

YOU'RE A WOMAN I'M A MACHINE

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ROSS VAUGHAN, SHAUN THATCHER,
JOANNA GOULD

WORKS BY ROSS VAUGHAN AND SHAUN THATCHER



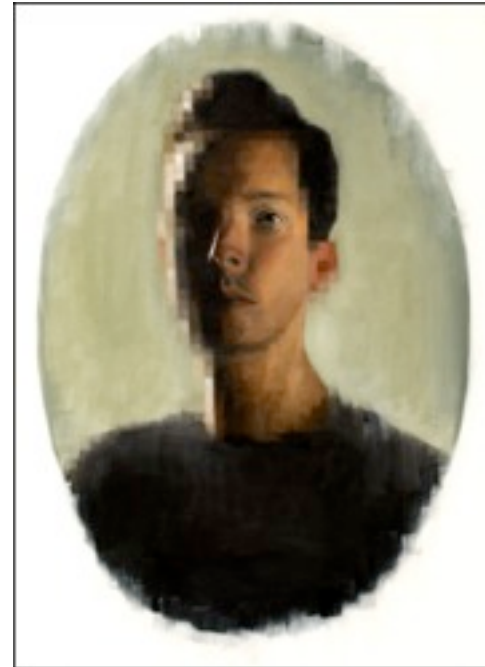
34-40 JANE BELL LANE, QV BUILDING, MELBOURNE

Thought you would fulfil your human-on-robot fantasies didn't you? Think you may be titillated by the digital and flesh combined? Saw the title – You're a Woman, I'm a Machine¹ and found yourself hoping to find the type of android/human depictions that would make your mother blush? You sick fuck.²

Well, let's see if amongst this cacophony of nostalgia and digital mind bending we cannot find you something to whet your appetite.

Mr Thatcher seems to have something for you here. What appears to be your generic run of the mill still life and portraiture has distorted itself into something else. This should work for any young beings with twisted sensibilities. It is this digital flirtation with traditional representation that would be sure to get even the old masters hot and bothered.³ Though initially you can be forgiven for thinking these are at once a pointillist's nightmare and a cubist's wet dream, consider again.⁴ Much like the anamorphosis of yore, you first find yourself drawn into decoding these perfect shapes and their overall design. Back it up. Let yourself be forced backwards by Thatcher from the pixelated details and get some perspective. Your mind will naturally reconstitute and make sense of this madness with every step.

Mr Vaughan on the other hand conjures images of a mechanical workshop in George Jetson's robotic future.⁵ Whether it's the hypercolour used or the fixation with the artificial subject matter, he



"JAMIE"
SHAUN THATCHER 2013
OIL ON CANVAS 16" X 22"

"ALFRED PASSES
THE TURING TEST"
ROSS VAUGHAN 2013
OIL ON LINEN 24" X 34"

appears to be artistically toying with my childhood playthings.⁶ There is a feeling of being confronted by depictions lingering in my innocent mind without permission. What right have you to appropriate the images of my youth, sir? That said, like a post-war Japanese cartoon there is something more than just 'boys and their robots' about his work. These artificial agents build a narrative of entering into battle when you meet them exhibited canvas to canvas.⁷ They are mostly familiar faces in some mechanical stand off with the spectator – but perhaps not in the fashion that the title suggested.

Two artists brought together by inevitability and proximity have created what can only be described as an exhibition of the artificial. So why don't you invest in some artifice?

JOANNA GOULD

¹ Or you are a lost Death From Above 1979 fan. Sorry to disappoint but it's not my fault they named their damned exhibition after an album title (Albeit a great one).

² Hopefully you will soon come to the same realisation as Sam Treadwell in Cherry 2000 that sexy android lovers are not what they're cracked up to be.

