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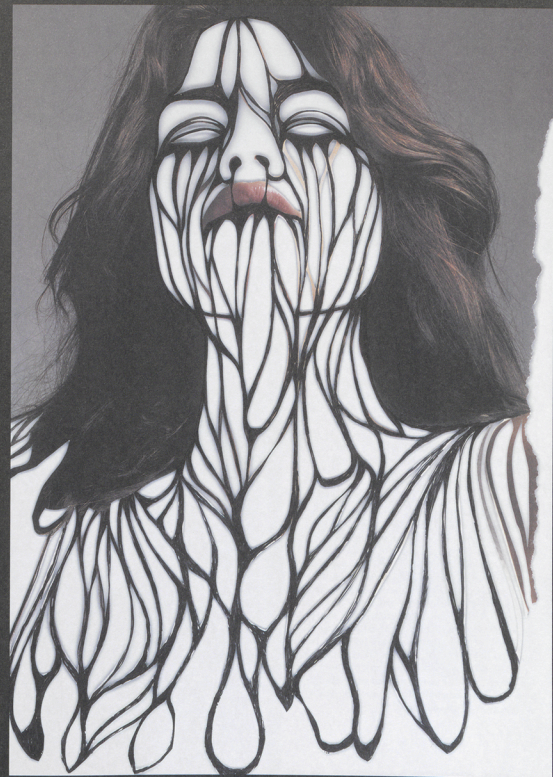
amic dicke

What happens when you dismantle the idealized body? Amie Dicke explores just that in her work. The experience of being a woman is a vital part of Dicke's art. "It all started with a series of sculptures I made just before I graduated from art school in 2000. I observed other women. I was looking for a personal style or unique attitude or stance and, quite literally, tried to obtain one by studying the positions and shapes of the female body."

She created pressings of her legs, from crotch to foot, out of marzipan and icing, which quickly (though not intentionally) decayed soon after their creation. They are in a state of constant deterioration, through sagging and cracking. The discovery of these deformities provided me with a whole new perspective:

uncontainable beauty.' Her work contrasts the 'perfect beauty' of magazines and billboard ads with the inevitability of its decline. 'Perhaps it's the certainty of decay that makes beauty so appealing.'

Dicke first began using and subverting magazine imagery as raw material when living in New York in 2001. 'I found myself surrounded by the world of fashion and glamour. On buildings and metro-stops, glowing lips and shining eyes were tempting me, like they were saying, "All your dreams will come true, just insert personality here"'. I started to project my loneliness on to the city where the most familiar faces were those of the supermodels on buildings and in magazines.' She started to draw on the faces and bodies of women in magazines, adding flowing lines of black ink and covering the original colours and composition. She



cut away and removed the space between the lines – the fashion, the jewellery, the faces and bodies. 'What remains are fragile figures existing in a gas-samer-thin web of contours. I erased the graceful positions and self-confident looks of the models.' Dicke emphasizes that the critique she made on the feminine ideal was directed towards herself, not the fashion or beauty industry. She was more interested in her own response to idealized imagery. 'It's very appealing and at the same time superficial. I prefer the words shallow, skin-deep. Sometimes, you have to explore the surface to be able to go deep. The ambiguity starts with buying the magazine. I like fashion and leafing through the pages of magazines, but at the same time it gives me an empty feeling. It is like the quote by Simone Weil: "Beauty always promises, but never gives."'

The black, spiderous lines of Dicke's work echo a 1970s painted rock, but the connection is totally unintentional. Her aim is not to shock or disturb the viewer, but to reflect her own inner disturbance. Dicke transforms bodies into blood and arteries – forms are reduced to their visceral framework. Instead of rock and rebellion, she is influenced by the drama drawings, where drawn bodies literally unveil their inner self as their skin is pulled away.

Dicke's work now focuses on sculpture and installation, while still examining the contrast between violence and representations of women. She creates casts of her own body in the position of figures taken from vintage Helmut Newton photographs. In one of her pieces, the eyes and face of a sculptural bust are a reclining marble nude contained in a net filled with hair. There's a sense of restrained violence as bodies are bound or controlled.

All is *Yonah and Vestation to the Spirit* was created during a gallery opening. Here, Dicke performed a semi-religious ritual with incense on an image of a recumbent nude, held within an upturned wardrobe. The incense burned through the image, which is lying on dirt in a wardrobe. The burnt places look like the ruins of a bombed city. 'I like the idea of the spill.' Her use of domestic furniture, mistake or in *Private Property*, an installation where she uses blacked wardrobes and seats are locked in position, highlighting their isolation. Like her cut-outs, the pieces examine our relationship with the objects and the commercial images around us. Dicke questions whether commodity fetishization begins with the consumer or the consumed.

Previous spread

Isabella
2004
Cut-out, ink on paper
177.8 x 248.9 cm
Courtesy Peres Projects,
Los Angeles/Berlin

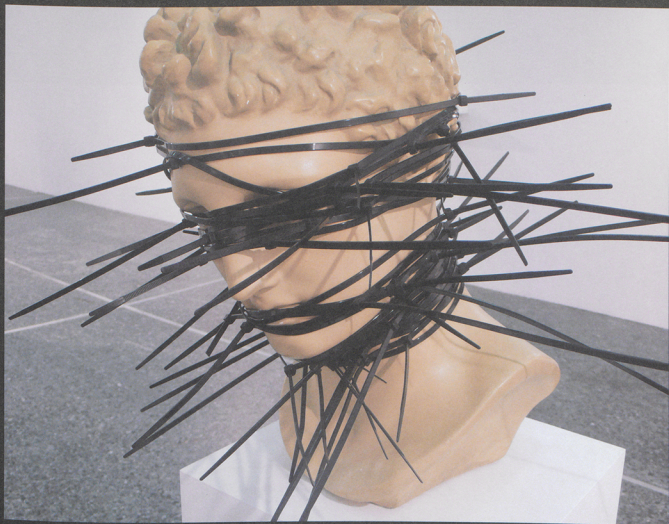
Below

Jeanne
2005
Cut-out, ink on paper
177.8 x 228.6 cm
Courtesy Peres Projects,
Los Angeles/Berlin



Below

Eye Witness
2007
Mixed-media sculpture,
plaster, plastic zip ties on
pedestal
50 x 60 x 80 cm



Below

Degeneracy
2005
China, hair and stocking
21 x 30 x 70 cm
Private collection, New
York. Courtesy Diana
Slighter, Amsterdam



Opposite (top)

*All is Vanity and
Variation to the Spirit*
2006
Incense-burned archival
iris print on soil in
antique wardrobe
105 x 191 x 242 cm
Courtesy Diana Slighter,
Amsterdam

Opposite (bottom)

Private Property
2006
Installation
Variable dimensions
Courtesy Peres
Projects, Berlin

