



ELENA VON KOHN

L'INSTANT DU RÊVE

The Instant of the Dream

Vernissage Prve - 10 June 2026

GALLERY JOSEPH

PARIS

4-6 RUE DE BRAQUE

75003 PARIS

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The Instant of the Dream

Gallery Joseph

4-6 Rue De braque
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Edited: Aaron Kerscher

Cover: Into Quiet, 2025
137 x 103 inches
Oil on canvas

At right: The Edge of Choice, 2025
138 x 142.5 inches
Oil on canvas

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"L'Instante Du Reve"

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To see a complete collection of works online, visit: elenavonkohn.com



ELENA VON KOHN

L'INSTANT DU REVE



The Edge Of Choice

138 x 142.5 inches (351 x 362 cms) | Oil on Canvas

ELENA VON KOHN

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The Instant of the Dream

In *L'Instant du Rêve*, Elena Von Kohn constructs a world suspended between gravity and release, where the human figure exists in a fragile dialogue with forces both internal and elemental. Her compositions unfold like fragments of a dream, precise yet elusive, structured yet impossible to fully anchor in reality.

Across the works, bodies appear in states of transition: falling, floating, balancing, or surrendering. In one composition, two figures navigate a fractured, cavernous space, suspended above a hollowed sphere—an image that suggests both origin and rupture. In another, a solitary figure lies stretched across a circular form, as if held momentarily between descent and awakening. Elsewhere, three figures gather along a narrow plane against an expansive horizon, their gestures forming a quiet choreography of connection and separation.

Von Kohn's use of scale reinforces this psychological intensity. Monumental formats reaching nearly two meters immerse the viewer physically, transforming each painting into an environment rather than an image. The surrounding elements, rock formations, water, sky, and abstracted structures, do not function as traditional landscapes. Instead, they act as extensions of emotional states, shifting in response to the figures they contain.

Color is restrained yet deeply atmospheric. Cool blues, muted earth tones, and softened flesh hues dissolve the boundary between body and environment. Light emerges not as a source, but as a condition revealing forms only to allow them to recede again.

There is a persistent tension between control and surrender. Figures balance on narrow supports, lean into invisible forces, or move through unstable terrains. Yet these moments do not read as collapse; they suggest transformation. The body becomes a site of negotiation, where vulnerability and strength coexist.

At its core, *L'Instant du Rêve* is about perception in flux. These works resist fixed narratives, inviting the viewer instead into a space of ambiguity where meaning is not delivered, but discovered in the act of looking.

The Cutting Edge

152 x 121.5 inches (386 x 308 cms) | Oil on Canvas



Not Enough

176 x 148.5 inches (447 x 308 cms) | Oil on Canvas



Into The Balance

121 x 152 inches (307 x 384 cms) | Oil on Canvas



Into Quiet

193 x 137 inches (490 x 348 cms) | Oil on Canvas



Fragments Of Silence

190.5 x 143.5 inches (484 x 365 cms) | Oil on Canvas



The Edge Of Choice

138 x 142.5 inches (351 x 362 cms) | Oil on Canvas



Desire And Crusades

128.5 x 98.5 inches (326 x 250 cms) | Oil on Canvas



Invisible

121.5 x 182 inches (309 x 462 cms) | Oil on Canvas



Witness To The Unknown

191.7 x 143.2 inches (489 x 364 cms) | Oil on Canvas



ELENA VON KOHN



Born in Germany and later educated in Moscow, Elena Von Kohn picked up her first paintbrush in Leipzig, Germany at the age of three. Even at that young age, Von Kohn recalls an immediate connection to painting in the liminal space between the conscious and unconscious. Her early interest in painting led her family to Moscow where she studied at the Moscow Art School for Gifted Children, and later the Moscow State Pedagogical University where she graduated Summa Cum Laude with a Masters of Fine Arts degree.

In the years following her graduation, Von Kohn participated in numerous exhibitions, most notably the Young Artists Annual Show in 1990, and the Young Talents Juried show in 1991, both in the Central Exhibition Hall in Moscow, as well as a solo exhibition titled From Russia With Love, in Ruce Bulgaria. Those exhibitions led to such notable awards as the prestigious Moscow Artist of the Year award, the Bulgarian International Artist Award, and the Russian Art Ambassador Award, respectively.

