

For his new exhibition at Alison Jacques Gallery, UK-based artist Graham Little will present a series of intricate drawings which extend the artist's fascination with processes of image-making. With each image focussing on the figure of a solitary female and inspired by a specific advertising or fashion magazine scenario, Little explores how a commercialised visual culture can be reclaimed to offer expanded narrative opportunities and rich new possibilities for empathy and emotional engagement.

Little's practice centres on the reinterpretation in gouache and coloured pencil on paper of photographs found in vintage health and beauty publications and fashion spreads and advertisements in magazines such as *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar*, from the mid-1970s onwards. In the act of remaking these images, Little proposes a range of masterfully controlled transformations, enhancing or muting certain tonal elements, erasing or adding figurative details, adjusting aspects of the composition and the *mise-en-scène* and transforming the surface finish of the image into something richer and more luminous than the flat gloss of fashion photography. Significant alterations in key design elements within the composition, both the fabrics adorning the women and the textiles and wallpapers surrounding them, are particularly important for Little, revealing a fascination with surface and detail not only as technical tools but also conceptual themes. By reincarnating these found photographic sources into exquisitely detailed and crafted drawings and watercolours, and investing his subjects with a pathos and psychological depth that is not allowed by the original fashion photography, Little reveals a distinctly romantic postmodernist sensibility. Eschewing in his practice both photorealist replication and the stratagems of appropriation deployed by other key artists confronting the age of mass-media, Little pursues instead an art of "non-mechanical reproduction", taking the superficiality of the source photographs as a cue to construct new narrative moments which restore some integrity to the subjects depicted in the drawings.

The status and identity of the female subject is also a question of profound importance for Little, whose works in this exhibition all concern a single woman re-enacted. The dominance of women in Little's work reflects not only the unique importance of women in the development in late twentieth-century consumerism, but also the problematic relationship of the female figure to art history. The various source images are subtly shifted so that the emphasis is no longer on objects or the evocation of aspirational living, but rather the female subject moves centre-stage in the drama and the prospect of imagining her interior life comes to the fore. Graham Little's practice offers with quiet determination an alternative imagining of how images of women in contemporary visual culture might be read, one which fixes their personality and value not through the things they can sell, but through what stories they might tell.

Graham Little (b. Dundee, UK, 1972) graduated from Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design, Dundee (1995), MA Goldsmiths College, London (1997), was a Research Associate in the Department of Fine Art at Goldsmiths. He has exhibited widely internationally including a solo exhibition at Camden Arts Centre, London (2001); Drawing Now: Eight Propositions at MoMA, New York (2002); Images of Society at Kunstmuseum, Thun (2003); WALL ROCKETS: Contemporary Artists and Ed Ruscha, curated by Lisa Dennison at The FLAG Art Foundation, New York (2008); The Associates, Dundee Contemporary Art Centre, Dundee (2009); and Lebenslust & Totentanz at Kunsthalle, Krems (2010). His work is represented in many important collections internationally, including Museum of Modern Art, New York; The Guggenheim Museum, New York; The Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA; Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art; The British Council Collection; The Zabłudowicz Collection, London; and The Olbricht Collection, Berlin. He lives and works in London.

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