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Yohji Yamamoto
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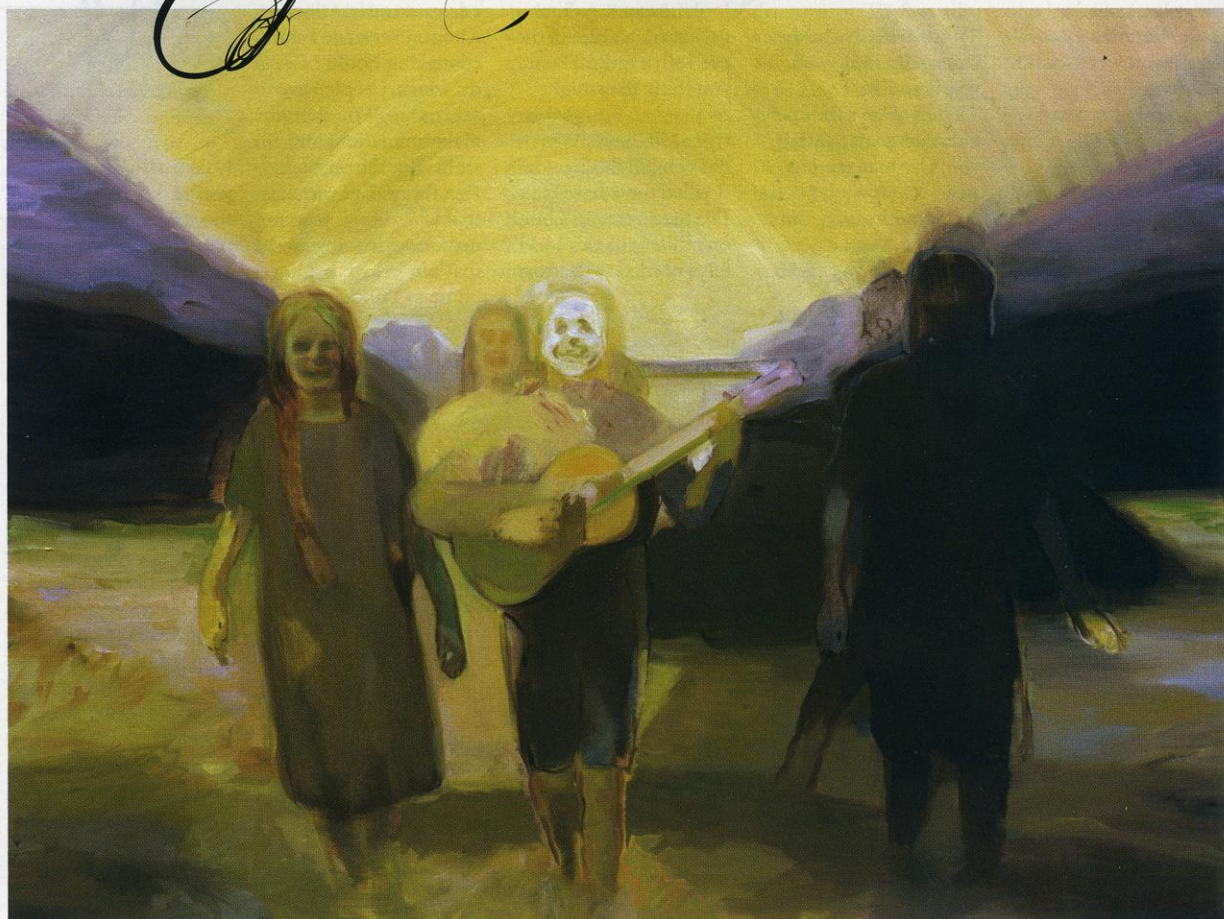
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Kaye Donachie

LOOKING AT KAYE

Donachie's paintings is like stepping into your secret daydreams of being 16 years old again—free from worry, allergic to bullshit and anti-authority with a middle finger to the world. Seldom do we own up to it, but that dream is alive and well somewhere inside all of us. But... Was that really what being 16 was all about? What about the fear of individuality? Or that foreboding lack of direction? After all, for many of us, the reality of high school was more of a nightmare.

The hippie followers of Charles Manson, the Beach Boys and Dadaist poet Emmy Hennings, (all young, idealistic and terrifying in one way or another) inspire titles such as "All your life, You were waiting for this moment to arise" or "You hear yourself say things that you never could mean" and "Squeaky (is the world as sad as it seems)," which reflect Donachie's opinion that her paintings "are kind of theatrical in a sense, so I think that there is a heightening of the light and darks in them. I think it has more to do with a more spectral reference to (youth's) transience, its disappearance. Burning



bright... burning out..."

Donachie's explorations into the uncertainty of youth are something that she has an almost scientific knowledge of: the more we dug, the more we found that her interest in this suspended moment in life may or may not have something

to do with being around so many students while teaching at the University of London. After all, where else could you find students as adventurous and insecure as in art school?

Where do you spend more time, in the studio or in your house?
In the studio, yeah.

It would probably be nice to have the studio inside your apartment though...

I would probably just sit and watch TV or something. You need to get out of the house.

Do you listen to any music when you are working?
I am listening to Ian

Brown at the moment. And then the radio...I just listen to either Radio 4 or Radio 5 Live, which is like a sports channel.

Really?
I really like football.

Who is your favorite team?
Arsenal.

