

Lisa Brice

Keep Your Powder Dry

15 October – 20 December 2025
17 Savile Row W1S

For the opening exhibition of our townhouse gallery on Savile Row, Lisa Brice presents new paintings in three distinct groups arranged sequentially in the spaces of the building. Using a repeated viewpoint to form an architectural horizon across consecutive paintings, the audience is offered a parade of dynamic empowerment.

Known for her depictions of feminine actors in interior spaces and working environments, Brice reflects on the erosion of safety in the current socio-political climate. She gives her protagonists codes of collective assertiveness, an emboldened and defensive response, willing the triumph of the underdog. The characters here are powerful, proactive, effective: they are David not Goliath, Judith not Holofernes. Drawing on images of violence in art history from the likes of Gentileschi, Caravaggio, Manet and Magritte, Brice was similarly inspired by Honor Blackman's 1965 *Book of Self Defence* which is illustrated by images showing various men being beaten black-and-blue by the judogi clad siren.

Brice conflates the often-intimate observation of passive groups of women in late 19th and early 20th Century French painting into a brooding solidarity of resistance. In the group of paintings which picture figures on the horizon of a bar, the protagonists are ready for action, their makeshift weapons near to hand, their victims engaged. These combative bodies appear again as the audience in a smokily-lit fight club that is the subject of another painting. In this ambitious composition, the ring is framed by a parade of athletic combatants who turn the tables on our viewpoint by posing with mirrors in preparation to enter the fray.

In a further development, the palette across all three parts of the exhibition is reduced into firmly sobering tones of black, red, brown and grey in a departure from the vibrancy of earlier works. The grisaille painting of Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *Christ and the Woman taken in Adultery* in the Courtauld Collection and Francisco de Goya's Black Paintings, particularly *Atropos (the Fates)* are treasured references. The subtle rebellion of the subjects in this exhibition, their strength in numbers against repression or bullying, asks us to imagine the potential of collective action.

Lisa Brice (b. 1968, Cape Town) graduated from Michaelis School of Fine Art, University of Cape Town in 1990. She has exhibited internationally with major recent solo shows including *Bar Games (1993-2023)*, Sadie Coles HQ, London (2023); *Lisa Brice*, Charleston Trust, Lewes (2021); *Smoke and Mirrors*, KM21, The Hague (2020); and *Art Now: Lisa Brice*, Tate Britain, London (2018). She has also participated in numerous group exhibitions including 'Are we still up to it?' – *Art & Democracy*, Herrenchiemsee Palace, Chiemsee (2025); *To Improvise a Mountain: Lynette Yiadom-Boakye Curates*, Hayward Gallery, London, touring to Leeds Art Gallery, MK Gallery, Milton Keynes, and Nottingham Castle (2025); *A Room Hung With Thoughts*, Green Family Art Foundation, Dallas (2025); *Paraventi: Folding Screens from the 17th to 21st Centuries*, Fondazione Prada, Milan (2023); *Capturing the Moment*, Tate Modern, London (2023); *A Century of the Artist's Studio 1920–2020*, Whitechapel Gallery, London (2022); *Women Painting Women*, Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Texas (2022); *Mixing It Up: Painting Today*, Hayward Gallery, London (2021); *Life Between Islands: Caribbean–British Art 50s – Now*, Tate Britain, London (2021); *A Contemporary Collection*, Hepworth Wakefield, Yorkshire (2020) and *Home Truths: Domestic Interiors in South African Collections*, South African National Gallery, Cape Town (2016). For over a decade, Brice spent time between the UK and Trinidad following residencies at the Gasworks, London, in 1998 and at CCA7, Trinidad, in 1999-2000; she now lives and works in London.

Gallery Note: 17 Savile Row was purpose built to be London's first arts club in 1870, and its exhibition history includes Dürer, Rembrandt, Turner, Rossetti and Burne-Jones, along with displays of Japanese and Chinese antiquities, Greek coins and ceramics, book bindings and Old Master paintings and drawings. Our renovation has brought the building back to its original structure, and we look forward to the exhibitions this new space will host alongside those at our galleries at Kingly Street and Bury Street, in this historically artistic area of London. The project has been managed by Work Ltd, Giles Architects with a bookshop design by J P Sanfourche.