

Jasia Rabiej and Ant Łakomsk

After Amy

chess club

Colonnaden 72 Hamburg

18 April 2025

The multi-layered compositions of Ant Łakomsk and Jasia Rabiej come from different formal orders. Paintings of Łakomsk are immersed in the legacy of portrait and landscape painting, while digital images by Rabiej can be associated with art created with the use of AI. Both artists refer to the “peaceful awkwardness of mundane activities: going to work, resting, going home from work, being a woman, seeing a woman, arguing, regretting arguing.”¹ With the help of autofiction and recollection, they produce the narrative based on a nostalgic pedestal of longing to be somewhere else, to embody alter-lives. Suspension between worlds—internal and external, virtual and material—becomes one of the fundamental issues in their practice. Taking an object out of one order and locating it outside its initial environment, in a certain interlude or void, defines their method and manner of compositions originating from traditional techniques and found material.

Something makes me think of Fred Perry's polo shirts—wasn't it that Amy Winehouse chose them to contrast with her recognisable style of a romantically ruined woman? She used the casual Brit-wear in her way—as if she was adopting a subcultural, conservative look to recover the tools for visual subversion and nostalgia. Fred Perry was also a rebel. He was born in 1909 to a working-class family, and soon became the world's number-one tennis player in the 1930s, after which he founded his clothing brand. The laurel wreath featured in the brand's logo is eventually falling out of its original context. To me, it is associated only with Amy—it is one of the prosthetics of memory, a vivid emblem of her remembrance.

Memory as prosthesis, nostalgia as life's momentum—the intangible and imaginary worlds within which we find the heroines of Łakomsk and Rabiej inconspicuously also begin with a rupture. Ant Łakomsk uses painterly vocabulary to play with the traditional genres. She situates her subjects on narrow canvases, resembling a vitrine or a coffin. Jasia Rabiej borrows from digital images that she finds online and distorts them. She plays with the records of other people's memories, brings them to life for a moment, and moves them from

¹ quoting the artists

photoblog spaces to project spaces. Both inscribe the imaginary self-narratives into banal, clichéd scenes—Ant suspends her characters between layers of reminiscences, and Jasia combines anonymous visual stories into new, pieced-together arrangements. They project, repeat, and reappropriate as if they were using tracing paper. Ant paints temporalities in which they may or may not have existed; Jasia blurs the evidence of their presence: they touch on issues of representation in coded and insider ways, exposing what at first glance seems overlooked—teenage girls along with their memories and group photos with other friends or pets.

Text by Franciszek Smoręda

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Workslist

Ant Łakomsk:

Living Room, 2025, oil on canvas, 170 × 40 cm

Solo, 2025, oil on canvas, 170 × 32 cm

After Amanda, 2025, oil on canvas, 170 × 32 cm

Jasia Rabiej:

London, 2025, digital print on archival paper, 50 × 40 cm

Birthday, 2025, digital print on archival paper, crayons, eyeshadow, 45 × 70 cm

Birthday wish, 2025, wooden display stand, keys, key rings, bracelet charms, 7 × 16 × 7 cm

Untitled, 2025, digital print on archival paper, crayons, eyeshadow, 100 × 70 cm

Bobbi Brown, 2025, wooden display stand, lipsticks, dried seahorses, 13 × 20 × 6,5 cm

One Love, 2025, carved wooden display stand, key, coins, 7,5 × 22 × 8 cm