

Wonderland.

EMOTION WITHOUT WORDS

Swamped in Miu Miu, three of London's finest talk creativity.



Photo courtesy of Wonderland Magazine

One's Insta bio describes her as a “Diamanté in the rough” while another partners outlined emojis with a simple introduction of “painting/london” – a third suggests she’d “do anything for attention”. The reality is that London’s art scene is bangin’, and Paolina Russo, Faye Wei Wei and Alba Hodsoll are names we really think you should get to know.

Doused in Miu Miu (because it doesn’t get much better, or more apt right now, than Miuccia), the female trio are responsible for some golden moments on the ‘gram – we still dream about Faye’s SS18 set for Shrimps, frequently – while each boasts a strong execution of their respective practice (Paolina works in knitwear, Faye and Alba in paint).

With fans in John Galliano and Antonia Marsh, don’t just take our word for it.

Faye Wei Wei

Describing one of Faye Wei Wei's paintings can be likened to the task of recounting a scene from Greek mythology, or maybe just a really weird dream. In one work a bride is guarded by a knight and a lioness, while in another a handsome young man shields his horse from a venomous snake. "When I begin to make a painting, I'm trying to find an image or composition that intrigues me," the 23-year-old artist confides. "These symbols allow me to express a language of emotion without words, they are what makes up the meaning in a painting."

Inspired by feelings of love, lust, and desire, Wei Wei's paintings capture the push and pull of human emotion. They are, as she explains, echoes of the "tangible vibrations that exist between people." "I think some people think my work is overly feminine or decorative," she adds. "But when I look at them I see something quite dark and quite strong."

Found in the spikes of sea urchins, lobster crackers, and her solid, purposeful brushstrokes, this darkness is where the magic of Wei Wei's work resides. Her paintings are not simply large-scale representations of the mythical, but rather, intricate tapestries that honour the challenges and frustrations of the world around her just as much as the beautiful elements. "It was a painful process," Wei Wei says in regards to the creation of her recent collection, *Anemones and Lovers*. "Painting is always about pleasure and pain and about failure I think, but I am happy I managed to come out with something that was actually very healing to me and brought me so much pleasure."

A collector as much as a painter, Wei Wei's studio is a glorious mess of trinkets and treasures from around the world that guide her paintbrush by the power of the memory associated with each item. But where will the artist's inspiration take her next? "I think soon, the moon, will bloom," she says in response to the question. A fitting answer from London's most cryptic painter. – RD



Photo courtesy of Wonderland Magazine

Alba Hodson

"For some reason if a woman today is making sex paintings she's a 'sex artist', or a 'feminist artist'. However, if a man is doing the same, he's just an 'artist'", Alba Hodson tells me, confronting the double standards that surround the sexual themes of her art. "I'm a feminist, yes – so long as I'm conscious it would be hard not to be. I'm still confused as to who and why one would resist the term. My work will likely portray feminism at times, but I don't seek 'feminist' subject matters."

Examining sex, flaws and the feminine form, the young artist portrays organic and abstract shapes, coming together through delicate lines and thoughtful use of negative space to produce a subtle, yet resonant vision of human physicality. Having two solo exhibitions under her belt at the Alex Eagle

Studio – as well as playing a part in Antonia Marsh’s Girls Only residency programme at The Cob Gallery – her abstraction of the human form creates an ambiguous effect, encouraging the viewer to present their own conclusions. Hodoll describes her study of the female form as an “investigative” process, one of “exploration, experimentation, and elimination, as has been my experience living in my own body.”

The name of her most recent series at The Cob Gallery, POV, is an acronym borrowed from a category on porn sites, “Point of View”, which portrays the act as though from the outlook of one partner. Capturing closely cropped details of selected elicited scenes without expressing opinion nor judgement, Hodoll’s art forces the viewer to form their own stance, encouraging a dialogue around how we each individually view sex. “I am not taking any particular stance on the subject of pornography. Nor am I attempting to direct viewers to one conclusion,” she explains. “One of the most rewarding aspects of making images out of your own chaos is to then present it to another to hear their chaos.” – LS



Photo courtesy of Wonderland Magazine

Paolina Russo

Fashion Design Knitwear student at Central Saint Martins, stylist, illustrator, intern at Maison Margiela – and muse of John Galliano. Quite an addition to the resume of a 22-year-old, though unsurprising when you look at Paolina Russo’s body of work. The Canadian born designer is an explosion of fun and colour, creating clothing that embodies a clever sense of humour whilst empowering its wearer. “I like my work to have a sense of humour because fashion is funny,” says Russo. “But the most important thing is to make clothes that people look good in – I love pieces that complement the body, exaggerate features and, ultimately, make you look sexy”.

What really sets her apart from the crowd however, is her transformative eye for textiles and impressive practice of repurposing found materials, a skill she has developed during her time at CSM: “I find the process of creating my own textiles extremely interesting as it gives more control and room to experiment, which is why learning knitting techniques is so valuable”. Having constructed garments out of everything from woven cassette tapes to car seat leather, the young designer has a distinctive creative style that knows no boundaries of the ordinary, able to bring the unconventional together seamlessly in one bright and bold ensemble. “I think, at my core, I’m just a romantic,” she muses on her inspiration, citing the memories, colours and shapes of her suburban childhood as well as her family and boyfriend.

Landing the dream internship of any aspiring designer – with the aforementioned Maison Margiela in Paris – Russo found one of fashion’s biggest names as her new mentor. In turn Galliano listed her

as one of his muses in an interview with Business of Fashion's Tim Blanks late last year, something she found "extremely flattering, unexpected and incredibly surreal". She took away from Margiela the "understanding of creating an entire story and world around your work, something really important to John – even the smallest detail had a story and reason behind it". Since returning to London, Russo has been chosen as a British Fashion Council Scholar, which will help produce her final BA collection, to be completed in May. "I'm really excited about it! Can't wait to share with everyone." – LS

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