

# THE NEW YORKER

Art

## GREG PARMA SMITH

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What's the opposite of zombie formalism? One answer might be the soulful, if overwrought, realism of Greg Parma Smith. No one could accuse the young New York artist of phoning it in: the centerpiece of his new show is a deeply researched, painstakingly detailed twenty-five-foot-long opus, which he has described as nothing less than "an allegory of being." It's a scene, in six parts, of the calm before the storm at the end of the world (a quartet of pelicans plays the role of the four horsemen of the apocalypse, for reasons that remain obscure). The painting style shifts from academic figuration to wild-style graffiti; references ricochet between East and West. In one panel, an exquisitely rendered image of a neoclassical nude appears to have been broken and repaired with upraised veins of gold. You may think of the Japanese art of kintsugi, or of Hippocrates: *ars longa, vita brevis*.

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