You've been involved in countless group shows throughout the years. Many times curators and gallerists will lump a group of artists together to try and tag an 'art movement.' Do you ever feel pigeonholed by that at all?

I think it can be quite interesting, just in terms of a type of comparison, to make a sort of statement. But that is probably more to do with what the curator wants more than what the artist does.

Do you notice those trend influences on your students?

I think that it is just because they are quite young and just starting out. You don't quite know what you're interested in, so you kind of copy things. I think that is a good way to start. But of course it doesn't mean what they are making doesn't bear any relevance to what they will think about in five years.

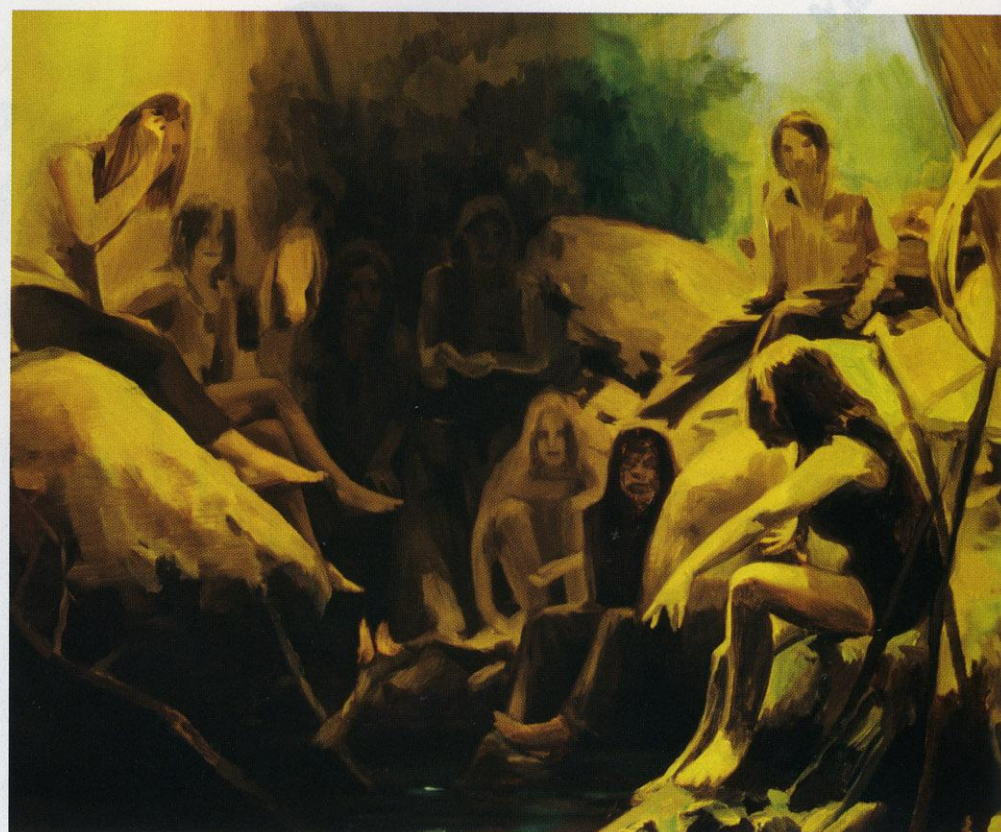
How has your own work shifted or changed?

I think the treatment has changed. The way you interpret things doesn't

really change, but maybe the subject matter does. You are coming to different things as you get older. The handling of the paint probably doesn't really (change). You are just kind of refining something, like a language.

So what is it about these freaked out characters that inspires you to paint?

I think that it has to do with the fact that I read so many biographies. The romanticism and nostalgia that come with them, I find fascinating. Recently I did a painting about the actor Mark Frechette. I've been really interested in his life story. He was the star of (Michelangelo Antonioni's film) *Zabriskie Point*, and he was this youthful, beautiful character. But his personal story reflects



something much more tragic and dark. He ended up joining a Mel Lyman cult and getting into a string of crimes resulting in him dying at 27 in prison, of asphyxiation, dropping a set of weights on his throat.

Do your paintings reflect a belief that utopian ideals are in some way unattainable or naïve?

I think the emphasis within my paintings is to evoke or merge a moment of romantic idealism. My interpretation of the resourced material is to transcend a portrayal of any one

specific group of people—any significance the image has for me is ascertained through the process of painting. The image is constructed as if a camera lens were trying to find the middle distance, and moments of belief and doubt fluctuate with the push-pull sharpness of the paint. This is to emphasize the idea that the world we focus on is one of half-truths.

Do you feel art school was a benefit for you?

For me it was, yeah. Just in terms of (learning) art history—different people and different ways of

working and thinking of things. And you've got such a variety of characters at college. People are doing so many different disciplines. You wouldn't have had that if you hadn't been to college. That's a sort of benefit of it, I think. I was in Berlin for a bit, and it is a really different system there.

In what way?

Well, you have a professor, who maybe comes in, if you are lucky. But sometimes you don't see them the whole term. My professor came in once a week, and you would show him the

work you had done, and he would just say that the work was crap, and then he would go out of the room! But he would never give you an explanation! Basically what you had to do was make work like the professor's and then in the evenings the students would make their own work.

That's bizarre.

Yeah! At the time I found it really hard, because you could do what you want, which can be hard. Everyone develops at different rates, and when they come to school at 19, it's so young...✱

