

LIZE BARTELLI:
LAST NIGHT I DREAMT
THAT SOMEBODY LOVED ME

Thursday 05 – Wednesday 11 June 2025
PV: Wednesday 04 June 2025, 6 PM – 8 PM
12 Saint George Street, Mayfair, London W1S 2FB



Lize BARTELLI, *Betty*, 2025. Oil on canvas, 42 x 60 cm, unique. © Prudence Cuming, 2025.

In *Last Night I Dreamt That Somebody Loved Me*, Lize Bartelli paints a world where beauty, identity, and resistance intertwine. The exhibition confronts the weight of societal canons, offering a radiant exploration of femininity, strength, and agency.

In *Last Night I Dreamt That Somebody Loved Me*, Lize Bartelli paints a world where beauty, identity, and resistance collide. Curated by Marisa Bellani to coincide with London Gallery Weekend 2025, this new body of work—her first solo exhibition in London—challenges the expectations placed on women, expectations that have echoed through history, shaping perceptions of desirability, power, and self-worth.

Taking its title from The Smiths' melancholic ballad of longing and validation, the exhibition speaks to the unspoken rules that dictate how women are seen and valued. Youth is idolised, beauty is commodified, and desirability is often mistaken for worth. But Bartelli resists these pressures. Instead, her paintings celebrate autonomy, confidence, and the quiet acts of rebellion that define female agency.

At first glance, her subjects—*Brigitte*, *Gloria*, *Simone*, *Leila*—seem to embody a collective femininity, their smooth skin and striking outlines suggesting an idealised form. Yet their gestures tell a different story. Reclining with a cigarette, holding a phone mid-conversation, flashing a victorious hand of cards—each woman exists on her own terms. They are not passive objects of desire but self-possessed figures, asserting their presence with a quiet, magnetic force.

These works are not portraits in the traditional sense. Though each painting is named after a historical woman who shaped feminism, activism, art, or culture, Bartelli does not depict them directly—except in the case of Brigitte Bardot, whose cropped, cigarette-smoking image recalls the unfiltered sensuality of the 1960s. Instead, these figures become symbols, embodying a lineage of women who have defied convention and rewritten the rules of visibility.

The cultural and aesthetic influences of the 1960s and 70s weave through Bartelli's work—the decades in which feminist thought transformed into action. *Simone* references the intellectual force of Simone de Beauvoir, whose writings reshaped gender discourse. *Leila*, with its confident, card-holding subject, nods to Leila Diniz, the Brazilian actress who defied conservative expectations of women's sexuality. Meanwhile, mid-century motifs—rotary phones, vintage cards, and textured interiors—ground the paintings in an era of liberation, yet they feel timeless, reflecting struggles that persist today.

Bartelli's palette is bold and emotive, with vivid reds and oranges burning against deep blacks, while bursts of blue and yellow inject moments of dissonance—simultaneously warm and unsettling. The repetition of smooth skin tones speaks to the homogenising effect of beauty standards, yet through posture and expression, her figures reclaim their individuality.

Curator Marisa Bellani describes Bartelli's approach as *Solar Feminism*—a term Bellani coined for a vision of feminism that radiates strength, resilience, and warmth. Rather than framing femininity as a battle, she thinks that Bartelli embraces its power, illuminating a path of self-determination and defiant joy.

At its core, *Last Night I Dreamt That Somebody Loved Me* is about the tension between how women are perceived and how they see themselves. In a world that often demands conformity, Bartelli's paintings offer something radical: the freedom to simply exist, unapologetically.

NOTES TO EDITORS

ABOUT LIZE BARTELLI

Lize Bartelli (b. Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; lives and works in London) is a painter whose practice is rooted in colour theory and an exploration of feminine identity, which evolved from her academic studies in Philosophy at PUC in Rio de Janeiro (2008–2012) and Performance Art at CAL, Rio de Janeiro. She furthered her artistic background in Europe, completing a Master's in Design at Marangoni in Milan (2012–2013) and studying Art History at Sotheby's in London (2016–2017). Although Bartelli has been involved in creative practices for much of her life, she committed to painting professionally in 2020.

Represented since 2023 by Simoes de Assis in Brazil, her work has gained significant recognition and has been featured in several prominent publications, including *Veja São Paulo* by Humberto Addo (2022), *Architectural Digest* by Kathryn Romeyn (2020), *Les Nouveaux Riches Magazine* by Daniel Lichterwald (2020), and *Elle Decor* (2020). Bartelli's recent solo exhibitions include *Skeleton's Closet*, Simoes de Assis, São Paulo (2022), curated by Julia Lima, and *Mothering* at Kupfer Project, London (2022), curated by Kiki Mazzucchelli. She has also showcased her work at leading art fairs such as SP-Arte, São Paulo (2022), and Zonamaco, Mexico City (2024).

ABOUT ROMAN ROAD

Roman Road is a catalyst for artists' career growth, building on its origins as a gallery space. Initially founded in 2015 as a traditional exhibition venue participating in art fairs, Roman Road quickly recognised the need for a more comprehensive support system to help artists navigate their careers beyond the exhibitions. This insight led to the development of a forward-looking curatorial and studio platform, designed to respond to young artists' needs in an ever-evolving art world. From 2020 to 2023, Roman Road provided free studio spaces to emerging artists alongside mentoring programmes, furthering its commitment to accessibility and inclusivity. Its headquarters in Bethnal Green now house a dedicated research and workshop room, ensuring that resources remain readily available to artists. Roman Road continues to pioneer an artist-focused approach, establishing itself as a vital resource for emerging talent in the contemporary art world.

ABOUT THE CURATOR

Marisa Bellani is a London-based curator and advocate for artist development, committed to identifying and supporting emerging talent. Her journey began shortly after completing her MA at Sotheby's Institute of Art, when she opened her first project space in Bethnal Green, London. In 2015, she founded Roman Road, a contemporary art gallery that has since become a platform for over 50 emerging artists and photographers, including Antony Cairns, Alix Marie, Daisuke Yokota, Polina Piëch, Daisy Dodd-Noble, Yulia Iosilzon, Jessie Makinson, Ariane Hughes, and Channatip Chanvipava.

In 2024, she launched Beyond Studio, an educational initiative within Roman Road, expanding the conversation around artistic practice through a methodology that integrates neuroscience-based coaching techniques—an approach shaped by her training at the NeuroLeadership Institute (2019).

Marisa's curatorial research is an ongoing dialogue—one that unfolds across exhibitions, collaborations, and encounters. In 2024, she initiated *We The Future*, a curatorial series launched at Christie's, London, that asks: How do we navigate the shifting landscapes of gender, utopia, dystopia, and the architecture of the mind? Each exhibition operates as a site of dialogue, embracing liminality—where uncertainty is not a void but a space of potential. Moving between the natural and the constructed, the personal and the universal, these projects propose a choreography of ideas, constantly evolving through encounter and exchange.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Pop up space (Mayfair)

12 Saint George Street

London W1S 2FB

United Kingdom

Exhibition: Thursday 05 – Wednesday 11 June 2025

Private View: Wednesday 04 June 2025, 6 PM – 8 PM

Opening times: Everyday 10 AM to 6 PM with extended hours on Friday until 8 PM

PRESS INFORMATION

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