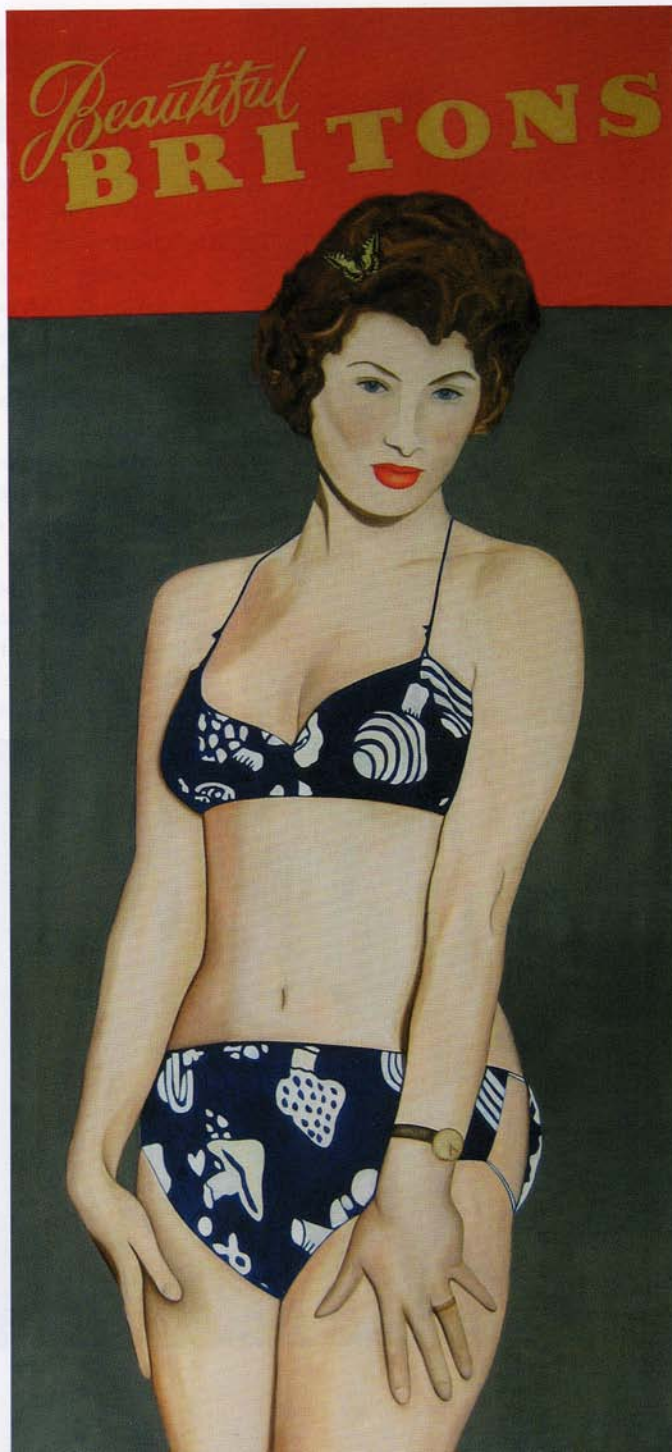


Queens for a Day

Cathy Lomax has to be one of the hardest working women in the art biz. As well as producing her own work she's the founder and curator of Hackney's Transition gallery as well as the publisher of the fab art mags *Arty* and *Garageland*. This latest series of paintings from Lomax forms part of a forthcoming exhibition, *O Dreamland*, devoted to seaside escapism.

'It's fitting that beauty contests in the UK started at the seaside: the home of kitsch, vulgarity and escapism,' Cathy tells us. 'Post WW2, Britons flocked to the seaside as an antidote to austerity, and girls parading around magnificent outdoor lidos in figure hugging swimwear, fitted the bill perfectly.'

'Were the girls controlling the crowds with their sexuality, or being exploited by those who watched? Looking back at photos from





the 50s, 60s and 70s, it seems a bit of both.

Beyond feminist readings I'm interested in the cracks in the girls' beautiful veneers. Rather than self-assured show-offs they're awkward, slightly embarrassed, even bored. Yet in spite of that, these girls-next-door have an underlying sense of pride at their queen for a day achievement. Seaside beauty contests fell out of popularity with the decline of British coastal resorts, and these girls have become museum pieces, evoking nostalgia for a more innocent time.' □

O Dreamland runs from 25-27th August.

For more details see transitiongallery.co.uk

