

# BLOGS & STORIES

## PAUL LASTER

### Julie Heffernan's Earthly Delights

by Paul Laster


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**A new exhibition in Santa Monica highlights the painter's nude "self-portraits" with floral fantasies and surreal dreams. [VIEW OUR GALLERY.](#)**

Alluring and timeless, Julie Heffernan's paintings are self-portraits that place the artist in an enchanting world of make-believe. Her new paintings on view at [Mark Moore Gallery](#) in Santa Monica, California, through July 3 portray the artist merged with nature and society in surreal, psychological ways. In one, she wears a headdress of birds perching in woven branches, holding an extravagantly plumed beast in her hand, while surrounded by construction tractors at her feet. In another, she is woven into a fantastic forest of fruit, while tiny lions and tigers play below.

Referencing historical painting, Heffernan uses a process called "image streaming" to construct her subjects. "Before I'm actually sleeping, as I relax and get out of the conscious mind, pictures will flood into my head, kind of like a movie," she said. "It's not like daydreaming or remembering. They're spontaneous pictures that I just sit back and watch. And then I'll fall asleep. When I wake up, it's at that point where the images start to stream in, and out of those I'll usually 'see' something."

Her sensuous, penetrating paintings present an allegorical realm, where beauty is eternal and dreams come true.

