

Male Odalisque

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Male Odalisque, the working theme for my series, is a term that is an oxymoron by definition by relates to shifts in our culture and contemporary views on masculinity and sexuality. The odalisque traditionally refers to the female slave or concubine in the harem of a Turkish sultan, and was adopted during the nineteenth century by elitist Europe as a form of artistic eroticism. The “male gaze” associated with classical work is also adopted by the series through referencing the term *odalisque*. These male subjects are therefore effeminized, dominated, and abused in ways similar to their female counterparts.

The palette for this series contains the tones of traditional and academic painters: reds, browns, and blacks, another reference to traditional ideologies. The paper surface and body piercing needles reference the ephemeral nature of the human body.

I receive most of my inspiration from Luis Caballero, Sherry Saville, Odd Nerdrum, and Caravaggio. Saville’s interest in gender roles, Caravaggio’s theatrical compositions, and Nerdrum and Caballero’s ominous treatment of the figure have all led me to the *male odalisque*.

These paintings are intended to raise questions about pleasure, pain, sex, abuse, gender roles, homophobia, etc. They are intended to inspire thought about something unfamiliar or taboo and lead to understanding or wonder. These works are based on oxymoron. They are meant to confound perception rather than validate it.