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*One Day With Leila Bartell*

Words by *Sophie Goodwin*

Images by *Thea Caroline Sneve Løvstad*



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*London-based painter and film director Leila Bartell explores nature, memory and the complexities of the human mind in her work. Sophie Goodwin talks to Leila - whose solo show at Tristan Hoare Gallery opens this month - about the rhythms and rituals of her day, her sense of discipline and protecting her own space in time.*

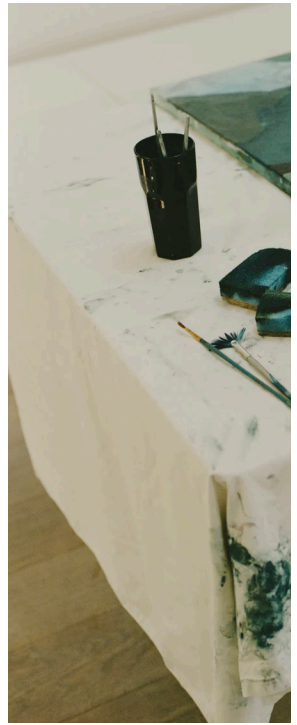
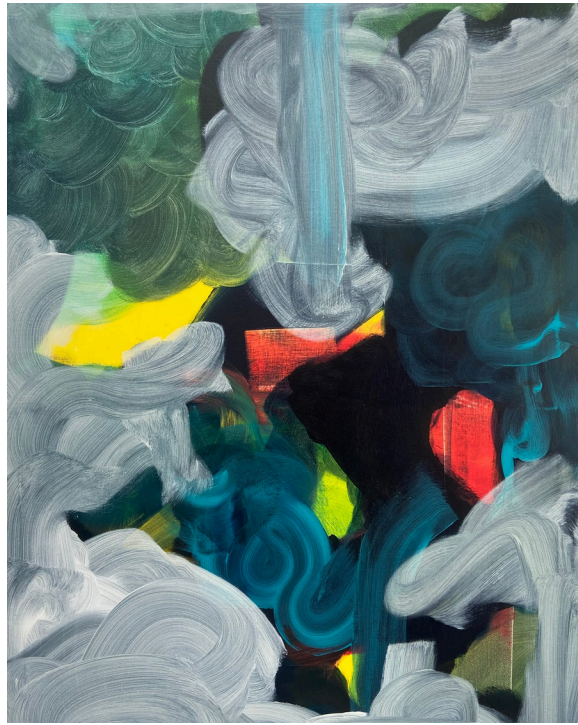
INTERVIEW BY SOPHIE GOODWIN | [MASTERS & MUSES](#) | 13 JUNE 2025



Leila Bartell © Thea Caroline Sneve Løvstad

***I wake at 6am, sometimes before the sun.*** There is a quiet sense of productivity in the early hours that suits me, nothing performative, just a sharp sense of consciousness. I begin with meditation, then journaling in fragments, and a short workout. I do not scroll. It is a ritual of clearing space, mentally and emotionally, for what is to come.

***My sacred time to work follows, until lunch.*** I protect this without exception. I paint in layers, building translucent veils of memory, space and distortion. I am drawn to cloudscapes because they mirror how perception works; shifting, unstable, subjective.



*Artworks by Leila Bartell, on display at Tristan Hoare Gallery, London.*

***I rarely listen to music when I paint (otherwise I love music).*** I'm very sensitive to it, and I find it can hijack a painting. If I need grounding, I may put on Chopin. But usually, it is a voice, a nonfiction audiobook on philosophy or history. Something cerebral enough to distract the overthinking part of me, so the painting can emerge subconsciously, instinctively. There is a delicate art to blocking out the noise in one's subconscious but letting enough stimulus in to be productive.

***Lunch is simple.*** I usually eat alone. I like solitude, not as retreat, but as alignment. It is a recalibration before the more outward facing part of the day.

***If it is sunny, I will walk in Hyde Park.*** I watch the sky. I always have. The 21st-century sky feels different — fractured by digital life, ecological unease, instability, displacement. Not Constable's sky. And yet it still holds something timeless. I take photos of clouds almost daily, not to replicate but to remember the feeling of looking up.





**From mid-afternoon, the rhythm shifts.** Sometimes there is a call with a gallerist, or an artist liaison drops by to film something. Other days it is a studio visit, a curator, a collector, an advisor, the kind of conversations that stretch the work beyond its edges.

**There are practical days too: going over inventory, or doing planning.** Occasionally we are sketching out ideas for future projects, or stepping back to think strategically about what comes next. And sometimes I will slip out to a lecture, or visit another artist's studio, small things that keep the mind lit from other angles.

**It is varied, but it all folds back into the work.** The studio is the life force, and everything else orbits around this centre of gravity.

*Walks in Hyde Park and watching the sky © Leila Bartell.*

**Evenings are quiet.** I cook, read or watch a film. Lately, I have been writing more, not with an exact objective, but as a form of therapy. It's cathartic: a way of processing what painting cannot.

**Books wise, I tend to reach for nonfiction.** Philosophy and reasoning. Heidegger, lately. But there is usually a novel nearby, maybe one for every five others. Right now, it's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. I read it slowly, 20 pages before bed, letting it linger.

**I rarely go out unless there is a reason.** An exhibition, a friend's show, or one of the salons that have been springing up in collectors' homes. I love being around other artists' work, supporting their pledge and engaging in fruitful conversations. I do not chase novelty, or wild or new experiences. I look for resonance.

**I protect my solitude.** I sleep early, not from rigidity, but to wake clear-eyed, ready to return to the questions the work keeps asking.





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