

BLOUIN modernpainters

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OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2010

PIPILOTTI RIST

AN EXCLUSIVE
PROJECT

DONNA HUANCA >

SKIN IN
THE GAME

MARNIE WEBER

CASTS
A SPELL



JIMMY ROBERT
MARC CAMILLE CHAIMOWICZ
SAM MCKINNISS



DARREN
BADER'S
WEIRD MARKET





Prince (Under the Cherry Moon), 2016. Oil and acrylic on canvas, 18 x 14 in.

OPPOSITE: *Pink Roses (after Fantin-Latour)*, 2016. Oil and acrylic on canvas, 16 x 12 in.

SAM MCKINNISS

The artist on his new paintings

PATRICIA HIGHSMITH'S 1949 short story "The Great Cardhouse" is about a French collector of counterfeit paintings. It follows Lucien, a connoisseur of forgery, who takes great pleasure in going to auctions all over Europe, seeking out and paying top dollar for fake masterpieces being peddled as authentic. This is much to the chagrin of the art establishment. His mere presence at auction is all that's required to signal to other bidding parties that a fake is afoot and that they are possibly being duped. Highsmith's collector of fake art glories in

artifice, chicanery, and playful, highbrow dubiousness. What I mean is that he's being sincere if he says he prefers to commune with camp rather than with so-called originality, which is what makes Highsmith's characterization so intriguing and relatable. Facsimiles of genius, or better yet, anonymous art surreptitiously masquerading as famous art: that's what Lucien prefers to collect.

Lucien is on a mission to acquire a spurious Giotto at a prominent auction house in Aix. He makes the acquaintance

of a pianist named Mlle Duhamel, whom he sees perform a Scarlatti sonata at a presale gathering. He discerns from her expression and mannerism while playing that she hates Scarlatti; indeed, the pianist detests music altogether, even though her playing is expert and her tonality beautiful. Regardless, the audience assembled before her is enchanted. Lucien senses a kindred spirit.

Later, when the supposedly fake Giotto is sold to him, and upon closer inspection is proved authentic, Lucien is crestfallen. He is defeated in the face of originality, his authority on the subject of forgery made fallible. It is Mlle Duhamel's unlikely kinship that rescues him. By the end of Highsmith's story, the two are shaking hands and pledging friendship, recognizing in one another the same essential displeasure they derive from uncontested mastery, from others' untried connoisseurship, from craven, God-given talent.

My friend Jayson Musson said in an interview a couple of years ago: "Every morning I wake up, look at my naked body in my bedroom mirror and think to myself: 'Your profanity knows no end.'" I relate to that, even though I don't think I'm particularly debased or unattractive; neither, for that matter, is Jayson, but I know what he means. I hope no one feels that my paintings have held up a mirror to anything. I would consider that rude. All my recent paintings are a pastiche of JPEGs found online, desultory images that randomly inspire. When Prince died, I stayed up until 3 A.M. looking through the thousands of searchable pictures of him. The following day, I made this painting you see here.

Often enough, a found JPEG of an older painting does the trick. For instance, I've been downloading and making copies of 19th-century floral still lifes by Henri Fantin-Latour for several years now. I find his work to be somewhat morose, suspenseful, and indescribably beautiful. But lately when I've been painting, I have thought about Lucien and how he might prefer my version to Fantin-Latour's, which makes me feel pretty good. MP

McKinniss's exhibition "Egyptian Violet" will be on view at Team Gallery in New York from October 13 to November 13.

