

## *Juwelia: Paintings*

8 January, 6–8pm

Opening Reception &  
Book Launch; *Juwelia: Paintings* (Peradam, 2015)

Performance at 7pm

*Juwelia: Paintings* presents an exhibition of works by Berlin-based artist, writer, singer and dancer, Juwelia. Juwelia exhibits her/his paintings regularly in her/his gallery and studio in the Neukölln neighborhood Berlin, in a storefront called Galerie Studio St St. There are often performances within this space, among artworks which personify this location specifically and the artist's experiences (both real and imagined) in Berlin. Juwelia is both the personality behind the work and the subject of this unique practice itself, where the reality is imagined and imagined becomes the reality blurring the lines between any distinction.

"The Complexity of Being Truly Human" written by artist, Elizabeth Jaeger (□New York City, August 2015) serves as formal press release for this exhibition. The essay below recounts the first time Jaeger met Juwelia in Berlin:

*I met Juwelia by chance in 2009. I was living alone in Berlin and spoke no German. On a Friday, I saw an advertisement in a local arts yer; all I could make out was 'Performance / 8 o'clock' and decided to attend.*

*When I arrived, I found Juwelia, Beverly, and Zsa Zsa sitting in the first room of Galerie Studio St. St., making casual conversation and sipping cheap champagne. Later, I would realize I walked into the exact scene of Juwelia's painting, "Beverly, Zsa Zsa, Juwelia" (2008).*

*The three queens welcomed me to sit inside, and we motioned explanatory hand gestures to each other from opposite couches—I truly didn't speak any German, nor they English, but the conversation was lively. After about an hour, more guests arrived and the show began. I remember feeling enchanted by Juwelia's 1920's Parisian-themed songs and dances, and completely bewildered by where reality started and stopped.*

*As she sang and danced on the tiny handmade stage in the center of the room, one couldn't ignore the similarities between every element of her performance and the numerous self-portraits mounted all over the adjacent walls. The movements, the clothes, the hair, the stage, the upholstery, the sense of music, and the exuberance of self all repeated in various dimensions, complementing each other to a dizzying effect.*

*I also remember being completely confused by where her gaze was directed. She met no one's eyes, staring only above and beyond the gaggle of spectators seated in the hand-upholstered sofas and chairs. When I finally turned around to look, I was met by my own image staring back at me. The back wall was entirely made of mirrors. Juwelia was dancing for herself; we only happened to be there.*

*The mirror is an apt metaphor for how I think of much of Juwelia's work. Her paintings are a direct reflection of the world she has created for herself. Her life is also a mirror of her paintings, as if it was born out of them and the mind that painted them. They are, in effect, interdependent and interchangeable.*

*Later in the month, I would visit Juwelia in her apartment— an apartment whose walls are painted floor to ceiling with the motifs of her paintings, and whose entirely hand made decor all reflected her particular aesthetic—and realize that I had walked into her world, I had walked into her painting.*

*Juwelia taught me that we can be whoever we choose to be, and that our will and our fantasies are more real and important than any 'real' situation we are presented with. To live inside your paintings is to live inside the freedom of your mind, a freedom we all possess but rarely choose to engage with. To be what you 'feel' as what you 'are' is freedom itself, a celebration of the exuberance, contradiction, and the complexity of being truly human, all of which I find at play in the work.*

*So as you peer into the Juwelia's canvases, also use them as a window to peer out of. They function as windows into Juwelia's real life, one created and celebrated by her and all of Galerie Studio St. St.*