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ADRIANA MOLDER



BEAUTY ISN'T ALL BLACK AND WHITE. AT LEAST NOT IN ADRIANA MOLDER'S SPECTRAL PORTRAITS. WORKING MAINLY WITH INDIA INK AND DELICATE PAPERS, THE PORTUGUESE ARTIST PAINTS FACES THAT HARK BACK TO FILM ICONS, EACH PAINTING TELLING A STORY IN ITS STILLNESS. WE GRABBED A MOMENT WITH HER TO HEAR ABOUT HER INFATUATION WITH CINEMA AND A FRIEND WHO LOOKS LIKE GOSLING.

When did you first start making art? Did you have any training?

Around 1996, I was making small-scale works on tracing paper. I didn't really know what to call them so I guess it was art. I first studied stage design in theatre school, but when I finally went to art school, I knew what I wanted to do. The drawings got bigger in scale, and I started to focus more on faces. I did my first solo show in 2002.

What drew you to India ink and tracing paper?

I've always been attracted to black-and-white photos, drawings and movies, so black India ink seemed like the perfect medium to get started with. The really deep black surface I get by many layers of ink reminds me of a black sea. I remember there was a day when I wanted to draw, and I only had tracing paper in the house. I went with it and was amazed by its possibilities. The way it reacts to water, its ephemerality, its fragility...it's so much better than regular paper. But now I'm working mainly with acrylic on canvas, and ink on watercolour papers.

Tell us about your new series of works, 'The Light In The Heart' and 'Mystery'.

It's a series of six paintings, and some new colours are visited in these portraits – red, neon-like shades, and a bit of blue. I started

with the idea of lost love but ended up painting a very mysterious group of ghosts. The 'mystery' is in how I represent the female faces – all of them are watching or being watched.

We heard that film icons inspire the faces in your portraits. What is it about movies that strike a chord?

I watch all sorts of films, mostly American and European cinema. When I like a particular film, I find myself moved and changed by it. In my works, I use a combination of things from films – a particular face, or a character in a still with lighting that pleases me.

Which faces do you find yourself depicting most often?

I have a friend whose face I used as a model for a long time back when I was in art school. And I find myself using Ryan Gosling – who looks a lot like my friend – as a model for my works quite often. I also have a fascination with Marlene Dietrich, so I go back to her from time to time.

The faces in your portraits have rather haunted expressions. What were your intentions behind them?

You can see all you want if you look carefully into people's eyes, and my portraits should be

the same. For some time I wanted distance, but now what I really want is directness.

Do the vivid touches of red in your paintings represent anything?

I love red almost as much as I love black. I use it to point out something, to make something in the painting more intense, as well as warmer.

We heard you don't do any prep sketches for your paintings. How do you keep from making errors?

I think it was Bacon who said that painting is an adventure. I agree, and even though most times I know where I want to go, it's moments where you can either fail or succeed that are exciting. I have saved some works from my mistakes, and they become very strong works, but if it's a serious error I would destroy it.

What do you want people to take away from viewing your works?

I hope they have the guts and time to meet the people in my paintings. After that, anything can happen. J

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Adriana Molder: The Light in the Heart is on until July 10 at Art Plural Gallery, 38 Armenian Street.