

Arta Ajeti
Dreamed her badly
April 8 - May 23 2026

In this body of work, intimate graphite drawings depict feminine figures between self-presentation and withdrawal. Set within dreamlike interiors and indeterminate spaces, bodies emerge through abrupt illumination, veils of shadow, and shimmering drapery. The compositions are carefully staged, but resist narrative closure. Instead, the drawings hold the figure in an unstable state, at once self-aware, vulnerable, and difficult to fully grasp.

Working from a personal archive of photographs that are instinctively selected, collaged, and often already degraded, the artist treats the sourcing of images as a structuring part of the practice. Detached from their original contexts, these fragments are gathered for the affective potential of gesture, texture, and pose, then reassembled as the basis from which the drawings emerge. Using graphite as both a descriptive and corrosive medium, these references are translated through layering, smudging, and repeated reworking. Flash-lit areas are created and pushed toward overexposure, while other forms collapse into dense, near-black fields, often testing the threshold at which an image begins to come apart and real and imagined elements become difficult to separate.

Throughout the work, feminine avatars emerge and recede like apparitions, their bodies are soft, reflective, luminous, and at times estranged from themselves. Around them, wrecked cars, theatrical curtains, static-filled screens, stairwells, storm clouds, and ornamental surfaces create a world in which glamour and damage are held in uneasy proximity. Informed by psychoanalytic thought, the drawings construct a world shaped by desire, identification, and loss, where meaning adheres to surfaces, gestures, and fragments and where the figure appears less as a stable subject than as something continually slipping from definition.

Arta Ajeti is a Montreal-based artist working primarily in drawing. She is currently pursuing an MFA in Painting and Drawing at Concordia University, and holds a BFA in Illustration from Parsons, The New School for Design (2017). Alongside her studio work, she has several years of professional experience as an illustrator and tattoo artist, which informs her sensitivity to drawing and image-making. She has exhibited in group exhibitions including *Melted City 5* at Blanc Gallery (2025) in Quezon City, *Flash* at Harsh Collective (2024) in New York, *Friends of Friends* at Project HOY (2022) in Montreal, and *Melted City 4* at Yui Gallery (2018) in New York. Her work has been recognised through awards including the Tom Hopkins Memorial Graduate Award and the Leslie Schalk Painting and Drawing Award (2026).