

ESSAIS

57 Boulevard de la Villette 75010 Paris

Karine, Shione, Faith, Chloé, Merylin

Andrea Eooi

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One might paraphrase Louis Marin: “The portrait of Chloé is in fact Chloé in portrait, where Chloé is not the name of the model of the portrait, but the name of the portrait of the model.” Or rather: *Chloé* is the title of the painting, Chloé is also the name of the model, and Chloé finally is here one of the five bodies of painting that step forward, an apparition that takes on paint as one takes on flesh, and that likewise takes on a name.

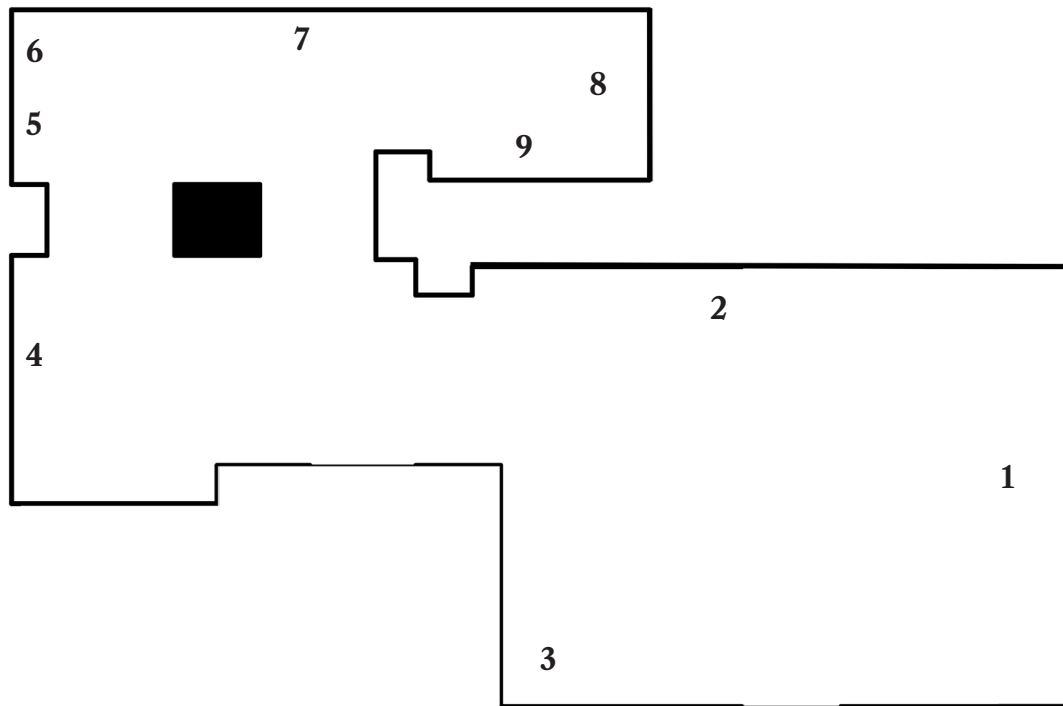
In the family home, Andrea Eooi would sometimes find, folded behind a wardrobe, a Playboy pin-up poster. It was the mid-2000s, and this type of image had begun circulating online—licentious images, yet ones that formed a particular knot with a certain color of memory, that of childhood. Memory, the first point from which *Karine, Shione, Faith, Chloé, and Merylin* emerge, just as her earlier series had arisen from it, drawn from personal photo albums, or from the observation of ordinary objects, yet charged with affect, within their environment.

Now, Andrea Eooi gathers material online and collects screenshots from pornographic films from the 2000s–2010s, using reverse image search engines to find, from a single selected image, others related to it, as well as foreign platforms that are less censored. The collective well of the internet, deep and immense, constitutes the second threshold of emergence; but by what qualities does an image come to stand out within this murky archive? What miracle (or what ordering) of composition allowed, here alone, the manifestation of a feeling? Painting becomes a way of slowly undoing the process concealed within the immediacy of seduction.

Andrea Eooi works in grisaille: deprived of a varied chromatic range, painting dramatizes its effects. She adjusts a cursor that can move only from more to less along the scale of values, rather than circulating across the extended map of a color chart. Historically, grisaille is associated with a form of austerity; here, it allows the removal of any excess of lewdness. Economy appears at every level: the artist relies on a rigorous working protocol, her own craftsmanship, and the resources at hand—offcuts of wood that determine the format of the works or from which she builds her own stretchers, fabrics she kept from her years of study at École Duperré or recovered from wholesale merchants, hand-prepared paint, and few pigments—Naples yellow for light (when applied thickly, it gives a warm tone; in thin layers, it appears cooler), umber and ochre for the darker passages. As for her technical knowledge, she draws it from Renaissance painting treatises, which already contain answers to the questions posed today by digital images.

Andrea Eooi begins with the dark ground, from which, in the time of painting, through successive additions and sandings, the slow detachment of form occurs. This also happens in the instant of viewing. For grisaille is a play of shadows and light that pushes painting toward trompe-l’œil—less because it leads us into illusion at face value, than because it introduces distance. And it is through distance that light can outline in shadow the forward movement of a breast, a mesh of silk, the ridge of a nose, a curl of hair—the emergence of Karine, Shione, Faith, Chloé, and Merylin. This is why we have less “the portrait of Chloé”—the representation of a body—than “Chloé in portrait”—a body that steps forward in paint and in light. That steps forward: for it is not so much our gaze that probes the depth of the painting, but the figure that comes toward us. It seems to exceed its fiction and penetrate reality—so that our reality becomes fiction, for we no longer quite know where the boundary lies between the image and the eye. A deceived eye.

And a touching eye. In *Camera Lucida*, Roland Barthes writes that “what distinguishes the erotic photograph from the pornographic photograph” is that the former “leads the spectator outside its frame.” These dark zones from which Karine, Shione, Faith, Chloé, and Merylin burst forth—whether those of memory, of the vast imagery of the internet, or of painting—are that “blind field” where desire takes shape. Barthes continues: the pornographic body, by contrast, “shows itself; it does not give itself; in it there is no generosity.” Unlike the bodies that come toward us, and whose mystery Andrea Eooi’s painting preserves even as it accompanies it. It allows us to contemplate the invisible of representation, where perhaps the two great absentees of these perfectly tensioned busts have vanished.



1. *merylin 01*, 2025, Tempera, oil paint on silk mounted on wood panel, 29 × 48 × 0.9 cm (11.4 × 18.9 × 0.4 in)
2. *shione 01*, 2025, Tempera, oil paint on linen, 73 × 116 × 2.3 cm (28.7 × 45.7 × 0.9 in)
3. *chloe 03*, 2025, Tempera, oil paint on silk mounted on wood panel, 68 × 35 × 0.9 cm (26.8 × 13.8 × 0.4 in)
4. *faith 03*, 2025, Tempera, oil paint on linen, 54 × 54 × 2.3 cm (21.3 × 21.3 × 0.9 in)
5. *D05*, 2025, Pencil and pastel on paper, 21 × 29.7 cm (8.3 × 11.7 in)
6. *D04*, 2025, Pencil and pastel on paper, 21 × 29.7 cm (8.3 × 11.7 in)
7. *karine 03*, 2025, Tempera, oil paint on linen, 95 × 65 × 2.3 cm (37.4 × 25.6 × 0.9 in)
8. *D03*, 2025, Pencil and pastel on paper, 21 × 29.7 cm (8.3 × 11.7 in)
9. *faith 02*, 2025, Tempera, oil paint on silk mounted on wood panel, 38 × 52 × 0.8 cm (15 × 20.5 × 0.3 in)