

Grace Mattingly

Monster Party

13 Sep–29 Sep, 2024

The Old Silk Barn, Bruton BA10 0HB

These are my bad girl paintings. Some studio days are good girl days and others are bad girl days. Embodying the Bad Girl is a creative place to set the intention to break the rules, whatever they may be that I've set for myself. On bad girl days there are no mistakes.

Ugliness is funny.

It really ends up being about loving what feels imperfect within. And turning that into a fun, funny, and self assured expression.

Formally these works are about line, movement, and speed. About a lack of preciousness - colors mixing together and getting dark and muddy. It's sort of like in fairytales when midnight strikes and the masks come off - the artifice is lifted and everyone becomes who they really are. The monster is the thing that's not socially acceptable or legible, that's feared or taboo, but isn't actually dangerous or bad.

There's also something about the demonization of female sexuality sort of reclaiming itself, or making fun of itself. A favorite reference for these paintings Rupaul's Drag Race when the category for the runway is monster themed in some way. There's a catharsis and humor in seeing self-aware presentations of femininity make fun of society's demonization by making that demonization literal and overt - by dressing up as an actual monster.

And on a psychological level, there's something about not being afraid of the monster within, playing with the monster, inviting the monster to dance, getting to know it and discovering what it looks like, and wants... Suddenly it's less threatening. Once you know the monster's name it's no longer dangerous. The monster isn't really bad. It's just a less socially acceptable way of being that wants to be expressed rather than repressed.

Grace Mattingly (b. 1991, Chicago) is a London-based artist who studied Painting at the Slade School of Fine Art and holds a BA in Philosophy from Columbia University, New York.

ARUSHA www.arushagallery.com, info@arushagallery.com, 6 Percy Street, London, W1T 1DQ