

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**JACKS MCNAMARA: ANCESTRAL IMAGINATION**

September 17–December 3, 2022

**OPENING RECEPTION WITH THE ARTIST**

Friday, September 30, 5-7pm

**ARTIST TALK**

Saturday, October 1, 2:30pm

**POETRY READING WITH THE ARTIST & GUESTS**

Saturday, November 5, 4pm



© Jacks McNamara

(September 2022) Santa Fe-based artist Jacks McNamara develops their *Ancestral Imagination* in this immersive solo display. The exhibition uses painting and installation to explore the seasonal relationships and pre-Christian, Celtic pagan spiritual practices common to the artist's European ancestors, whose descendants have migrated into the indigenous territories and high desert landscapes of New Mexico. Mythical plants and transcendent abstractions swirl together, offering emotive portals into the past and future. An opening reception with the artist is scheduled Friday, September 30, 5-7pm, and a poetry reading with the artist and special guests including Isreal Francisco Haros Lopez, Isabel Ribe and more will be held on Saturday, November 5 at 4pm.

For McNamara's first solo show at form & concept, the artist was driven to explore the destructive and healing elements of our swiftly changing environments; their own solo practice of prayer and spell work; and their deeply personal exploration into their family lineage as an adopted child. Since the artist reconnected with one side of their biological family at the age of 21, and learned of ancestors who were poets and artists, McNamara has been intuitively delving into the ancestral influences that guide their often meditative artistic practice. "It's a difficult thing to wish for what you don't have," says the artist. "I wish I had a coven or communal body of pagan folks and family that I was in practice with, drawing on shared ancestral traditions. And I don't—I am a solo practitioner. And so these works have become the residue of what I'm exploring and imagining about the world, and about myself."

However, through McNamara's solo practice, a bridge is formed. Radial bursts and forms reminiscent of roots and seeds, wooden knots, cellular structures and prayer circles, carried forth through the artist's synesthetic responses to music and light, strengthen the unseen bond between maker and viewer. "I don't always know where these paintings come from. Creating them is an act of devotion and discovery, of rooting myself in something ancient and entirely new," says McNamara. "I think that's why folks connect with them so strongly. People often tell me they've never seen work quite like mine. I think the unique interplay of my media is one of the primary reasons. That, and heart."

**Jacks McNamara** is a queer, trans, neurodivergent artist, writer, organizer and educator working at the intersection of healing and social justice. Their visual art is informed by their parallel practice as a poet, and is deeply shaped by their experiences of synesthesia, their passion for plants, their astonishment at New Mexico landscapes and their investigations of pre-Christian spirituality in ancestral European homelands. Jacks is a Lambda Literary Fellow with a BFA from the San Francisco Art Institute. They learned the foundations of painting at the Aegean School for the Fine Arts in Paros, Greece. Their work has been shown across the US and Canada, in venues ranging from Vancouver's Gallery Gachet to New York's Fountain Gallery. Jacks is the co-founder of The Icarus Project, a participatory adventure in radical mental health and mutual aid now known as The Fireweed Collective, and co-author of *Navigating the Space Between Brilliance and Madness*. They are the creator of many zines and a collection of poetry, *Inbetweenland*, which was released by Deviant Type Press in 2013. Jacks' advocacy and art are the subject of the poetic documentary *Crooked Beauty*. Jacks also teaches The Big Queer Poetry Class, writes regular columns for the Santa Fe Reporter, and hosts the podcast *So Many Wings*.

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