



## Press Release

09 March 2017

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Artist returns to Leeds College of Art for first solo exhibition

***Lydia Blakeley: Leisure 17 March - 14 April 2017, Vernon Street Gallery***  
*Opening event: Thursday 16 March, 5-7pm*

Leeds College of Art's latest exhibition features a new body of work by alumna, Lydia Blakeley. In her first solo exhibition Blakeley presents six new paintings, using retro-style images to toy with our nostalgia for mid-century modernism. Bourgeoisie notions of leisure are presented as dream-like aspirations and female figures are picture-perfect air-hostesses and homemakers.

Lydia Blakeley graduated from Leeds College of Art in 2016 with a first class BA (Hons) in Fine Art. Her artistic practice explores contemporary culture through painted collage, drawing together references from the 1950s until the present day.

A critical text will accompany the exhibition, written by Professor Derek Horton, Visiting Professor of Contemporary Art at Birmingham City University, and co-director of &Model gallery Leeds. There will be a public engagement event in the style of a fast paced pecha-kucha discussion exploring Blakeley's six new paintings.

Lydia Blakeley: Leisure is curated by Dr Sarah Taylor, Subject Leader BA (Hons) Fine Art and Crossing Borders research cluster leader.

#### Press Invite

Press are invited to Vernon Street Gallery, preview on **Thursday 16 March 2017**, from 5pm-7pm. Refreshments will be served and the artist will be present to answer questions. Please RSVP to: [sophie.millerwallace@leeds-art.ac.uk](mailto:sophie.millerwallace@leeds-art.ac.uk) or 0113 202 8044.

## Editor's Notes

For more information & images contact: Sophie Miller Wallace, PR & Communications Officer, 0113 202 8044 or [sophie.millerwallace@leeds-art.ac.uk](mailto:sophie.millerwallace@leeds-art.ac.uk)

The exhibition will run from 17 March to 14 April 2017 at Leeds College of Art's Vernon Street Gallery, Leeds, LS2 8PH. [www.leeds-art.ac.uk](http://www.leeds-art.ac.uk)

**Image credit:** Lydia Blakeley, For Export, 2017. Oil on linen, 145 x 195cm. Image courtesy of the artist, reproduced with kind permission. Photo Ciaran Davies.

### Exhibition events:-

#### **The Pleasure of Leisure: A Rant on the (a)Gender of Painting**

Thursday 30 March 5.30-6.30pm, Vernon Street Gallery

A public engagement discussion event to explore Blakeley's six new paintings.

### About Lydia Blakeley

Lydia Blakeley was born in Reading in 1980, and now lives and works in Leeds. Blakeley graduated from Leeds College of Art in 2016 with a First Class BA (Hons) in Fine Art. She previously worked in fashion retail for over a decade. This former life in retail has surreptitiously infiltrated her artistic practice, she uses painting as an investigation into the consumption of imagery and the desire for aspirational lifestyle ideals.

[lydiablakeley.com](http://lydiablakeley.com)

### Leeds College of Art

Founded in 1846 as the Leeds Government School of Art and Design, Leeds College of Art has contributed significantly to the development of art education in Britain and across the world. Today, Leeds College of Art remains one of only a few remaining independent art schools in the UK, leading the way as a centre for art and design education. The College has an impressive history of notable past students, Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth were students in 1919 and 1920. In later years Damien Hirst, Marcus Harvey, Eric Bainbridge, Clio Barnard and Georgina Starr all studied at the College, known then as the Jacob Kramer College. The College's recent graduates continue to win prestigious international awards year on year and enjoy successful careers in the creative industries.

[www.leeds-art.ac.uk](http://www.leeds-art.ac.uk)