

Pamela Phatsimo Sunstrum

Parabellum

October 30 – December 20, 2025

Opening Thursday, October 30, 2025, 6:00pm – 8:00pm



Pamela Phatsimo Sunstrum, *It is because I want you to go on*, 2025.

Galerie Lelong, New York, is pleased to announce an upcoming solo exhibition of new paintings and drawings by Pamela Phatsimo Sunstrum entitled *Parabellum*, marking the artist's second at the gallery. Deriving its title from the Latin adage "*Si vis pacem, para bellum*"—meaning "if you seek peace, prepare for war"—the exhibition unfolds as individual scenes in a broader narrative. Sunstrum depicts life during wartime through intimate, everyday moments:

bathing, training, preparing. Her works underscore the disquieting persistence of routine amid conflict. By turning away from spectacle, she reveals this uneasy coexistence, highlighting the small acts of intimacy and connection that endure even under the shadow of war.

As in much of Sunstrum's multidisciplinary practice, the works comprising *Parabellum* draw inspiration from a wide range of references across fields—including film, literature, art, as well as her personal history. Engaging the tradition of academic painting as a vehicle for historic record, Sunstrum invokes and subverts the genre, interrogating mechanisms through which power is constructed. Her works are populated by a cast of women, prompting consideration of how information and control would be bartered in a gendered space, while offering glimpses into the multifaceted experiences of feminine friendship and camaraderie. In training and battlefield scenes, they form a united front; in depictions of laundering, grooming, and relaxation, tenderness blends with palpable tension as hierarchies between the women are implied. Sunstrum transforms the war painting into a meditation on intimacy, shifting its focus from heroism to the layered bonds of women in moments of both strength and vulnerability.

Extending the exhibition's unfurling narrative are a pair of arched paintings, each depicting dressing quarters at different moments in time, through which Sunstrum continues her explorations of sisterhood, domesticity, and visibility. *Now you are everything* (2025), reveals a room with a mirror, absent of figures and scattered with discarded clothes and pipes echoing those in other paintings on view. Seven pairs of shoes surround a table and chair. In a related composition entitled *How do we know if we are loved?* (2025), six figures surround a seventh as she contemplates her own naked reflection in the mirror, the group illuminating her with candles

as she looks upon herself. The new paintings will be complemented by a selection of preparatory graphite drawings that lend insight into the artist's layered process and further develop the story told throughout the exhibition.

About the Artist

Pamela Phatsimo Sunstrum's multidisciplinary practice encompasses drawing, painting, installation and animation. Her work emerges from a critical investigation of historical systems of power. The figures and stories in her work stand in resistance to the legacies of these power systems that continue to be used as tools of oppression, exploitation, injustice, and violence. Sunstrum's works make reference to literature, film, theatre, and other forms of storytelling to build an ever-expanding narrative. These ongoing sagas unfold within terrains that appear simultaneously futuristic and ancient: a patchwork of remembered landscapes from her upbringing in places such as Botswana, Canada, Sudan, Sri Lanka, Malawi, South Africa, America, and others. The characters in her work stand as a collective: a nebulous cast in constant flux amidst ever slipping and insufficient notions of self-hood and belonging.

Key exhibitions and performances include: *Pamela Phatsimo Sunstrum: It Will End In Tears*, Barbican Centre, London, UK (2024); *Pamela Phatsimo Sunstrum: The Gods and The Underdogs*, KM21, The Hague, The Netherlands (2024); *Pamela Phatsimo Sunstrum: The Pavilion*, London Mithraeum Bloomberg SPACE, London, UK (2023); Sharjah Biennial 15: *Thinking Historically in the Present* (2023); Greater Toronto Art 2021 (GTA21), MOCA Toronto, Canada (2021); *Born in Flames: Feminist Futures*, The Bronx Museum of the Arts, New York City (2021); *WITNESS: Afro Perspectives from the Jorge M. Pérez Collection*, El Espacio 23, Miami, Florida (2021); *Pamela Phatsimo Sunstrum: All my seven faces*, Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati, Ohio (2019); Zeitz MOCAA, Cape Town, South Africa (2019); The Wiels, Brussels, Belgium (2019); Kunsthaus Zürich (2019); The Nest, The Hague (2019); Michaelis School for the Arts at the University of Cape Town (2018); Artpace, San Antonio, Texas (2018); The Phillips Museum of Arts, Lancaster (2018); Interlochen Centre for the Arts, Interlochen (2016); NMMU Bird Street Art Gallery, Port Elizabeth (2016); Tiwani Contemporary, London (2016); VANSa, Johannesburg (2015); Brundyn Gallery, Cape Town (2014); FRAC Pays de Loire, France (2013); the Havana Biennial (2012); and MoCADA, New York City (2011).

Sunstrum was born in Mochudi, Botswana, in 1980 and now lives and works in The Hague, Netherlands.

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Highlights



Pamela Phatsimo Sunstrum

How do we know if we are loved, 2025

Oil on cradled wood panel (arched)

78 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 55 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 2 $\frac{3}{8}$ in (200 x 140 x 6 cm)

(GL16966)



Pamela Phatsimo Sunstrum

Take justice upon my hands, 2025

Oil on cradled wood panel

55 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 78 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 2 $\frac{3}{8}$ in (140 x 200 x 6 cm)

(GL16968)



Pamela Phatsimo Sunstrum

An education, 2025

Oil on cradled wood panel

55 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 78 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 2 $\frac{3}{8}$ in (140 x 200 x 6 cm)

(GL16970)



Pamela Phatsimo Sunstrum

The Barber, 2025

Graphite on paper

31 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 43 $\frac{1}{4}$ in (80 x 110 cm)

(GL16865)



Pamela Phatsimo Sunstrum

Charge I, 2025

Graphite on paper

31 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 43 $\frac{1}{4}$ in (80 x 110 cm)

(GL16949)

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