

Press Release

JONATHAN SCHOFIELD

The Defiance of Summer

30 September - 21 November 2025

Vivienne Roberts Projects

The Bindery, 53 Hatton Garden, London EC1N 8HN

Vivienne Roberts Projects is pleased to present *The Defiance of Summer*, an exhibition of recent paintings by Jonathan Schofield.

Drawing inspiration from Baudelaire's vision of modernity as the "immutable ephemeral" - beauty drawn from the fleeting yet touching on the eternal, Schofield captures passing gestures, fashions, and attitudes while holding within them something enduring. As he says: *"It's the momentary made solid, the passing gesture held in coloured pigment - painting as luminous - painting as a way to hold time."*

The exhibition's hero image, *Not the End*, unfolds on a stiflingly hot afternoon in a garden - possibly Kensington Gardens - beneath a deep purple-blue sky. Three fashion models, elegantly dressed in white, inhabit a scene thick with cinematic drama and dreamlike tension. In the foreground, one woman shades her eyes from the sun with a raised arm; beneath her full skirt, she wears black high-heeled leather boots, while a discarded newspaper crossword lies at her feet. Another, seen from behind in a strapless evening gown, walks her dog on a red lead. In the distance, a third woman reclines on the grass, drinking from a bottle. Though rooted in contemporary fashion and detail, the painting unexpectedly evokes the atmosphere of Paul Delvaux: surreal, detached, faintly melancholy. It captures the duality Baudelaire described, drawing beauty from modern life while echoing the classical and timeless through its strange stillness.

At the heart of the exhibition is the near two-metre-high painting *The Defiance of Summer*. A modern girl stands in a pink swimsuit, sunglasses masking her gaze, garden hose raised like a weapon. In contrast to Picasso's *Fillette à la Corbeille Fleurie* (1905), where youth is rendered with a resigned fatalism, Schofield's figure resists objectification. Clothed, armed, and unapologetic, she meets us on her own terms, embodying shifting gazes and layered identities in an age of self-awareness and performance.

Elsewhere, the narrative remains suggestive rather than fixed. In *FOMO in Paris*, a girl leans from her balcony against a bright blue night sky, peering into the street below - is she calling to someone, or simply caught in the fear of missing out? In *The Blue Room*, a woman with an umbrella, rendered in soft shadow except for the vivid red suitcase she carries, seems to be leaving the man in a black raincoat who lingers behind her. A book is pinned to a tree; a painting hangs within the blue-lit room beyond. Nothing is fully explained, yet everything suggests possibility.

The Pink Picnic is painted on brown card, a technique reminiscent of Toulouse-Lautrec, who often used similar surfaces to work quickly with diluted oils. The choice of ground allows for rapid drying, enabling the artist to capture spontaneity and immediacy. In Schofield's work, beach and sky seem to dissolve into one another, with wisps of pink cloud echoing the pink tablecloth, their tones reflected subtly in the girl's clothes and the towel on the sand. The green of the girl's parasol is mirrored elsewhere, while the blue of the sea finds its counterpart in the chairs. These delicate

colour correspondences, together with the artist's sensitive use of space, unify the composition and lend the scene a quiet, dreamlike atmosphere.

Schofield's vision is rooted firmly in the present. His acute observation of fashion - swimsuits, sunglasses, boots, suitcases - is woven into the fabric of the paintings not as ornament but as a way of capturing the pulse of contemporary life. Just as Baudelaire drew poetry from the fashions of his day, Schofield infuses his figures with the sensibilities of ours. Within these fragments of the everyday, we glimpse something enduring: poise, longing, defiance, desire.

The Defiance of Summer is more than a title; it is an attitude that threads through the work - poised between irony and intimacy, vulnerability and grace. These are paintings of our time, alive with contradiction and luminous with possibility. They do not offer resolution; they open a space for looking again, and deeper - until, in that act of looking, we glimpse the eternal shimmering within the fleeting.

Exhibition Details

- **Private View:** Tuesday 30 September 6.15 - 8.15pm RSVP
- **Dates:** Part 1: Tuesday 30 September - 31 October 2025
- Part II: Tuesday 4 November - 21 November 2025
- **Venue:** Vivienne Roberts Projects, The Bindery, 53 Hatton Garden, London EC1N 8HN
- **Opening Hours:** Tuesday - Friday, 11am - 5pm (or by appointment)

Press & Sales Enquiries

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High-resolution images and interviews with the artist available on request.

Notes to Editors

- In his own words, Jonathan Schofield describes his paintings as emerging from chains of visual associations, often sparked by photography, fashion, lifestyle, and the demi-monde. Ambivalent emotions stirred by these images drive a process of transformation, resulting in works that both honour and critique narratives of pleasure. He seeks what critic Michael Fried called "absorption," inviting viewers into open-ended contemplation and evoking cinematic spaces where time feels suspended. For Schofield, colour is the primary vehicle of expression - volatile, relational, and psychological - behaving like thought or memory, closer to music or the collective unconscious than to pure aesthetics. Through a continual process of scraping, erasing, and rebuilding, each painting becomes a palimpsest, holding fleeting gestures in luminous permanence.
- **Jonathan Schofield** was born in Manchester and has been based in London for over 25 years. He completed his MA in Fine Art (Painting) at the Royal College of Art, South Kensington, where he was taught by renowned artists including Peter Doig, John Stezaker, Sean Scully, and Helen Chadwick. His degree show sold out, earning him a distinction, and his work entered several permanent collections, including the RCA's own. Following his studies, Schofield was awarded a prestigious scholarship to spend six weeks painting in Asilah, Morocco, and later undertook painting sabbaticals at studio residencies in Paris and Rome. He also spent a formative summer painting in

New York.

After graduating, Schofield built a highly successful career as a Creative Director before returning to painting full-time in 2014. His work quickly began to attract a growing audience and collectors, aided by the democratising reach of social media. Schofield's often large-scale paintings are now held in private collections across Copenhagen, Germany, the United States, and London. He currently works from his studio in Hackney, London.

- **About Vivienne Roberts Projects:**

A common thread runs through the art exhibited with Vivienne Roberts Projects: poetic imagery - something these artists seem to share with Paul Klee, whose influence was extensive on modern XXth century painters and continues today. It is art that is timeless, poetic and personal, characterised by a strong line, whimsical and impish humour, a dialogue with nature, organic or biomorphic imagery, sensitivity to colour gradation, a meditative quality, and a developed independence from realism.

Dedicated to showcasing groundbreaking contemporary art, Vivienne Roberts Projects fosters artistic dialogue, connecting diverse audiences with transformative experiences.