

# ANDREA FESTA

## Friends Looking at Friends Sinead Breslin

Andrea Festa presents “Friends Looking at Friends,” a striking series of portraits and still lifes by Sinéad Breslin. This is her second solo show at the gallery. The opening ceremony is held on the 4th of February from 6 pm to 9 pm, and the exhibition is on view until March 19th, 2026.

Born in 1986 in Ireland and raised in London, Breslin completed her fine art education at the University of the West of England (B.A., M.A.) and has exhibited in solo and group shows across the UK, US, Mexico, Europe, Russia, and Asia. She has received multiple international residencies, including the prestigious Palazzo Monti in Brescia, Italy. Her work is held in private and institutional collections worldwide, from the Alex Katz Foundation in New York to Beijing’s X Museum.

“Friends Looking at Friends” presents new portraits of Breslin’s peers and family members, interspersed with delicate, playful still lifes. Her practice—exploring identity, home, motherhood, and connection—has adopted a more considered approach in recent years. After five years in New York and Mexico City, Breslin returned to London in 2019, reconnecting with her childhood home. She rented a studio at London Fine Art Studios on Lavender Hill, where she met the artist and teacher Mark Chen, who became her tutor, helping her refine her observational technique and life-drawing skills. She now combines these tools with playful brushwork, a keen eye for the obscure, and bold color, producing vivid artworks that examine contemporary life with undertones of social angst, Catholic iconography, and human connection.

Isolated figures inhabit saturated interiors and landscapes, suspended in abstract collages of time and place. Contemplative yet uncanny, these scenes evoke intimate spaces of memory, with figures sometimes meeting the viewer’s gaze with longing, intensity, or unease. Breslin cites formative encounters with masters such as Nicolas Poussin, whose compositional strategies and object placement influenced her own layering and spatial guidance. She also draws on figures from art history like Henri Matisse, Giorgio Morandi, Alice Neel, and Lucian Freud, alongside contemporary influences including Nicolas Party, Alex Katz, and Chantel Joffe. Her mentorship with Katz, who painted her portrait in New York, emphasised the figure as a vehicle for painterly expression, where power resides in the brushstroke rather than content.

Breslin deconstructs interiors and landscapes with whimsy, creating painterly collages of time and place. Her works strongly reference religious icon paintings, with central figures surrounded by symbolic gestures and patterns. Raised Catholic, she notes: “Catholicism and the surrounding visual pageantry is part of my subconscious. Throughout my childhood, I would sit in churches with my father, losing sense of time, looking at stained glass windows, the richness of the colours, the dismantled perspectives, and the tranquil quality of the ever-changing dappled light.”

In Bobby and Nigoria, Breslin captures a pensive moment between two friends in a Somerset home. The painting features “worlds within worlds,” with paintings inside paintings reminiscent of Matryoshka dolls, layered with observation, memory, and psychological tension. Throughout this series, the protagonist’s piercing gaze creates a charged exchange with the viewer, reflecting today’s political, economic, and social uncertainties.

Her brother Joseph appears alongside one of their mother’s greyhounds in Race Day, set against a dramatic, moody landscape that amplifies the emotional intensity. Domestic motifs—tables, food, and interiors—feature prominently throughout. In Megan in the Kitchen, an apple alludes to Adam and Eve and temptation, while a picture frame behind the protagonist echoes a church mosaic in Southern Italy. In “Breakfast Table,” a ripe plum, an egg, and even a phallic sausage evoke themes of fertility and domestic ritual.

Andrea Festa

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February 4th — March 19th, 2026

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