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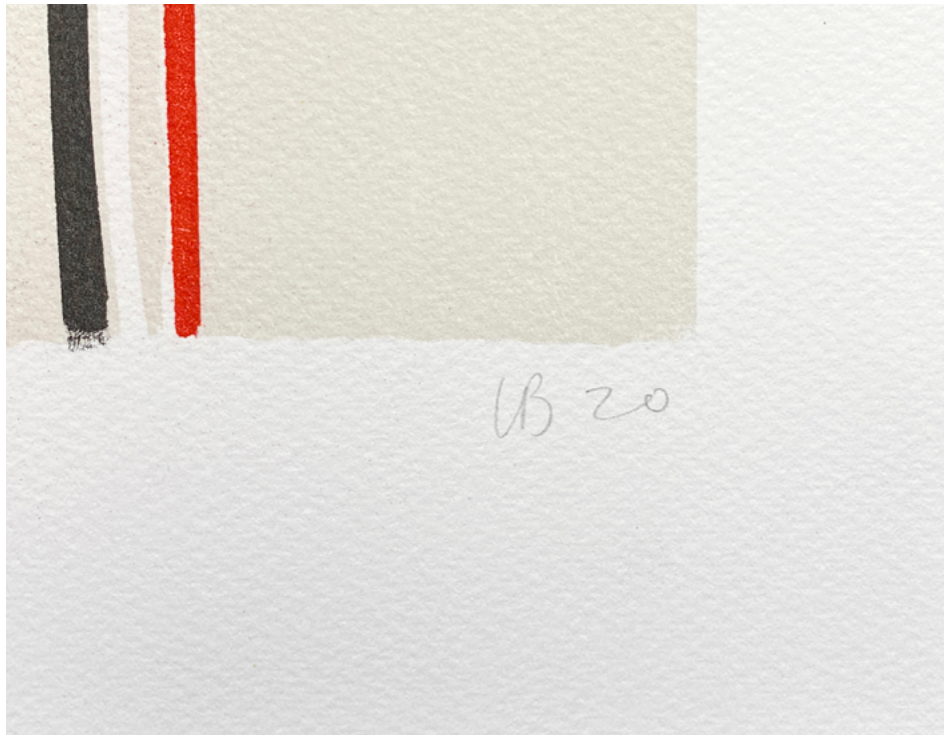
Lisa Brice (b. 1968), *Untitled (after Ophelia)*, 2020



Born in Cape Town, South Africa, Lisa Brice grew up in South Africa during a particularly volatile time in the country's history. This still informs the works she creates today.

In 1998, Brice travelled to London for a residency at Gasworks Studios. In 1999, she was invited to undertake a workshop in Trinidad and a subsequent residency alongside local and international artists including Peter Doig, Chris Ofili and Emheyo Bahabba (Embah). She is currently based in London while maintaining strong ties to Trinidad.

In 2018, Brice had a solo exhibition at Tate Britain, London as part of their Art Now series. A major institutional exhibition by the artist opened at KM21, The Hague in November 2020.



Employing a multitude of borrowed art historical references, Brice depicts strangely familiar scenes in new and often unsettling ways. Where figures might previously have been depicted as objectified nudes or damsels in distress, Brice recasts them in new situations with a sense of autonomy. Brice has discussed the significant fact that historical figuration in Western art history is, more often than not, created by white men for white men. For her, the act of a woman re-authoring an image which was previously painted by a man about a powerful shift in itself.

This subversion of misogynistic visual tropes from the canon of Western art history is key to Brice's practice. The main figure in this work references Ophelia by John Everett Millais. In the painting by Millais, a heartbroken Ophelia lies lifeless, having drowned in a stream. Brice has resurrected Ophelia from her watery grave and she leans nude through a brightly coloured plastic curtain used to keep mosquitoes out. Plumes of smoke billow up from the cigarette she holds nonchalantly whilst drinking a bottle of Trinidadian Stag beer pitched in Trinidad as a 'man's beer'.

For *Untitled (after Ophelia)*, 2020, Brice has combined the art historical with a sense of Trinidadian life.

Since 1999, when Brice first attended a workshop in Grande Riviere, and a residency in POS the following year, she has maintained strong ties with the island. Brice often references Trinidad in her work, one recurring reference being a particular shade of blue. For Brice, the colour hints at the sense of liberation experienced by those masquerading as Blue Devils during Carnival, or when revellers coat themselves with mud or paint for J'ouvert a celebration which marks the beginning of Carnival freeing themselves from the limitations of their own character. The blue paint is possibly made from Reckitt's powder, which historically was used throughout the colonies of the British Empire for blueing white cloth. The powder has also been associated with skin bleaching, something that takes on particular relevance considering Brice's connection to Trinidad where shadeism discrimination based on degrees of skin colour is prevalent. Brice's use of blue interrupts easy readings of ethnicity. Blue also has a plethora of art historical associations it is traditionally the colour of the Virgin Mary's cloak in religious iconography; for Henri Matisse, the colour allowed him to focus intensely on the female form; and Yves Klein employed his own trademarked shade to make paintings using women as living paintbrushes. Brice's work consistently defies straightforward interpretations; her bold and defiant characters refuse to be pinned down.



Artist

Lisa Brice (b.1968)

Title

Untitled (after Ophelia)

Medium

Lithograph in colours on wove paper

Date

2020

Size

34 x 15 in : 86.4 x 38.1 cm

Frame Size

36 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 17 $\frac{3}{4}$ in : 93.5 x 44.8 cm

Edition / Inscriptions

From the edition of 50, signed, dated and numbered by the artist in pencil

Publisher

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