

ROMAN ROAD
PRESS RELEASE

Bury a Friend

Private View:	Thursday 16 March 2023, 6 – 8 PM
Exhibition:	Friday 17 March – Friday 14 April 2023
Location:	Roman Road, 50 Golborne Road, London, W10 5PR
Opening Hours:	Monday – Tuesday, by appointment Wednesday – Friday, 11 AM – 6 PM Saturday, 11 AM – 5 PM

Roman Road is thrilled to present *Bury a Friend*, a group exhibition curated by Marisa Bellani, bringing together works by ultra-contemporary artists Johanna Bath, Sonya Derviz, Jack Laver and Mia Vallance. Throughout the show there's a prevailing sense of curiosity and catharsis that materialises from the varied pieces, with each artist digging beneath the surface of the visible to unravel or challenge existing forces of power and the endless corridors of our minds.

The exhibition takes its title from an iconic single by American singer-songwriter Billie Eilish, a song written from the perspective of a monster lurking beneath her bed, in which themes of darkness, uncertainty and death unfold in a fusion of haunting melodies and dancy instrumentals. It is in, or rather, out of such tenebrous moments where this exhibition finds its inspiration, carrying the idea that life is a cycle and a dance between the darkness and the light. Drawing on the tensions between the natural and the unnatural, the known and the unknown, the displayed artworks in *Bury a Friend* explore moments of time, memories, the human psyche, resilience and loss, developing a visual vocabulary of mortal contemplation and reflecting on the idea of owning your darkness.

The participating artists have each been asked to select two of their artworks that represent the self and the alter ego: two beings or states that are buried within us and are constantly challenging, and at worst fighting each other in search of balance, often leaving us exhausted. The exhibition has also been scheduled on the cusp of British springtime, symbolising a moment when the air is still cold but nature is showing signs of rebirth, and when a familiar sense of awakening is upon us.

Bury a Friend is the second show of Roman Road's 2023 programme, for which the gallery intends to shift its focus to more group exhibitions, promoting a sense of community and togetherness for artists that are self-taught, still at school or have recently graduated. We aim to bolster both local and international emerging artistic talent through multidisciplinary and thematic exhibitions, alongside a varying programme of collaborative talks and events.

About the artists

Johanna Bath (b. 1980, Warendorf) is a German artist working with painting. She studied illustration design at the Bildkunst Akademie Hamburg (1999-2002) and design and painting at Hamburg University of Applied Sciences (HAW), graduating in 2007 with a Diploma. In 2017 she gained international recognition after being named on Saatchi Art's 'One to Watch'. Bath was also selected by the CAC (Contemporary Art Collectors) for the Emerging Artist Programme of 2022. Her solo exhibitions include *Shivers*, Pipeline, London (2023); *Vanish into thin air*, März Manufaktur, Paderborn, Germany (2019) and *Neue Arbeiten*, Part2Gallery, Düsseldorf (2019). Her work has also been shown widely in group exhibitions, including recently at BLANKGallery, Shanghai (2023); Van Der Plas Gallery, New York (2022); Galleri Nobel, Oslo (2022); RAUM 55, Essen (2021); and Haze Gallery, Berlin (2021).

Sonya Derviz (b. 1994, Moscow) is a London-based artist working with painting. She graduated with a BA in fine art from the Slade School of Fine Art, London, in 2018. She was awarded the UCL Dean's List and Stanbury Prize (both in 2018) and also the UCL Art Museum Award (2017). Her solo exhibitions include *The eyes have all the seeming, of a demon's that is dreaming*, curated by Sa-Yori Radda at Daniel Benjamin Gallery, London (2022); and *Pas De Corps* at V.O Curations, London (2018). Derviz's work has been shown widely in group exhibitions, including *Into My Arms*, Sherbet Green, London (2023); *Inside Out*, The Artist Room, London (2022); *First Light*, organised by Hector Campbell, Collective Ending, London (2022); *Pathways on Paper*, South Parade, London (2022); *It Seems So Long Ago*, Matthew Brown, Los Angeles (2020); and *Parfum d'épines*, Phillips x V.O Curations, Paris (2019).

Jack Laver (b. 1998, London) is a multimedia artist working with printmaking and painting. He completed a Foundation Diploma in art and design at Kingston University in 2017 before graduating with a BA in illustration and visual media from the London College of Communication (part of University of the Arts London) in 2020. Laver recently participated in the Hinterraum residency in Berlin (2021) and was also previously selected for the Summer 2020 Residency Programme held at The Columbia, London, in partnership with Roman Road. His recent exhibitions include *Manifestation*, ZÉRUÌ, London (2022); *Two Sisters*, Roman Road, London (2022); *Hidden Pathways*, Hinterraum, Berlin (2021); *Strange Dreams*, a duo show with Jordan Hemingway, The Columbia in collaboration with Roman Road, London (2021); and *Art In The Age Of Now*, Fulham Town Hall in collaboration with Art Below, London (2021). His first solo exhibition titled *Cut from the Shadows* is forthcoming this year at ZÉRUÌ, London (2023).

Mia Vallance (b. 1998, Cheltenham) is a London-based artist working with painting. She completed a Foundation Diploma at Central Saint Martins, London, in 2017, where she went on to study for a Bachelor's degree in fine art, graduating in 2020. During this time she also attended the Beaux Arts de Paris under the Erasmus exchange programme as part of her degree. Vallance has recently completed the Turps Off-Site Programme (2021-2022) and was shortlisted for the John Moores Painting Prize in 2020. Her recent group exhibitions include *The Worm at the Core*, SET Woolwich, London (2022); *Refresh*, Hatch, Paris (2022); *A/D D/A*, ZÉRUÌ, London (2022); and *Sequences. 03*, The WHO Gallery, London (2021). Vallance's debut solo exhibition titled *Painting for a short future* was held at superzoom, Paris (2022) and she has a forthcoming solo show at ZÉRUÌ, London (2023).

About Roman Road

Roman Road is a contemporary art gallery based in London and founded by Marisa Bellani. The gallery has recently redefined itself with a more fluid and ethical approach, becoming a platform for collaborative exhibitions in 2019 and focusing on ultra-contemporary art. Since 2020, Marisa has organised art residencies in London as part of the gallery activities. Roman Road exists since 2013, following and fostering notable projects and dealing with artists all over the world. Since completing a full renovation in 2015, Roman Road has established a qualitative programme and has seen its represented artists become internationally recognised by institutions and collectors. Roman Road has established a qualitative and thematic programme and realised the creation of a research cell and Roman Road Journal in 2018, an online platform dedicated to publishing articles and exploring topics on art, science, technology, anthropology and literature.

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