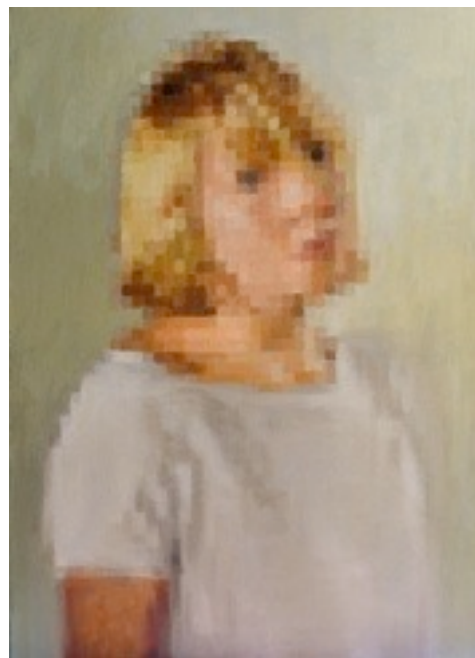
³ Consider the way 1533 would have received Hans Holbein's The Ambassadors.

⁴ Though I do not claim to have an intimate knowledge of the Cubist mind I always presumed Braque was thinking perverted thoughts under those silver locks of his.

⁵ In other words nothing like the first automaton designed in the 12 century by Al-Jazari – that's right, this is not a new subject matter.

⁶ Though I admit that is I guess what their sole purpose is. I, myself, cut all the hair off my Barbie making it into a Ken with breasts. Freud would.

⁷ "Come with me if you want to live".



"VICTORIA"
SHAUN THATCHER 2012
OIL ON CANVAS 16" X 22"



"THERE'S NO 'I' IN METAL"
ROSS VAUGHAN 2012
OIL ON LINEN, 24" X 34"

RV: Hi Shaun. So what's with all the pixels? And why the hell does your studio smell so repulsive?

ST: Hi Ross. The pixels started out as an experiment—a way to bring my photography into my painting, then it sort of took over. Unfortunately the sink in my studio is full of fermenting acrylic paint. So what was the last exhibition you went to like?

RV: Acrylic is lame. The last exhibition I went to was around the corner from my house. Some kind of pop-up bollocks. Can we start over?

ST: No. If you had to pick between Rose Madder and Permanent Rose which would it be?

RV: I'd thought you'd never ask. Rose Madder is pretty sweet for skin tones, but it's expensive, and the pigment's weaker than permanent rose, which is usually a series two or thereabouts. And it makes a killer bubblegum pink.

ST: So where did the robots come from? I tend to work from my own photographs but you seem to cull images from a whole bunch of different sources.

RV: Well, I like chance and unexpected results. I make individual paintings with little or no conceptual framework at all, I just let my intuition choose what to paint. By painting a series of images in the same dimensions, using the same aesthetic, the same palette of colours, a sort of sequential narrative starts to form, and once that begins you just keep adding and adding until you've got something substantial. It's a story, of sorts. What about you? Why paint pixels instead of just digitally altering photographs?

ST: Painting is an additive process; you start from nothing and end up with something, even if it's shit,



"OUIJA NO.1"
ROSS VAUGHAN 2012
OIL ON LINEN 42" X 48"



"DATASET NO.2 (OF 4)"
SHAUN THATCHER 2013
OIL ON LINEN 16" X 16"

"DATASET NO.4 (OF 4)"
SHAUN THATCHER 2013
OIL ON LINEN 16" X 16"

while photography is reductive; you look through a camera and 'take' a photo. I like how they relate to each other. Plus, painting is fun.

RV: Agreed. Let's talk about being a representational painter in Melbourne at the moment. Do you think figurative painting has a place within local contemporary art?

ST: Probably not, but who gives a fuck. We're lucky enough to live in a society that tolerates 'art school' as an actual life decision. I like painting stuff.

RV: How much time a week do you spend on making art?

ST: We're painters, not artists. I spend 30 odd hours a week, on top of my day job and uni bullshit. You?

RV: I refuse to answer that question. Why don't you paint a picture of someone who gives a shit? Don't you want to talk about how you work interacts with the space and the lexicon you use? Go on, indulge your inner art-wanker.

ST: As far as I can tell, our best guess is that the Sun will die in four billion years or so, and the Earth along with it. Painting is one way I deal with that anxiety in the absence of real problems.

RV: That's grim mate, Here, Have a Chupa chup

ST: Cheers. In closing, how about some word association?

ST: Burnt Sienna

ST: Bungip

ST: Thermonuclear Warhead

ST: Crust Punk

RV: Brown

RV: Jesus

RV: Rainbows

RV: Dreadlocks

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