

## This is a Vampire Story

The thinking is... roughly... that the models from magazines are re-employed by me as templates for my painting activity and as hostesses to a stranger's encounter with the painting. They are professional actresses so they don't mind. They are skilled at playing a variety of roles but mostly their faces are kept blank for projection.

Models are meant to be copied so I take the image and I make it mine. This is an act of possession, like taking a photograph, but, through the painting process, the copied model becomes flawed and reworked many times until she becomes part of an abstract negotiation and eventually emerges as a character or presence which is both less knowable and more particular.

The models know that later, when they are fully prepared, they will play hostess to an audience. (Their poses are well rehearsed, the studio is backstage, the paint is cosmetic, girlish even, but then unruly, ugly, primal, unfashionable, awkward, emotional. The paintings are frozen performances.) Overall, the transformation is from a magazine ideal to an alternative, subjective fantasy... or you could say that the ideal commodity image gets 'lived in' until she acquires a new life in a painting, following her perfect death in the Barthesian photograph. 'Postcommodity'. The impossibly perfect commodity image, like any ideal, is never attainable; it is a modern Siren, shape-shifting and endlessly seductive, inviting us towards an eclipsed 'something else'.

In my work, painting itself- as a physical medium and a cultural fantasy- is fetishized and reimagined as a decadent vanity, an empty styling, an eroticised living death and an ancient chameleon language which perhaps uses us to continue. This is a vampire story.

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