

Valérie Belin

Lady Stardust

April 11 - June 1st, 2024

3, rue du Cloître Saint-Merri II, Paris 4^e



Galatée (Lady Stardust), 2023
Pigment print, 171 x 129,5 cm / 67^{1/16} x 50^{15/16} in. (framed)

Galerie Nathalie Obadia is delighted to present a new series of photographs by Valérie Belin entitled *Lady Stardust*. This exhibition echoes a recent retrospective dedicated to the artist at the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Bordeaux and organised in partnership with the gallery.

This new body of work is made up of eight photographs bearing the names of stars (*Electra, Véga, Léda, Stella* and *Galatée*), five of which will be shown at the gallery. They are all portraits of the same young woman, a professional model, dressed in distinctive outfits and shot in the studio against a plain background. Each photograph is unique, distinguished by a particular pose and carefully chosen accessories: simple fabric dresses, featuring geometric patterns in a variety of colours, paired with footwear of various styles. The photographs were taken in the manner of a magazine cover or poster, giving the impression that the person portrayed could be a fashion icon or a star, posing in a style reminiscent of Spider-Woman. The title of the series also suggests she could be a glamorous pop-star, visiting Earth from another planet.

Following on from her previous series, produced since 2015 (*Super Models, All Star, China Girls, Modern Royals* and *Heroes*), the backdrop used for each image is made up of a number of elements added a posteriori: pages from 50s and 60s comic-books peopled with superheroes (evoking themes of crime, horror, romance and the sentimental), swathes of fabric photographed in the studio, whose patterns match those of the dresses worn by the young model, and car workshop interiors photographed in Los Angeles in 2014. These “inorganic” décors made up of elements characterised by the complete absence of nature, evoke a fantasy, urban world. The combination of these settings with the figure of the young woman in the same image, would seem to represent “the coupling of the living body to the inorganic world”, as Walter Benjamin wrote concerning fashion in his *Arcades Project*. One might also say that these photographs are a form of *phantasmagoria*, an attraction in vogue at the turn of the Enlightenment, where imaginary figures projected by magic lanterns were made to appear in a darkened room – a phenomenon that marked a fresh development in the notion of the image as an illusion.

In her most recent images, bursting with visual signs, Valérie Belin plays on the codes of representation, blurring the boundaries between reality and the imaginary. In doing so, she has embraced the technological and ontological changes in the world of photography, from the use of film to digital technology, while at the same time following in the tradition of the 1920-30s avant-gardes by adopting techniques such as solarisation and double-exposure. From 2006, her switch to colour photography has lent her images a more pictorial dimension and on occasion a fully assumed “collage” aspect. With her oeuvre, Valérie Belin blurs the lines between the real and the virtual, nature and artifice, inanimate objects and living beings, presence and absence, hyperrealism, and metaphor.

Born in Boulogne-Billancourt (France) in 1964, Valérie Belin lives and works in Paris (France).

She graduated from the École Nationale des Beaux-Arts de Bourges (1983–88) and gained a DEA (the equivalent of a Master of Advanced Studies) in Philosophy of Art at the Université Panthéon-Sorbonne in Paris (1989).

In 2024, Valérie Belin receives an important retrospective at the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Bordeaux (France). She also participated in numerous significant solo exhibitions including the Victoria & Albert Museum in London (UK, 2019), the Three Shadows Photography Art Centre in Beijing, the SCôP in Shanghai and the Chengdu Museum (China, 2017) as part of a touring exhibition, the Centre Pompidou in Paris (France, 2015, 2009), the DHC/ART in Montreal (Canada, 2014), the Multimedia Art Museum in Moscow (Russia, 2014), Casa Franca-Brasil, Rio de Janeiro (Brazil, 2011), FotoMuseum Provincie, Antwerp (Belgium, 2011), Musée d'Orsay, Paris (France, 2008), Musée de l'Élysée, Lausanne (Switzerland, 2008), Maison Européenne de la Photographie, Paris (France, 2008), Huis Marseille - Museum voor fotografie, Amsterdam (Netherlands, 2007).

She has also participated in numerous significant group exhibitions especially at the Musée du Louvre in Paris (France, 2022), the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris (France, 2016), the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris (France, 2016), Huis Marseille - Museum voor fotografie in Amsterdam (Netherlands, 2015), Maison Particulière in Brussels (Belgium, 2015), MOMA - Museum of Modern Art of New York (USA, 2014), Center de la Photographie, Geneva (Switzerland, 2013), Maison Européenne de la Photographie, Paris (France, 2013), Seattle Art Museum (USA, 2012), Mori Art Museum (Japan, 2011), National Museum of Contemporary Art Korea, Seoul (South Korea, 2011), Musée Nicéphore Niépce, Chalon-sur-Saône (France, 2010), Peabody Essex Museum, Essex (USA, 2009), International Center of Photography, New York (USA, 2009).

Her work can be found in such prestigious private and public collections as the Centre Pompidou - Musée National d'Art Moderne (France), MOMA - Museum of Modern Art (USA), Fondation Cartier pour l'Art Contemporain (France), Los Angeles County Museum of Art (USA), Kunsthaus Zurich (Switzerland), Maison Européenne de la Photographie (France), San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (USA), National Museum of Contemporary Art Korea (South Korea), Musée de l'Élysée (Switzerland), Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris (France), MUDAM - Musée d'art moderne Grand-Duc Jean (Luxembourg), MAC/VAL (France), International Center for Photography (USA), Fond National d'Art Contemporain (France), JP Morgan Chase Art Program (USA), Groupe Lhoist (Belgium), CCF (HSBC) Fondation pour la photographie (France), UBS Art Collection (Luxembourg).

Valérie Belin won the Prix Pictet in 2015 for her *project Disorder*. The travelling exhibition of which it is a part is being presented between 2015 and 2017 at Somerset House (UK), the MAXXI in Rome (Italy), the CAB Art Center in Brussels (Belgium), the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Museum in Geneva (Switzerland).

Paris Saint-Honoré

Carole Benzaken

Éclats

March 16 - May 18, 2024

Paris Cloître Saint-Merri

Laura Henno

Grande Terre

April 6 - June 1st, 2024

Brussels

Romana Londi

What is your substance, whereof are you made (that

millions of strange shadows on you tend)

April 13 - May 25, 2024

Paris Cloître Saint-Merri - Espace II

Valérie Belin

Lady Stardust

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