

• FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE •

Sylvia Fernández

The Illusion of Paradise

March 7 — April 18, 2026

Opening Reception: Saturday, March, 5–8 pm

Free and open to the public | Artist in attendance

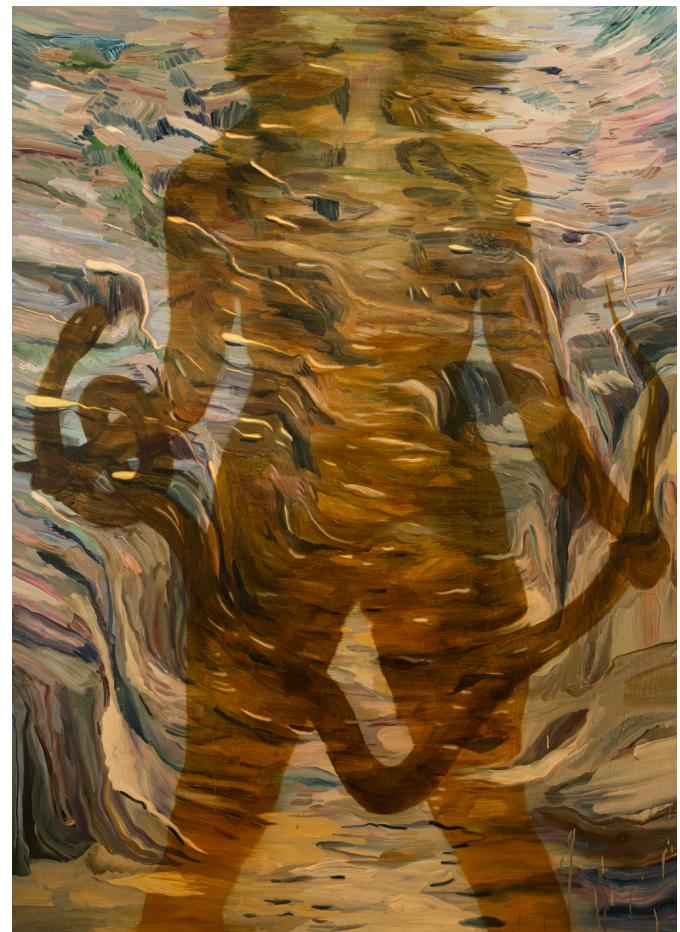
David B. Smith Gallery is thrilled to welcome San Diego, CA-based Peruvian artist Sylvia Fernández for her first solo exhibition with the gallery, *The Illusion of Paradise*. Featuring stretched paintings mounted back-to-back and suspended throughout the Main Gallery, themes of paradise as an emotional and physical territory, nature as solace, and the potential for optimism are among the many paths laid out in the exhibition.

Corporeal experience, informed by internality and influenced by personal subjectivity, registers immediately upon entering *The Illusion of Paradise*. Floating throughout the gallery, as if sifting through a floating archive, viewers experience Fernández's dreamlike compositions like flashes of forgotten memories. Tracing our attention over a ghostly, shadow-cast embrace, whispers seem to be audible. The senses come alive in *The Illusion of Paradise*, aided by a layered presentation of works that mimics the strata of perception on a journey inward.

In her works, imagery capturing a painterly fascination with light and the majesty of the natural world is visually described with moonlight refracted through space, ripples of running water glistening in the dark, and overgrown flora rustling as branches obscure further view. The works are quiet, meditative, and possess an aura of shrouded meaning. For Fernández, nature serves as an inspiring space to belong and a connection for rescue. A native of Lima, Perú—now a California transplant going on four years—Fernández describes being in constant awe of light—studying its endless opportunities for meaning and metaphor. An interest in states of consciousness and embodied female experience is a natural outgrowth of the artist's exploration of light and shadow, which can serve as illuminating or obstructing.

In English, an illusion is a deception, a false perception or belief. In Spanish—Fernández's mother tongue—ilusion has a double meaning, one that includes a sense of excitement and hope and a positive emotional state. This duality resonates with Fernández, as it allows for internal exploration of light as a respite from the uncertainty and fear that is omnipresent in contemporary life.

Between dappled moonlight catching on raindrops, undulating silhouettes, and enigmatic flora and fauna, Sylvia Fernández's *The Illusion of Paradise* offers a tangible exploration through a hanging garden of canvases, where spiritual reflection, self-discovery, and the beauty of the unknown thrives.



Territory, Land, 2025, oil on canvas, 84 x 60 in. (213.4 x 152.4 cm)

About Sylvia Fernández

Sylvia Fernández was born in Lima, Perú where she studied Fine Arts at Escuela Superior de Arte Corriente Alterna, where she graduated in 2002. She has lived in Lima showing her work locally and abroad, participating in several group and solo exhibitions. She has been based in San Diego, CA since 2022.

Recent exhibitions include California Center of the Arts (San Diego, CA), Oolong Gallery (San Diego, CA), La Loma Projects (Los Angeles, CA), Two Rooms (San Diego, CA), Tyger Tyger Gallery (Asheville, NC), Pivo Satelite (Sao Paulo, BR), Galería del Paseo (Lima, PE), Museo de Arte Contemporáneo (Lima, PE), Salón Acme (México City, MX), and Galería Icpna Miraflores (Lima, PE).

Fernández's working process is a delving dialogue with painting, a relationship that allows her to explore intuitively through the material, arriving at images that connect internal intimate journeys to plural universal ideas. Recently, her work has taken explored the abstract boundaries of the mind and body and their relation to nature. Internal landscapes serve as a form of rescue, caressing the idea of new paradises as a repercussion of a current alliance with nature to find different habitats to belong and coexist.

About David B. Smith Gallery

David B. Smith Gallery is committed to presenting intelligent and culturally relevant exhibitions in its Denver location, featuring the region's most important emerging talent alongside internationally recognized artists. Through its curatorial program, participation in art fairs, and extensive media coverage in publications such as *Artforum*, *Art in America*, and *ARTnews*, David B. Smith Gallery has cultivated a strong regional, national and international collector audience. *The New York Times* hailed the gallery as offering "an exciting contrast of cutting edge works." The gallery also maintains an active publishing division, which produces exhibition catalogues and editions.

David B. Smith Gallery is a member of the New Art Dealers Alliance (NADA).

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