

In Angélique Heidler's paintings, figures are set against a variety of backgrounds, media and motifs. Small add-ons and decorative elements frame, or adorn, them. They are appealing: glittery, fluffy, smooth, pink, shiny and small. Most of these objects were found in charity or 1-euro stores - perhaps cheapness and glamour do not exclude each other. Their placements are based on personal and ad hoc decisions, like a plot that never settles into a single meaning. On large-scale canvases, they sometimes interlock, then dematerialise again. Heidler approaches these visual moments in her compositions: in some paintings, the surface opens up; in others, it withdraws, revealing only hints without anticipating all scope for interpretation.

A doll is carrying a handbag. She looks both like a *grand dame* and a child. The idea of simultaneity rather than exclusion is a recurring motif. Traditionally a tool for children to rehearse adulthood, the doll is reclaimed and placed onto a large-scale canvas - a surface historically coded with masculinity and reminiscent of 20th-century modernist painting. Against this background, the doll becomes into a reversion that leaves open who is imitating whom; and who is taken seriously. She is one among numerous women and girls you meet: models, dolls and mannequins or Dua Lipa and Brigitte Bardot. Their depictions are only subtly framed by man-like figures, smoking or reading.

The images of young women evoke the conceptual figure developed by Tiquun collective in *Preliminary Materials for a Theory of the Young-Girl*, first published in 1999. The text is a collage of Tiquun's own writings with loosely quoted fragments from post-structuralist, Situationist and Marxist theory, combined with the language of French women's magazines. Here, the 'Young-Girl' is a figurative construct: the ideal subject of consumer society, simultaneously its total product and model citizen. Despite the gendered language, the Young-Girl has no biological sex or gender identity, and is not necessarily young; rather, 'she' functions as a 'technique of the self', structured by the imperative to be desirable. The Young-Girl's production is self-production: she strives to embody the images of desirable femininity and youth circulated by corporate media.

It would be misleading to interpret the girls and women depicted in the paintings as literal representations of the Young-Girl per se. Still, the metaphor provides a lens through which a specific kind of subjectivity can be understood - a way of being, feeling, thinking, and presenting oneself that seems central to these works. Also, the fragmentary, as both gesture and technique, is something that Heidler's paintings and Tiquun's text have in common. In both cases, it evokes the way we communicate and consume media and images today: fleeting impressions take the place of sustained attention. The works on display mimic the self-stylisation of the Young-Girl whose appearance, too, is assembled like a visual collage from glossy magazine pages, movie stills and borrowed gestures.

Rather than simply reproducing depictions of women, the voyeuristic moments that repeatedly appear in Heidler's paintings are actively subverted. The viewer's gaze is redirected, sometimes blurred by paint, distracted by glossiness, or disrupted by the small objects. The result is a space where interpretation remains open-ended, a truth claimed both for the work and the viewer: dressing up can be self-expression or the wish to hide.

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