

Janine Iversen

lip slip

November 4 - December 23, 2023

Please welcome the paintings of Janine Iversen.

With a title like *lip slip*, a mood is set. So is the stage. Both parties – painting and viewer – are ready to perform. Consent was given the moment you walked in. That sounds awfully naughty. Power dynamics are like that. This exhibition, as innocent as it may seem, is no exception.

Janine Iversen's paintings are double entendres without saying a word. Maybe this is a seduction, or a dirty joke. Like you, these paintings are multidimensional. They have desires. As much as they may want to be understood, they'd rather be objectified, to move your eyes across the surface from one spot to the next, back and forth, as if your eyes are caught in a lenticular photograph. This isn't just mere *liveliness*. This is agency. Paintings performing consciousness. Just as you might look a painting up and down, checking out its curls and curves, the painting may be returning your gaze with a furtive, "Hey, stranger."

Flirting with body language, these paintings don't want to just make eyes, they want to move you, with you, and into you. If this seems smutty, consider that even clean jokes get into your body. "Knock-knock" is just the set up that lowers your guard, diminishes inhibitions. If the joke lands, as they say, the laughter is physical. Hahahaha, your chest and abdomen moving up and down, in and out, so much so that maybe you can't catch your breath. What is it *running* from?

Whether a slip of the tongue or a wardrobe malfunction, a lip slip is nothing without taboo and temptation. Maybe an abstract painting is a collection of unconscious thoughts and unspeakable desires. Painting as both a confession of and devotion to transgression. Or maybe these are mere projections by the viewer. What happens to this relationship when an abstraction is matched with a sign or symbol? X marks an erogenous spot and the paintings acknowledge this with a wink. But who's undressing who?

There's no shame in being seduced. Maybe you will even fall in love. The feeling might not be sufficient, though. Love is an action, too – oh to be loved! While it may be easy enough to love a painting you are looking at, and a painting can return that gaze, can it also respond to your affection with a dangle of dots, or shy away by obscuring them behind a silky haze? Or maybe, when you look at these paintings you get a different feeling, something not quite discernible, or that you can't articulate, but it's right on the tip of your tongue. Often the reaction to such uncertainty is to look away, towards something concrete, or give in to pareidolia, to find Mary on the toast, make some meaning of desire. Instead, Iversen asks that you embrace the liminal space between thought and speech as intimate and playful. Is she toying with illusion here, a little sleight of hand? Sure, but I already told you there's no shame in being seduced. And there's certainly nothing wrong with falling in love.

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