human anxiety, existential philosophy and ancient mythology, Allen's work investigates despair and awareness of being through the exploration of alter egos. Inspired by her own transformative experiences during the pandemic, the works in this exhibition reimagine the figure of the Grim Reaper. Portrayed as an otherworldly runaway embarking on adventures through hazy, airbrushed realms, Allan's depictions of death personified represent an escape from an absurd quotidian existence. As they flee to new destinations in pursuit of freedom, her Reapers urge the viewer to celebrate the act of leaving, whether from a career, relationship, or lifestyle.

**Kelly Shami** (b. 1991, New Jersey) is a first-generation American artist of Syrian and Lebanese descent. She completed her B.F.A. from The School of Visual Arts in 2013. At SVA Shami became interested in depictions of women as objects and muses – rather than the creator herself, which she found paralleled in the restraints of growing up as an Arab woman. Inspired by female Surrealists like Dorothea Tanning, Leonora Carrington, and Frida Kahlo, Shami's paintings routinely combine the natural and unnatural. Flowers altered with piercings enhance their symbolic power as representations of female identity. The piercings, a form of alteration she experimented with at a young age to feel in control, allow Shami's delicate oil paintings to exist as a series of complex self-portraits, while the expertly rendered metallic surfaces of the piercings create a mirrored effect that encourages self-reflection.



Alchemy Gallery | 55 Delancey Street. New York, NY

For updates and more information on Alchemy Gallery, please visit: <https://www.alchemy-gallery.com/>

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