

THE ARTIST ROOM

ANIA HOBSON: HOTEL

25 May–24 June 2023

Private view: Wednesday 24 May, 6-8pm

Opening times: Wednesday–Friday, 11am–6pm and Saturday, 12–5pm

*We're taking pictures like we're a couple. Like we like each other. Like we're husband and wife, and we *span* time together. We *span* time together as a couple. Because we're a loving couple, *spanning* time. These photos are us, in love, *spanning* time.*

Billy Brown in Buffalo 66 dir. by Vincent Gallo (1998)

The Artist Room is delighted to present a solo exhibition of new paintings and drawings by Ania Hobson (b.1990, Suffolk, UK). In tandem with the works on view, Hobson has, for the first time, produced a video animation and published a bespoke, physical comic zine incorporating unseen drawings and textual narration.

Ania Hobson's paintings distil the breadth of human emotion by depicting evocative characters within staged yet universally-relatable vignettes. Utilising a distinctively fiery palette, her characteristically-cinematic works explore how the capability of humans to read emotion in one another – whether close or unfamiliar – is essential to human survival. 'I look a lot at the psychology of people,' she recently observed. 'Such as body language and the complex expressions that we use to communicate with each other.'

Hotel, Hobson's latest body of work, imagines two figures in an unravelling romantic relationship that quickly becomes estranged following a – what should usually be restorative – hotel visit. Predominately situated at nighttime, the paintings situate a couple in different parts of an indistinct hotel, where an overriding sense of conflict and friction permeates. *0:00am Drink*, 2023 (2023) depicts a figure drinking a martini alone. Resting her head in her hands and her arm outstretched on the bar, the work perhaps references the withdrawn figure in Manet's *A Bar at the Folies-Bergere* (1882). In *Hotel* (2023) one figure leaves the hotel room while the other gazes in the other direction below a lurid spotlight. The split painting *Decision* (2023) shows the same two figures later on at night; one walking alone, the other unable to sleep.

The works produced for the exhibition bring together influences ranging from Vincent Gallo's avant-garde film Buffalo 66 to comedic TV shows like Garfield; the acerbic

British newspaper cartoonist Carl Giles; and the cult American newspaper comic Calvin and Hobbes. Like in *Buffalo 66*, the dreamlike paintings combine biography with fiction while avoiding the specificity of any particular time period. All of the paintings are characterised by the intense red that Hobson has likened to the vitality of blood: 'reminiscent of when you'd hold your hand up to the light and there's that slight appearance of the red haze almost, it can be something dangerous, romantic, angry, or even just deeply passionate.'

In all of Hobson's oeuvre, the agency and subjectivity of women is placed at the forefront. Describing her work, Hobson once observed her practice as 'another, more primal form of expressing language to me, and one that sometimes subconsciously realises my own anxieties. But I want people to interpret the paintings in their own way, perhaps reading their own lives into my figures.'

NOTES TO EDITORS

Ania Hobson (b. 1990, Suffolk, UK, lives and works in London, UK). In 2011, Hobson graduated with a BA in Fine Art from Ipswich University, Suffolk, UK, followed by an MA from The Royal Drawing School, London (2013) and an MA from the Florence Academy of Art, Florence (2014). In 2018, Hobson received the Young Artist Award in the BP Portrait Awards, granted by the National Portrait Gallery, London, UK.

Recent solo and two-person exhibitions include *Ania Hobson & Barbara Kruger*, Morgan Presents, New York, USA (2023); *The Social*, Ruttkowski;68, Paris, France (2022–23); *Playing with Fire*, Steve Turner, Los Angeles, USA (2022); *I See You*, SETAREH X, Dusseldorf, Germany; and *Ania Hobson*, Gillian Jason Gallery, London, UK (both 2021). Recent group exhibitions include *Women Painting Women*, Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Texas, USA; *Women of Now: Dialogues of Memory, Place and Identity*, Green Family Art Foundation, Dallas, USA; and *Personal Structures*, European Cultural Center, Venice, Italy (all 2022)

Hobson's work resides in prominent collections including the Green Family Art Foundation, Texas, USA; and the John Marquez Family Collection, Florida, USA.

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