

February 4, 2025

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ANNOUNCING REPRESENTATION OF AVERY WHELESS

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA—OCHI is pleased to announce representation of Los Angeles-based interdisciplinary artist and painter Avery Wheless.

To celebrate this special occasion—and inspired by the female relationships depicted in her paintings—Wheless has curated a selection of artworks, objects, jewelry, and unique collectibles by women artists she admires, to be featured in OCHI's online shop from February 4th through March 30th, 2025. "This exhibition aligns with my work and my deep love for building safe, supportive, and dynamic female communities," Wheless shares. "There is a collective intimacy between each piece, as they all speak a shared language of form, feeling, and the complexities of being seen—expressing a duality of softness and strength." The shop will showcase works by Seffa Klein, Jenny Hata Blumenfeld, Kari Fry (SUBSURFACE), Eva Porche (Evangeline Jewelry), Zarina Nares, Gabriela Forgo, Stacey Nishimoto, and Sarah Plummer, presented alongside new works on paper by Wheless.

Wheless and OCHI have collaborated regularly over the past few years, beginning with consecutive solo presentations *Embraceable Boundaries* (2021, OVR) and *Collective Intimacies* (2022, Sun Valley, ID). Wheless' work has also been included in two group exhibitions organized by OCHI, *Wish You Were Here* (2022, Sun Valley, ID) and *Expanded Field* (2021, Los Angeles, CA).

Avery Wheless makes energetic and tender paintings, performance pieces, and video installations that express the agency and creativity of the contemporary female body in motion. Wheless' paintings prioritize gesture and emphasize ephemerality as her figures exist in a space between awareness and aloofness. They acknowledge the viewer and the stage they are on but are comfortable in their vulnerability. "Because of my ballet background, my approach to the studio, and to the world, is always through movement," Wheless explains. "The body's unconscious performance fascinates me—the way a slight tilt of the head, an exposed neck, or a contorted posture can convey emotion before a subject is even aware of it."

Free flowing and shape shifting, Wheless' figures appear poised in self-perception as the artist reflects on the malleability of unreliable narrators and the alteration of memory over time. Wheless' glowing palette and her confident and gestural brushwork are informed by her longstanding relationships to movement and light—observing and sketching people in public spaces with her father (an animation director) and rigorously training in ballet from a young age with guidance from her mother (a ballet teacher), Wheless also spent time landscape painting *en plein-air* along the northern California coast with a close-knit group of painters and mentors. More recently, her experiences as a filmmaker, writer, and performance-based artist all feed

back into her vigorous studio practice where she embraces her role as a conduit for artistic energy.

Born in Charlotte, North Carolina in 1993, Wheless grew up in Petaluma, California before attending Rhode Island School of Design, where she earned a BFA in painting. Wheless' work has been exhibited internationally at venues including Superzoom in Paris, France and Miami, FL; Garten Gallery in Como, Italy; BOZOMAG, Rusha & Co., and Bam Gallery in Los Angeles, CA; and OCHI in Sun Valley, ID and Los Angeles, CA. In 2023, Wheless attended the Katikía Artist Residency in Monemvasia, Greece. Her work has been featured and reviewed in publications including *Cultured*, *Flaunt*, *Artforum*, *Autre Magazine*, *Art Megastar*, and *Vents Magazine*.

ABOUT OCHI

Founded in 2015, OCHI is a contemporary art gallery with locations in Sun Valley, Idaho and Los Angeles, California. Nurturing and contextualizing a diverse roster of interdisciplinary artists, OCHI highlights a mix of traditional and experimental practices that investigate the conceptual and material boundaries of art. OCHI's program focuses on emerging and mid-career artists, collaborating with each artist to build momentum and visibility through robust activities such as institutional exhibitions, gallery partnerships, artist-initiated opportunities, educational and curatorial platforms, art fairs, and a range of press and publications.

Drawn to the culture and community of the Arlington Heights neighborhood of Los Angeles, Pauli Ochi opened the doors of Ochi Projects in 2015 after Noah Davis recommended a storefront at 3301 W. Washington Boulevard, a couple of blocks from The Underground Museum. Ochi Projects began as an experimental space in which the artists were handed keys and encouraged to dream big—a journey that mirrors the origins of OCHI's Idaho space.

The original Ochi Gallery was founded by Pauli Ochi's parents, Roberta and Denis Ochi, in Boise, Idaho in the 1970s. What began as an artist-run space evolved into an impressive program of exhibitions that featured renown artists. In the 1990s, the Ochi's designed and built a 6,000 square foot white box gallery with 30-foot ceilings located at 119 Lewis Street at the base of a ski mountain in Sun Valley—a gallery that OCHI still uses for year-round programming alongside its Los Angeles location.

OCHI is built upon a multi-generational belief that art has the power to build community, to evoke joy, expand horizons, to define culture, and to create a future that has not yet been imagined.

OCHI is a proud member of Gallery Association Los Angeles (GALA), New Art Dealers Alliance (NADA) and the Gallery Climate Coalition (GCC)

For all inquiries, please contact: hello@ochigallery.com