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Sola Olulode

*I've Got to Know You Now We May Never Meet Again*

Opening Reception

Tuesday, 4 February 2025 | 6 – 9 PM

On view: 5 February – 9 April 2025

[Dubai, 17 January 2025] – Lawrie Shabibi is delighted to present *I've Got to Know You Now We May Never Meet Again*, the Dubai debut exhibition by London based Nigerian-British Artist Sola Olulode whose paintings depict a vibrant dialogue between myth, memory, and the sea.

In this new series of paintings, the artist draws on her lived-in holiday experiences whilst also referencing the fantastical realms of Yemoja/Yemayá, the Yoruba water deity, alongside water spirits and sirens. The result is a series of works that celebrate femininity, nature, and the transcendent power of water.

Drawing direct inspiration from her personal archive of holiday photographs taken from her trips to the Caribbean, Mallorca and Brescia, Olulode paints vivid, dreamlike scenes of herself, lovers and friends swimming and frolicking in the ocean. The broad spectrum of colour in her paintings conjure up the rich and bold hues of the ocean: cobalt blues of the ocean blend with the vibrant oranges, pinks and purples of the evening sky. Far from straightforward representations, these paintings are portals into a world where myth and memory collide, and the giddiness of water becomes an act of liberation.

At the heart of her influence is her interest in ancient mythologies, particularly Yemoja, the maternal goddess of the sea, revered across the African diaspora as a protector, nurturer, and symbol of life's ceaseless ebb and flow. Intertwined with the presence of Yemoja is the enduring myth of sirens—otherworldly beings who exist at the intersection of allure and danger. The artist reimagines these mythical women as contemporary figures, presenting them in groups playing together or as larger-than-life beings immersed in the water. Enveloped by vibrant bursts of colour, these images of women embracing the freedom of being in water appear mystical, untethered from earthly constraints.

Central to Olulode's practice is her concern for Nigerian textile traditions and histories. In 2021 she attended workshops with traditional dyers in Lagos adding to her understanding of the different techniques. Her use of mediums such as wax, batik, oil bar, and impasto produce works that pay tribute to the cultural history that influences her art. In these paintings her skillful dyeing practices capture the movement of the waves, the interplay of light on the surface, the burst of energy of the figures and the fleeting magic of a sunset's reflection. The

result is a series of paintings that are at once luminous and enigmatic, offering a sense of motion and reverie that invites viewers to immerse themselves in their own imaginations.

Through lived experiences of the sea and ancient myths Olulode draws a symbolic connection to themes of renewal, femininity, and ancestral ties to water, underscoring the ocean's enduring role as both a literal and metaphorical source of life.

## SOLA OLULODE

Sola Olulode is a British Nigerian artist living and working in South London. She received a BA in Fine Art Painting from the University of Brighton in 2018. Upon graduation she took part in the notable graduate show *BBZ BLK BK: Alternative Graduate Show*. 2018. She then went on to receive a graduate studio residency at Lewisham Art House for a year in London. Since then she has exhibited in numerous international group solo exhibitions. Recent exhibitions include solos: *Islands of the Blessed* at Berntson Bhattacharjee Gallery, London, 2024; *Burning Like the Star That Showed Us to Our Love* at Ed Cross, London, 2023 and *Could You Be Love*, Sapar Contemporary, New York, 2022. Selected group shows include *Conversations*, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, 2024, *Keeping Time*, Gallery 1957, Accra, 2024; *Dreaming of Home* at Leslie Lohman Museum, New York, 2023; *To Be Held* at Carl Freedman Gallery, Margate, 2023; *Womxn Of Colour* Art Award 2020-2021 Finalists Exhibition: *Altitude 198* Contemporary Arts, London, 2021; Victoria Miro x Out Collective, Vortic, 2021, *An Infinity of Traces* at Lisson Gallery, London, 2021; *In Heavenly Blue* at Wunika Mukan, Lagos and *Run With The Wolves* at Lawrie Shabibi, Dubai also 2022. She has been featured in ID Magazine, Art Review and Readers Digest. She currently features on the Hayward Gallery Billboard till April 2025.

## ABOUT THE GALLERY

Lawrie Shabibi is a contemporary art gallery housed in Dubai's Alserkal Avenue. The gallery supports the long-term development of the careers of young international contemporary artists with a focus on those from the Middle East and North Africa. The gallery also organises art historical exhibitions working with an older generation of artists from the region. Liaising with curators, institutions, museums and collectors the gallery has successfully introduced international artists to the region whilst at the same time presenting Middle Eastern artists to the international contemporary art community. By holding a regular programme of exhibitions, screenings and talks, publishing catalogues and participating in international art fairs, Lawrie Shabibi has been a forerunner in the development of the contemporary art scene in Dubai.

For more information on Lawrie Shabibi please visit: [www.lawrieshabibi.com](http://www.lawrieshabibi.com)

## PRESS INQUIRIES

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