

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sierra Merda: Venus from the Block

March 19th - April 12th

Opening reception: Thursday, March 19th, 5-9 PM

SLA Art Space | 307 W 30th Street, New York



Venus from the Block. Oil paints on canvas, 90 x 72", 2024

NEW YORK - In celebration of Women's History Month, SLA Art Space is pleased to present *Venus from the Block*, the first solo exhibition by international artist Sierra Merda. On view March 19 – April 12th, 2026, the exhibition features 8 paintings (oil on canvas, paper and panel) created in New York between 2023 and 2025.

Venus from the Block explores beauty as something earned rather than inherited. Lives shaped by surviving the damage meted out by our world result in unique individuals whose strength reaches us as beauty.

This beauty is no abstraction; it is a presence. Merda's work rejects the simple perfection of traditional Venus imagery, embracing the three-dimensionality that its shadows create. Like Rembrandt before her, she sees shadow as the absence of grace, suffering reaching for light.

Drawing on a lineage that spans art history and contemporary lived experience, the exhibition frames beauty as something that emerges. Beauty isn't found in places we're told it exists, but in previously unknown domains of resistance. These figures come alive through their gestures, glances, and spaces, narrating a lived tension between fragility and strength.

Born into visual traditions shaped by patriarchal structures, Merda (b. 1991, Vilnius) has spent her practice wrestling with inherited norms. Her earlier work confronted fear and subjugation directly; this new series moves toward celebration, the triumph found at the threshold of hardship and endurance. Merda's modern muses come from varied social and geographic backgrounds, from from the depths of London's squats to suburban towns in upstate New York, bringing underrepresented bodies into a visual language of beauty historically reserved for the few.

About the Artist

Sierra Merda, who previously presented work under a different name, is a Lithuanian-born, London-raised painter and draftsman currently based in New York City. She earned her B.A. in Painting and Drawing in 2013 from the University of Northampton and, in 2025, completed her MFA in Painting (Anatomy Track) at the New York Academy of Art, where she was awarded a postgraduate Chubb Fellowship (2025– present). Merda has participated in many group exhibitions across the UK, Europe, and the United States, with *Venus from the Block* marking the 50th exhibition and first solo exhibition in her twelve-year career.

Her work is rooted in punk, feminist, and underground visual cultures, alongside a sustained engagement with classical art. Merda's practice subverts historical iconography while exploring

contemporary lived experience, examining the body, beauty, and survival through painting.

Gallery Hours:

Sundays 12 - 4 pm

And by appointment.

For press inquiries or further information, please contact:

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For more information, visit:

Artist website: www.sierramerda.com

SLA Art Space: www.slaartspace.org

Follow on Instagram: @SierraMerda

