



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Hana Yilma Godine
A Brush in the Universe

January 13 - March 2, 2024
Opening Reception: Saturday, January 13, 6 - 8pm

Fridman Gallery and Rachel Uffner Gallery are honored to announce *A Brush in the Universe*, a solo exhibition by Ethiopian painter Hana Yilma Godine spanning the two galleries. This is the second time the galleries are collaborating to present Godine's work, having jointly organized *A Hair Salon in Addis Ababa* two years ago.

The dual exhibition will bring together Godine's new paintings of women occupying spiritual, imagined spaces that fuse earthly and otherworldly landscapes. Godine presents her mythical, larger-than-life women in conversation with the universe – mountains, rivers, oceans, plants, animals, birds. The paintings, which blend oil and acrylic paint with textiles on canvas, emerge from the artist's ongoing research and reflection on the evolving representations of the female body in Ethiopian art and history, from the Archaic mythological heroine Andromeda to Queen Zauditu, Empress of Ethiopia from 1916 to 1930. In a patriarchal society torn apart by civil wars, Godine presents a parallel dimension where women are safe from violence and free to express their power, beauty and womanhood independent of social and political restrictions.

Godine's use of flattened perspective, elongated figures and evenly distributed light recalls Ethiopian iconography which underscores the divinity of biblical subjects by rejecting the rules of earthly representation. On the other hand, Godine's artworks are firmly grounded in reality – she paints on traditional fabrics which women typically turn into affordable dresses. She weaves her brushstrokes with the floral fabric print, at times leaving the patterns untouched, at times letting them subtly show through the painted layers.

Combining traditional materials with bold compositions and color schemes, the paintings appear to time-travel, offering a futuristic worldview based in spirit, community, care, and hope. In Godine's worldview, painting itself stands for creation, uncovering hidden connections among topographies and life-forms.

I think about painting as a space that mediates time and place, reconciling the past, present, and future into one unified form. Figures are central to my compositions. Their colorful, transparent, and collaged surfaces suggest embedded histories and embodied feelings.

Sometimes I think about fabric as water, as the fabric of life, the way it is fluid when I apply it on canvas. In my painting space a single woman's body is like a brush in the universe, and the universe is like a canvas. When her body moves around and makes marks, it can shape the space of painting and the universe.

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Hana Yilma Godine received an MFA from Boston University in 2020, having previously studied at the Abyssinia School of Fine Art and Design, and the Ale School of Fine Art in Addis Ababa. Godine's first exhibition with Fridman Gallery, *Spaces within Space*, took place in the Fall of 2020, followed by her first institutional exhibition at the National Museum of Ethiopia in the Spring of 2021, and a two-gallery solo show at Fridman Gallery and Rachel Uffner Gallery in 2022. Godine's work is in the collections of the Hirshhorn Museum, Inhotim Museum, and the Sharjah Foundation. She lives and works in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Image: Hana Yilma Godine, *Single painting #4*, 2022, oil and fabric on canvas, 80 x 80 in (203.2 x 203.2 cm)

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