



*Queen of the Moon* is one of a series of paintings I am currently developing. The series consists of mostly larger than life “night” paintings. They are based on events that I experience during sleeping hours, some dreaming others awake. I question ideas of reality by juxtaposing waking and dream life. These paintings deal with the surreal aspect of dreams as they deal with waking life issues and relationships, mainly focusing on power-roles in domestic partnerships embedded in a South American “machista” upbringing. In my dreams, I am subconsciously navigating the repression of freedom and desire that I as a Latin American, Argentine woman have experienced, in opposition to the emotional repression experienced by my male counterpart. These paintings not only show tension between two opposing forces, but also care, confusing the viewer as to whether the events portrayed are pleasurable or painful, loving or hateful.

This painting in particular, explores the duality between self and partner. It is a night, full moon, painting depicting a sexual encounter with me on top, as an expression of desire and power. The figure on the bottom is disengaged, almost nonexistent. He may be a person, may be a product of my imagination, or may be a reflection of my own self. There is also a transfer of energy, where the figure on the bottom is losing its materiality as the figure on top is gaining, evident in the textural quality of the painting. The change in color of the woman also signifies this energy transfer, as she touches his face with a sort of loving care, her hands begin to glow, nourishing her body.

Mercedes Llanos (b. Oct, 1992) is an emerging contemporary artist born in Mar del Plata, Argentina. She immigrated to the U.S. at age 13, where she received her BFA in Painting from University of Tennessee at Chattanooga (2015), and began her career as an artist and muralist in Tennessee. Consequently she moved back to Argentina and backpacked through South America painting murals among other jobs. In 2017 she moved back to the U.S. and began painting murals in Minneapolis, MN with the group Goodspace Murals. In 2019 she came to NY to obtain her MFA in Painting at Hunter College, expected graduation December, 2021. Mercedes has had solo exhibitions in Chattanooga, TN, and Minneapolis, MN, among group shows in TN, MN, and NY. She has participated in prestigious residency Vermont Studio Center, 2018, as well as Amazonian residency, Sachaqa Centro de Arte, 2017, in Peru.