



SPRING LOADED:
MACHO ART
BITCHIN' SURFBOARDS
LOTS OF SKIN
AND THIS NEW SEASON'S
WILDEST FASHION



39

SPRING PREVIEW 2006

**V BELONG
TOGETHER!**

MARIAH CAREY IN BULGARI
PHOTOGRAPHED BY KARL LAGERFELD



PAPER DOLLS

IN THE DARK AND DELICATE PAPERWORK BY DUTCH ARTIST AMIE DICKE, EVEN HER OWN SELF-PORTRAIT ISN'T SAFE FROM A SHARP BLADE

After graduating from the Willem de Kooning Academy in Rotterdam, Dutch-born artist Amie Dicke traveled to New York on a starter's grant from the government. She had hoped to develop her art career, and perhaps begin a new life for herself. Instead

Dicke found herself inexorably lost in the bright lights and dizzying speed of the city, struggling to land a job and make friends. It was this classic state of New York loneliness that led her to feel closer to the familiar faces of Kate, Gisele, and J.Lo, who graced every billboard and bus stop. In a city of cold shoulders, the ubiquity of supermodels occasionally comes in handy.

From then on, Dicke blanketed herself with fashion magazines, transfixed by the eternal covenants of beauty and perfection. And at the same time she was deconstructing those myths with surgeon-like precision. "While looking at the glossy pictures," Dicke recalls, "I started to draw black lines on the faces and bodies of the women using a pen. By adding flowing lines of black ink, I covered the original colors and other compositional elements. After that I took a knife and removed the space between the lines—the fashion, the jewelry, and parts of their faces and bodies." It was this technique that Dicke began applying to all of her icons. She colored in and sliced up all but a few elements—usually leaving the model's hair and upper lip, occasionally a pair of stilettos, or the nipples of a nude. What remained

was skeletal, almost diaphanous, revealing not only a metaphorical void, but a network of very real negative spaces. These cutouts, or *Snijwerken* as they're known in Dutch, have been compared with lace, veins, and dripping wax. Dicke herself describes them as "fragile figures existing in a gossamer-thin web of contours." Although she shies away from the term gothic, none of her early work would seem out of place on the cover of a death metal LP. Her contrasting filigree of black threads and shadowy slits may have stemmed from a "personal, empty feeling," but it's clear that her reward is catharsis. Her once docile subjects become striking, converting a model's empty gaze into a wraithlike, powerful trance.

As a young girl, Dicke was already collecting fashion magazines, pinning gorgeous women on her bedroom walls and wrapping birthday gifts in their pages. Her interest in fashion is longstanding, and when she speaks of it—rattling off designers such as Martin Margiela, Isabel Marant, and Viktor & Rolf as favorites—one has no doubt that she's a lifelong devotee. "I love fashion," she gushes. "For instance, to hang a dress outside the closet so you can see it and look at it



BOY COLOR COPY YAMA THE MUSEUM

V MAGAZINE

I see clothes sometimes like sculptures." It is sculpture, namely, that Dicke's work has always been concerned with. For her final project in art school, she constructed a mold of the space between her legs, made entirely of marzipan, and then covered it with pink confectionery icing. Within days, the sugary pillars began to crumble, demonstrating the imminent destruction and fragility of feminine form. It was titled, *How Sweet Is the Space Between My Legs*.

Dicke insists that her work is a critique of herself, and not of fashion. It is in the pages of fashion magazines, after all, from which she elicits inspiration. "I first discovered *V* in New York at a magazine shop," Dicke describes that fruitful happenstance. She was instantly drawn to its oversized photographs, shot by the likes of Mario Sorrenti, Selve Sundsbo, and Inez van Lamsweerde and Vinoodh Matadin, all of whom she adored. Their pictures became her palette, source material for work that has been shown at the Tate Modern, Art Forum Berlin, and several major galleries around the world. When *V* staffers heard about a girl making

cutouts of their pages, they ran right over to D'Amelio Terras Gallery to check it out. An introduction was quickly arranged, and in September 2005, Visionaire Gallery debuted a solo exhibit of her work titled "Verwilder" ("Run Wild" in Dutch). All of the pieces were drawn from the pages of *V* and specially commissioned for its New York gallery. These were the largest works Dicke had ever made. At that scale, the models were near life-size, and her trellised canvases looked like ominous billboards, delicately floating against the gallery wall.

The success of this collaboration spawned a second project for the magazine and the artist: a self-portrait. Dicke met with Mario Sorrenti, and posed for what would be her first cutout using herself as the subject. Working with Sorrenti was "wonderful," and put Dicke behind the makeup, hair extensions, and hot lights for the first time. When she received a print of her portrait, the thought of cutting herself out seemed suddenly unnerving. "Making the picture was a lot of fun," she explains, "but the difficult part began when I had to start working at the image." The girl

behind the hair and makeup was no stranger, and that gaze, empty as it may have been, was hers. Dicke decided then and there that this cutout would be her last. "I asked myself if I would choose [this image] when leafing through *V* and saw it for the first time. I really like the picture. It has all the ingredients. Now I have to finish what I started... I couldn't have wished for a better end."

Kate Sennert

"Caught," 2005

Artwork Amie Dicke
Photography Mario Sorrenti
Styling Camilla Nickerson

Makeup Frank B (The Wall Group) Hair Didier Malige (Bryan Bantry) Photo assistants Lars Beaulieu and Kenny Jossick Digital technician Heather Sommerfield Production Katie Fash and Steve Sutton Location Pier 59 Studios, NYC Chair design Philipp Haemmerle Inc.