

# *Veiled Bodies*

24.11.21 - 31.12.21

Alemeh Bagherian & Lindsey Jean McLean

PV 6-9pm Wednesday 24th November

Liliya Art Gallery,  
158 Putney High Street,  
SW15 1RS

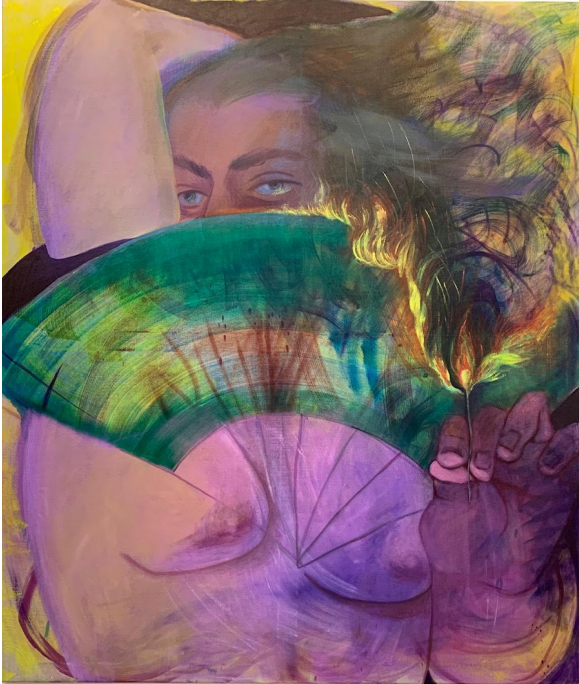
Liliya Art Gallery is delighted to present *Veiled Bodies*, an exhibition showcasing the paintings of Iranian artist Alemeh Bagherian alongside new and recent work by British artist Lindsey Jean McLean. Bagherian and McLean's difference in background and artistic practice are evident in the style and content of their work, however, these contemporary female painters share an unlikely connection through the veiling of bodies in their work. Each artist uses an expanded notion of the veil, transforming both objects and clothing to cloak their figures in a protective and powerful shroud.

Bagherian paints her female figures without traditional veils, covering her figures with motifs from Iranian culture. Incorporated into her paintings are stories from 'Shahnameh' (Book of Kings), an epic poem written in-between c.977 – 1010 CE by the Persian poet Ferdowsi, a seminal piece of Iranian literature. She brings these stories to life through clothing her figures in these traditional miniature designs. In doing so, she binds her figures to the history of Iran, showing how closely bound these stories are with her own personal and cultural identity.

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GALLERY



Lindsey Jean McLean, *Self Portrait as Colossus Woman with Fan*, Oil on Linen, 200 x 170 cm



Alemeh Bagherian, *Becoming Light*, Oil on Canvas, 100 x 119 cm

In McLean's intuitive painting style, her figures emerge from the canvas, caught in the midst of action. The 'male gaze' is restricted, with McLean revealing and hiding her figures using a variety of transformative objects and her own expressive application of paint. Draped in feather boas and veils, the painted bodies exist in an interplay of exposure and concealment, affirming McLean's control over what is revealed to the viewer. Her use of soft and luxurious contemporary objects - such as the feather boa - demonstrate a subversive approach to femininity. These tactile objects dictate how the figure is seen in the historically patriarchal medium of oil paint.

In bringing together these contemporary female painters, their disparate worlds collide in a paradoxical and generative presentation. Geographical and cultural borders are both emphasised and blurred, and the reclamation of female agency through painterly representation is brought into sharp focus. This exhibition not only shines a light on two talented and innovative women painters working today but shows the connections that can be found in two artists working towards a shared vision to reclaim female agency in paint.

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GALLERY



## Alemeh Bagherian

Alemeh Bagherian is a contemporary Iranian artist whose work explores the many dualities in modern society. Whilst her work predominantly features women, she seeks to address oppression in a universal manner, to tell the story of the innocence and purity of humans unjustly treated and oppressed. Most of the women depicted are partially covered to emphasise a sense of non-identity and censorship, breaking the 'male gaze'. The works in the exhibition are part of a series titled 'My Lady Peace', a body of work focusing on the connection between contemporary women and traditional symbols of the past. In this way, Bagherian aims to blend the two to evoke a sense of strength, stability, and subtle resistance in the face of oppression.

Bagherian graduated with an MFA in painting from Shahed University, Iran in 2010. She has since exhibited in a number of solo and group shows in Iran. Veiled Bodies will be the first presentation of her work in the UK.

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## Lindsey Jean McLean

Lindsey Jean McLean is a London-based figurative painter from Edinburgh. Her work questions the historical representation of femininity and women in painting; in particular the figures that exist in the liminal space between portraiture and imagination. Bedecked in a rich colour palette suggesting tactile honeys and velvets, these characters are in movement and entanglement, trapped in acts of concealment and destruction. She uses reoccurring motifs such as feather boas, fans and veils - transformative objects that obscure the gaze within her works. She subverts the historically patriarchal medium of oil paint to dismantle and create a new space to view femininity.

McLean studied Painting and Printmaking at Glasgow School of Art from 2009 to 2013. McLean's GSA degree show work was exhibited in New Scottish Artists in the Royal Scottish Academy. McLean also studied on The Drawing Year at The Royal Drawing School (2013-14) and is a graduate of MFA Painting at the Slade School of Fine Art. McLean is a recipient of the Elizabeth Greenshields Foundation grant, which is a distinguished award for emerging figurative artists worldwide. McLean's work was also selected for the London Grads Now 2021 show, currently on view at the Saatchi Gallery.