After moving to the United States in the mid-90s, Von Kohn accelerated her studio practice with exhibitions across the country, including solo and group exhibitions in Montgomery, Alabama, Las Cruces, New Mexico, Naples Florida, and Scottsdale, Arizona where she currently lives and works.

Von Kohn's work appears in public and private collections including the West Valley Art Museum in Surprise, Arizona, the Montgomery Museum of Fine Art, the International University of Peoples Medicine in Moscow, AM South Bank, Regions Bank Corporate Collection, both in Alabama, and the Russian Consulate in Ruce, Bulgaria, among others.

Von Kohn's most recent exhibition was *The Age of Diversity*, a solo exhibition at Gallery De Sarthe, in Scottsdale Arizona. The artist is currently completing a residency at the Max Ernst and Dorothea Tanning house in Sedona, Arizona, and is the first painter to create work in the female Surrealist painter's studio, continuing a legacy of important contributions to the movement that Tanning was such an integral part of.

COLLECTIONS

Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts, Montgomery, AL

Huntsville Museum of Art, Huntsville, AL

West Valley Art Museum, Surprise, AZ

Russian Consulate, Ruce, Bulgaria

Corporate Art Collection, AM South Bank, AL

International University of Peoples Medicine, Moscow, Russia

Baptist Health Care, Montgomery, AL

Troy State University, Montgomery, AL

Corporate Collection, Regions Bank, AL

Capital City Art Club Collection, Montgomery, AL

L'INSTANT DU REVE

ARTIST STATEMENT

My work exists in the space between control and surrender.

I am drawn to moments where the body is no longer stable when it begins to shift, to fall, to float, or to resist gravity. These are not moments of collapse, but of transformation. I use the human figure, particularly the female form, as a way to explore vulnerability, strength, and the tension between them.

The environments I create are not literal landscapes. They are psychological spaces constructed from memory, emotion, and intuition. Rock formations, water, and open horizons appear throughout my work, but they function as extensions of internal states rather than physical places.

My process is layered and intuitive. I build the painting slowly, allowing forms to emerge and dissolve. There is always a dialogue between intention and accident. Some areas are controlled and deliberate, while others are left open, unresolved. This balance is essential; it keeps the work alive.

Scale is also important. I work large because I want the viewer to feel physically present within the painting. The figures are not distant; they exist on the same scale as the body that is looking at them.

Color is restrained but intentional. I use it to create atmosphere rather than description. Light is not fixed; it shifts across the surface, allowing forms to appear and disappear.

These works are not about telling a specific story. They are about creating a moment, a suspended instant, where perception is uncertain, and meaning is fluid.

I am interested in that exact point where something is both real and imagined at the same time.

That is the instant of the dream.

ESSAY

The Space Between Falling and Flight

We encounter these paintings as if entering mid-thought.

A figure leans too far yet does not fall. Another drifts upward, suspended between surrender and resistance. Bodies bend across impossible structures, stretched through silence, gravity, and memory. At first, the instinct is to decode what is happening, to locate a narrative or event. But the longer one remains inside Elena Von Kohn's world, the less explanation matters. These paintings are not illustrations of moments; they are psychological atmospheres. They ask not what is happening, but what it feels like to exist within uncertainty.

In Elena Von Kohn's work, gravity behaves differently. It exists, but not as law. Bodies respond to it, resist it, negotiate with it. They hover in spaces where physical certainty dissolves, as though an unseen emotional force is holding them in suspension. The figures rarely appear grounded in the traditional sense. Instead, they inhabit thresholds between movement and stillness, collapse and transcendence, vulnerability and control.

This tension forms the emotional architecture of her paintings. Nothing is entirely stable, yet nothing descends into chaos. Her compositions balance on the edge of instability with extraordinary precision. The viewer senses strain, but also grace. One body arches impossibly across stone; another folds into itself as though listening inwardly. These are not poses in the classical sense. They are states of becoming. The figures themselves feel deeply psychological, almost dreamlike, yet never detached from the physical body. Elena Von Kohn paints the human form not merely as anatomy, but as emotional terrain. Limbs elongate, torsos twist, gestures dissolve before fully arriving. The body becomes language capable of expressing tension, longing, resilience, isolation, sensuality, and transformation simultaneously. There is also an unusual silence within the work. Even when the compositions feel dramatic, they are never loud. The silence is contemplative rather than empty. It creates space for introspection, allowing the viewer to project their own emotional experiences into the scene. This quality gives the paintings a rare intimacy. They do not dictate meaning; they invite psychological participation.

