

Press Release

ROMAN ROAD

LIZE BARTELLI: THE HOUR OF THE STAR

Friday 23 January – Saturday 21 February 2025

Private View: Thursday, 22 January, 6–8 pm

Pipeline, Second Floor, 1 Windmill St, London W1T 2JN



London. Roman Road is honoured to be the first to take part in the Visiting Curators Initiative at Pipeline. On this occasion, we present Lize Bartelli. *The Hour of the Star*, an exhibition opening on 22 January 2026, in which Bartelli continues her exploration of symbol, gesture, and colour following her first London solo show, *Last Night I Dreamt That Somebody Loved Me* (June 2025).

For her second London exhibition, Bartelli presents a new series of fourteen paintings in varying formats. Curated by Marisa Bellani, founder of Roman Road, the exhibition revolves around a central question: *where does the desire to become end, and the performance of becoming begin?* The use of red lipstick is a key point of investigation, functioning both as a sign of aspiration and a marker of tension, where identity is always in formation and always performed. The colour red dominates the exhibition. “Red is the colour of contradiction,” the artist notes, serving as both a visual and conceptual thread throughout the series. Interconnection is crucial—not only through the colour palette, but also through scale, which oscillates between the intimate and the imposing. Bartelli situates her work in dialogue with other artists’ explorations of the mouth—such as Cindy Sherman and Geneviève Cadieux—and the broader cultural symbolism of red lips, which operate simultaneously as object, sign, and locus of feminine expression.

In *The Hour of the Star*, Bartelli explores the moment when the boundary between interior emotion and exterior image—both conceptually and materially—works for or against us. Although known as a figurative painter, this series operates somewhere between abstraction and figuration. The objects depicted are recognisable yet abstracted, becoming metaphorical rather than literal. The paintings emphasise the performative nature of being—or becoming. Her brushwork heightens this dynamic: some passages lean towards a pop sensibility, while others move into heightened realism. This interplay reveals both her technical fluency and the deliberate stylistic choices shaping the series.

Colour holds a central place in Bartelli's practice. Red, especially, is both material and metaphor: it stains, asserts, and dramatises. Influenced by Josef Albers' precision and Suzan Frecon's meditative intensity, she treats colour as a language of intuition, resonance, and tension. Skin is rendered through thin layers of paint over pencil, instilling fragility, while the bold reds of lips and objects punctuate the canvas with force. Through these contrasts, the work navigates the space between abstraction and figuration, illusion and reality, performance and authenticity.

Two major works—*Clarice Lispector* and *Marilyn*—anchor the exhibition, creating a dialogue between two poles of female identity. On one side is the mythologised, hyper-visible Marilyn Monroe; on the other stands Macabéa, the naive and uncertain protagonist of Lispector's 1977 novel, who “painted her lips even beyond so her thin lips would get that weird thing like Marilyn Monroe” (Lispector, *The Hour of the Star*, Penguin, 2014, p. 53). *Marilyn*, a large 100 x 120 cm painting, contrasts with the small and intimate format chosen for *Clarice Lispector*. Bartelli extends this interest in contrast with a quadriptych titled *Carioca*, referencing the inhabitants of Rio de Janeiro and the practice of accentuating tanning lines.

The exhibition also resonates with contemporary reflections on social media and the construction of online identity. The act of overdrawing red lipstick—intimate, exaggerated, and symbolic—mirrors the ways personas are crafted and amplified digitally. Bartelli invites viewers to consider the tension between private self and public image, and how desire, aspiration, and self-presentation unfold across both real and virtual spaces.



Caption and courtesy information:

Lize Bartelli, *Marilyn*, 2025.

Pencil and oil on canvas, pencil, 100 x 120 cm

Courtesy the artist, Roman Road

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Lize Bartelli, *Clarice Lispector*, 2025.

Pencil and oil on canvas, 42 x 29.7 cm

Courtesy the artist, Roman Road

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NOTE TO EDITORS

About the artist

Artist's quote: "I am drawn to simplicity, to making every colour, object, and scale feel essential. The small works feel intimate, the large ones feel iconic, and that contrast revealed a new clarity in my practice. Nothing here is casual; everything has intention." Lize Bartelli

Lize Bartelli (b. Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; lives and works in London) is a painter whose practice and visual language draws from her academic background in Philosophy at PUC-Rio (2008–2012) and Performance Art at CAL, Rio de Janeiro. She later studied Design at Istituto Marangoni in Milan (2012–2013) and Art History at Sotheby's Institute of Art in London (2016–2017). Bartelli committed to painting professionally in 2020. Her work has been featured in *Veja* São Paulo by Humberto Addo (2022), *Architectural Digest* by Kathryn Romeyn (2020), *Les Nouveaux Riches* Magazine by Daniel Lichterwald (2020), *Elle Decor* (2020), *FAD Magazine* by Lee Sherrock (2025), *Forbes Brasil* by Paula Bezerra de Mello (2025), and *Vogue Brasil* (2025). Recent solo exhibitions include *Last Night I Dreamt That Somebody Loved Me*, Roman Road, London (2025), curated by Marisa Bellani; *Skeleton's Closet*, Simões de Assis, São Paulo (2022), curated by Julia Lima. Group show *Mothering*, Kupfer Project, London (2022), curated by Penelope Kupfer. She has also participated in international art fairs such as SP–Arte, São Paulo (2022), and Zonamaco, Mexico City (2024).

About the curator

Curator's quote: "After June, Bartelli refined her vocabulary with tighter compositions, clearer symbols, and a more deliberate sense of staging. This exhibition captures that shift, presenting a practice stepping decisively into its next chapter." Marisa Bellani

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,. 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.

Pipeline Visiting Gallery & Curator Program

Pipeline invites curators and galleries, both nationally and internationally, to occupy the second floor of the gallery for a month-long exhibition. Whilst independent from Pipeline's exhibition program, this opportunity offers visibility in the heart of London, with the support of a local gallery. Our aim is to build a more connected community among galleries, curators and artists.

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Gallery hours: Wednesday – Saturday, 11am – 6pm