

Kathrin Longhurst, *The Devotee*, 2023, oil on linen, 91cm x 91cm. Courtesy the artist and Flinders Lane Gallery.



Kathrin Longhurst, *The Seeker*, 2023, oil on linen, 91cm x 91cm. Courtesy the artist and Flinders Lane Gallery.



Kathrin Longhurst, *The Adventurer*, 2023, oil on linen, 182cm x 121cm. Courtesy the artist and Flinders Lane Gallery.



Kathrin Longhurst, *The Traveller*, 2023, oil on linen, 91cm x 91cm. Courtesy the artist and Flinders Lane Gallery.

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PREVIEW

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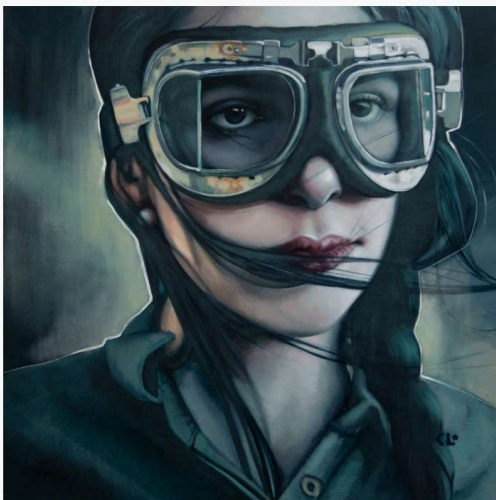
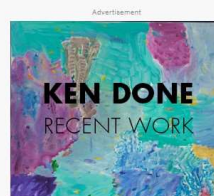
Words by [Sally Gearon](#)

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Kathrin Longhurst shows the everyday battlefield that is a woman's world

The women in Kathrin Longhurst's paintings tell a story of bold defiance. Among them you will find the adventurer, the trailblazer, and the fighter, but no wallflower. "All through art history we've had men painting women as decorative objects," she says. "[I'm] reclaiming that domain of painting women, and painting them in a way that is empowering, where other women can relate and see themselves. Because what you can't see you can't be."

Just don't call them portraits. Longhurst has a history with portraiture, as a finalist for numerous Archibald prizes and winner of the 2021 Archibald Packing Room Prize with a portrait of Kate Cebrano. But this new body of work is firmly rooted in figurative painting and storytelling, rather than straight depiction. "The models are there to express narrative. I use their likeness to create a story!"



Kathrin Longhurst, *The Traveller*, 2023, oil on linen, 91cm x 91cm. Courtesy the artist and Flinders Lane Gallery.

With vintage military jackets and aviator goggles, you may think the story is one of warfare, and you wouldn't be far off. "As a woman, you are on the frontlines. You're on a battlefield. You're fighting against inequality and not having access to certain things." This use of symbolism stems from a deep affinity with propaganda art. "I grew up in East Germany, so my childhood was heavily influenced by socialist realism. Art in a socialist country is there to educate and explain the ideology. Now I use the symbolism and imagery to throw things on its head, and use the language of propaganda art to further my own cause."

Women to the Front coincides with International Women's Day, and Longhurst hopes the audience will take away "a renewed interest in women's stories, recognising their resilience and their strength. And celebrating them for their incredible contributions to society."

Women to the Front
Kathrin Longhurst
Flinders Lane Gallery
5–27 March

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