The environments surrounding the figures mirror this instability. Rock formations dissolve into abstraction. Horizons disappear into the atmosphere. Water transforms simultaneously into reflection, depth, and surface. Architectural structures emerge only partially before fading into ambiguity. There is rarely a fixed sense of location. Instead, these spaces feel suspended outside ordinary geography or time.

This dissolution of environment is central to the emotional power of the work. The traditional perspective so often used in painting to create certainty is intentionally disrupted. Space folds inward. Distances become psychological rather than physical. The viewer loses the comfort of orientation and instead experiences the painting intuitively, emotionally, almost bodily.

Yet despite this instability, the work never feels disordered. Elena Von Kohn possesses a profound understanding of balance and compositional control. Every fracture is deliberate. Every asymmetry is measured. Her paintings operate like visual music, where tension and release are carefully orchestrated across the canvas. The result is an atmosphere that feels simultaneously unsettling and serene.

There are echoes of art historical traditions within the work, yet they never feel imitative. One senses the psychological intensity of Symbolism, the spatial ambiguity of Surrealism, and the emotional physicality of Baroque painting. At times, the floating bodies recall Renaissance ascensions stripped of religious certainty. Elsewhere, fragmented landscapes evoke Romanticism emptied of nostalgia. But these references function less as quotations and more as submerged memory. Elena Von Kohn absorbs historical language and transforms it into something distinctly contemporary.

What makes the work particularly compelling is its resistance to fixed interpretation. In an era saturated with immediate explanation and visual overload, these paintings slow perception. They refuse simplification. The viewer cannot consume them quickly. Meaning emerges gradually through emotional accumulation rather than narrative clarity.

This ambiguity is not confusion; it is openness. Elena Von Kohn trusts the intelligence of the viewer enough to leave space unresolved. The paintings remain alive because they are never fully closed systems. They continue unfolding psychologically long after one leaves them.

The female figure occupies a particularly important role within her work. These women are neither passive muses nor idealized symbols. They possess agency, interiority, and psychological complexity. Even in states of vulnerability, they retain an undeniable sense of presence and power. Their bodies are not objects of observation alone; they are sites of transformation, endurance, and self-possession. This quality becomes especially significant when viewed through the lens of Elena Von Kohn's own life and artistic journey. Her work carries the emotional weight of migration, reinvention, ambition, isolation, and persistence. One senses not autobiography in a literal sense, but lived experience transformed into visual metaphor. The paintings speak to instability not as spectacle, but as condition—something navigated, survived, and ultimately transcended.

ART EXHIBITIONS

- 2026 L'Instant Du Rêve, Gallery Joshep, Paris, France
- 2025 Dancing with Gravity, Bella Fine Art Gallery, Scottsdale, AZ
- 2025 LA Art Show, Los Angeles, CA
- 2024 Dancing with Gravity, The Review Gallery, Mesa, AZ
- 2023 Elena Von Kohn, Gallery 33, Santa Monica, CA
- 2023 Elena Von Kohn: Dancing with Gravity, Gallery De Sarthe, Scottsdale, AZ
- 2018 City and Me, Art Gallery Plus, Moscow, Russia
- 2014 New Works, Art Gallery Plus, Moscow, Russia
- 2009 Far and Away, John Di Tommaso Gallery, Scottsdale, AZ
- 2008 Impressions, West Valley Art Museum, Surprise, AZ
- 2007 Passions of Colors, Stonehenge Gallery, Montgomery, AL
- 2005 Small Masterpieces, Stonehenge Gallery, Montgomery, AL
- 2004 Forces of Nature, M. Phillips Fine Art Gallery, Las Cruces, NM
- 2004 New Paintings, Naples Contemporary Gallery, Naples, Florida
- 2004 New Paintings by Elena Von Kohn, Stonehenge Gallery, Montgomery, AL
- 2003 Presentation, Northern Trust Bank, Scottsdale, AZ
- 2001 Spring Annual Art Show, Stonehenge Gallery, Montgomery, AL
- 1998 New Artworks, Stonehenge Gallery, Montgomery, AL
- 1994 New Paintings, Troy State University, Montgomery, AL
- 1993 Journey, Montgomery Language Center, Montgomery, AL





The PROCESS

My work begins long before the first mark touches the canvas.

