

Gallery Lock-In

Celia Francis
Paint for the Stage

29 January - 4 February 2026
Little Western Road, BN1 2PU

Gallery Lock-In invites you to explore *Paint for the Stage*, a collection of recent work that presents paintings of ambiguous narrative and theatrical nature. The exhibition features a curated selection of works by Celia Francis.

Paint for the Stage examines themes of fictional narrative, curiosity, and play through theatrically painted individual scenes and the unexplained characters/caricatures within them. Stage makeup is a point of interest, with its garishness when seen up close, yet harmony and normality when seen from the audience; Celia uses paint, chalky colour, and studio debris to explore how this effect could be transferred into painting. The exhibition includes paintings of various size and an intimate selection of her sketches and painted studies.

Celia Francis' practice concerns itself with the manipulation of paint to provoke a sense of confusion and play. Celia uses a process of action (creating unexpected marks) and reaction (working with what she's just done). Ambiguous narratives and strange environments are subsequently created. She often chooses to paint on "slippery" surfaces, either wood or using thixotropic oil primer, as they allow for the serendipity of shapes and colour more so than other surfaces. As ballet has been a staple part of her childhood to her late teenage years, Celia organically brings in elements of theatricality and flat "space". Simple vertical and horizontal lines transform the canvases into proscenium stages on which her imagined narratives are played out. Theatre and stage makeup has been a large source of reference materialistically and visually.

Furthermore, Celia's painting influences come from experimental films, fictional books, and album covers. At the moment, she has been particularly influenced by Dennis Potter's fictional dramas. These subjects lend her a starting point to visually wander, and she experiments with visual framing techniques within the painting itself to create a fictional narrative. The ambiguous marks lead to fittingly ambiguous characters, where she and the paint work together to display their temperament and characteristics. Working quickly and intuitively is an organic and stimulating way for her to work.

Celia Francis grew up in Watford, UK, in 2004. She currently studies, lives, and works in Brighton, UK. Celia is a Fine Art Painting BA student at the University of Brighton, set to graduate in 2026. She has been involved in artist-led exhibitions and festivals, such as the Artwave festival, in Hospitable Environment's "Emerging Sussex" show in Newhaven. This is her first solo show.

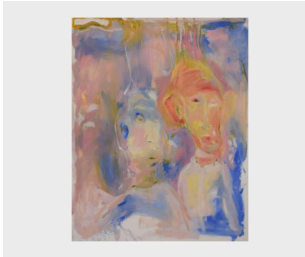
Gallery Lock-In, located in Brighton, provides a platform for artists to host socially engaged visual art exhibitions and other artist-led activities.

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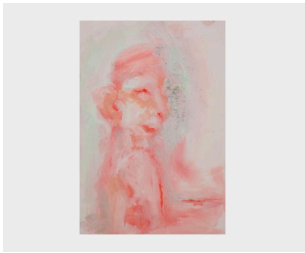
*price list available upon request.

Gallery Lock-In

First Room



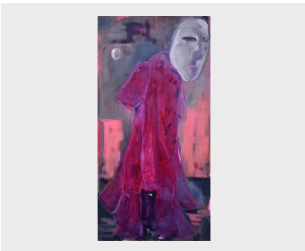
Lumber Room,
Oil on canvas,
100 cm x 80 cm,
November 2025.



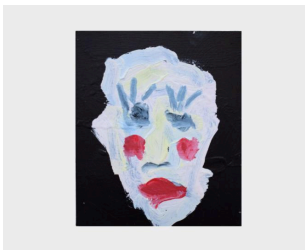
Monkey at Benten,
Oil on wooden board,
20 cm x 14.5 cm,
January 2026.



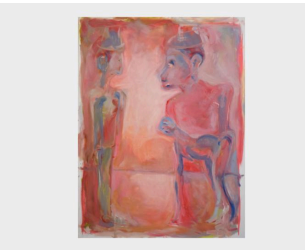
The Afflicted House,
Oil and studio debris on canvas,
120 cm x 80 cm,
December 2025.



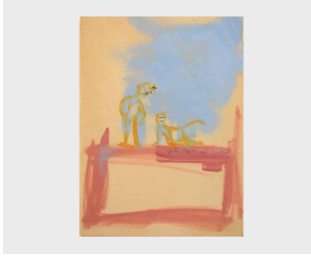
Misako Dislikes You,
Oil and studio debris on canvas,
200 cm x 100 cm,
January 2026.



Stage Makeup No.2,
Oil on wooden board,
18 cm x 15.2 cm,
November 2025.



Shake Down,
Oil on canvas,
120 cm x 90 cm,
December 2025.

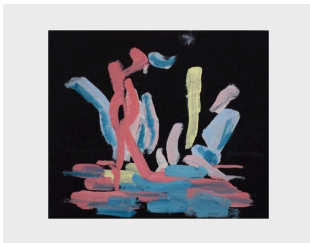


Fictional Dress Rehearsal Sketch No.2,
Oil and studio debris on canvas,
55 cm x 40 cm,
December 2025.

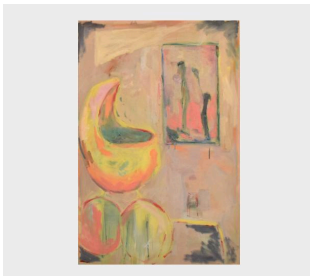
Second Room



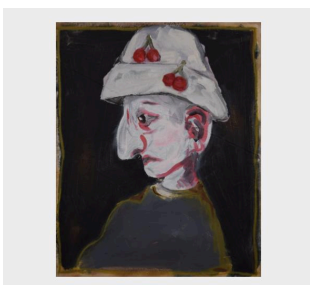
Check It Out,
Acrylic on paper,
118 cm x 130 cm,
October 2025.



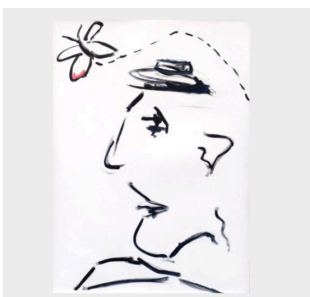
Stage Lights,
Oil on wooden board,
18 cm x 21 cm,
November 2025.



Pram,
Oil and studio debris on canvas,
120 cm x 80 cm,
January 2026.



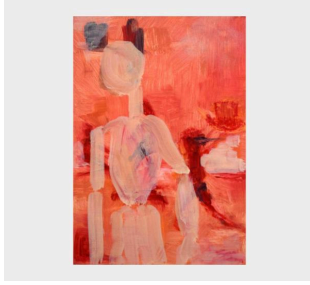
Hat with Cherries,
Oil on canvas,
51 cm x 42 cm,
October 2025.



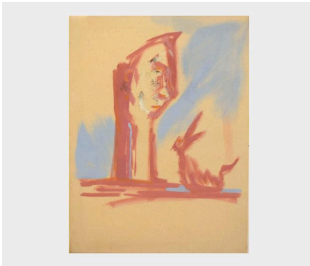
Benjy,
Oil on canvas,
88 cm x 64 cm,
October 2025.



Prison Window with Pink Feet,
Oil on wooden board,
20 cm x 13.5 cm,
October 2025.



Stupid Dances (Reworked),
Oil and oil pastel on wooden board,
21.5 cm x 16 cm,
March-October 2025.



Fictional Dress Rehearsal Sketch No.1,
Oil and studio debris on canvas,
51 cm x 42 cm,
December 2025.