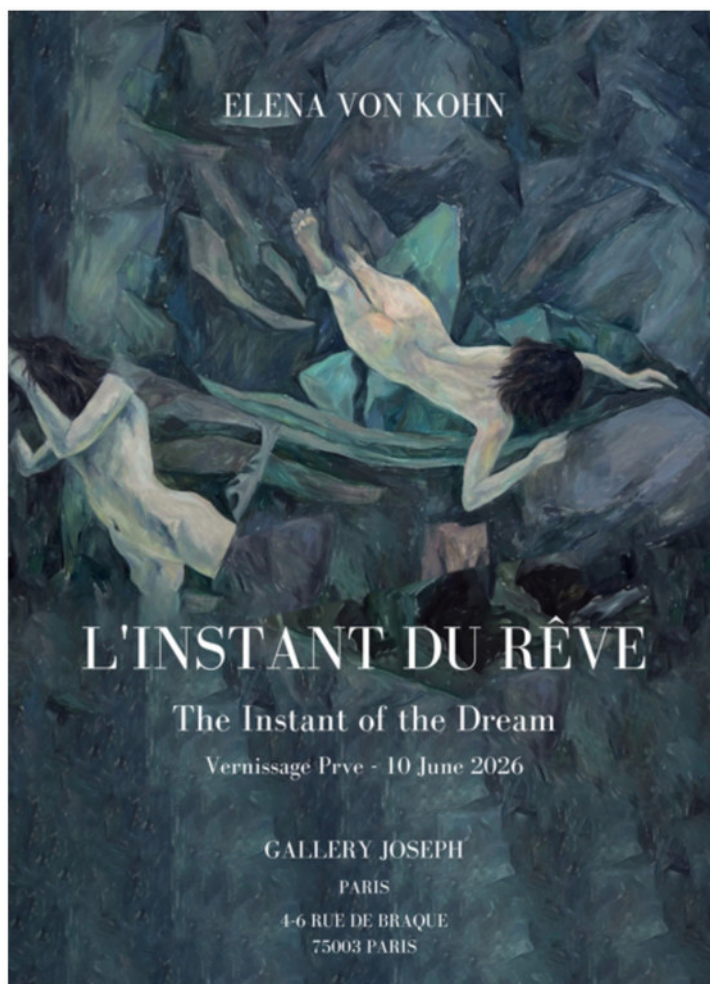
It starts as a quiet internal image, often fleeting, elusive, something felt rather than seen. I do not approach painting with a fixed narrative. Instead, I follow an intuitive path, allowing forms to emerge organically, guided by memory, emotion, and subconscious associations. I work primarily in oil on canvas, building the surface gradually through layers.

Each layer is both a discovery and a concealment. What is revealed in one moment may be softened or obscured in the next.

This process of addition and reduction creates a visual tension, where clarity and ambiguity coexist. The human form, central to my work, is not constructed in a traditional sense but rather uncovered. Figures appear as if surfacing from within the canvas itself, fragmented, suspended, and often caught between states of presence and disappearance. My background in classical training informs my understanding of anatomy and composition, yet I deliberately move beyond strict representation.

I am interested in what lies between reality and imagination, where identity becomes fluid, and perception shifts. Color plays a psychological role. It is not descriptive but expressive, shaping the emotional atmosphere of each piece. I often work within restrained palettes, allowing subtle tonal variations to carry depth and resonance. There is no final certainty in my process.

Each painting reaches a point where it feels complete, not because it is resolved, but because it holds its own internal balance. I leave space for the viewer to enter, to question, and to interpret. In this way, the work remains open and alive beyond the moment of its creation.



The featured image was chosen because it captures the essence of your work, figures suspended between reality and subconscious space, evoking vulnerability, transformation, and quiet tension. The composition suggests a moment of weightlessness, as if time has paused between falling and awakening.

The title “L’Instant du Rêve” (The Instant of the Dream) perfectly aligns with this visual language. It reflects that fleeting, almost ungraspable moment where the dream and reality merge, an instant of emotional and psychological truth that defines your enigmatic surrealism. Together, the image and title create a poetic entry point into the exhibition, inviting the viewer into a suspended, introspective world.

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