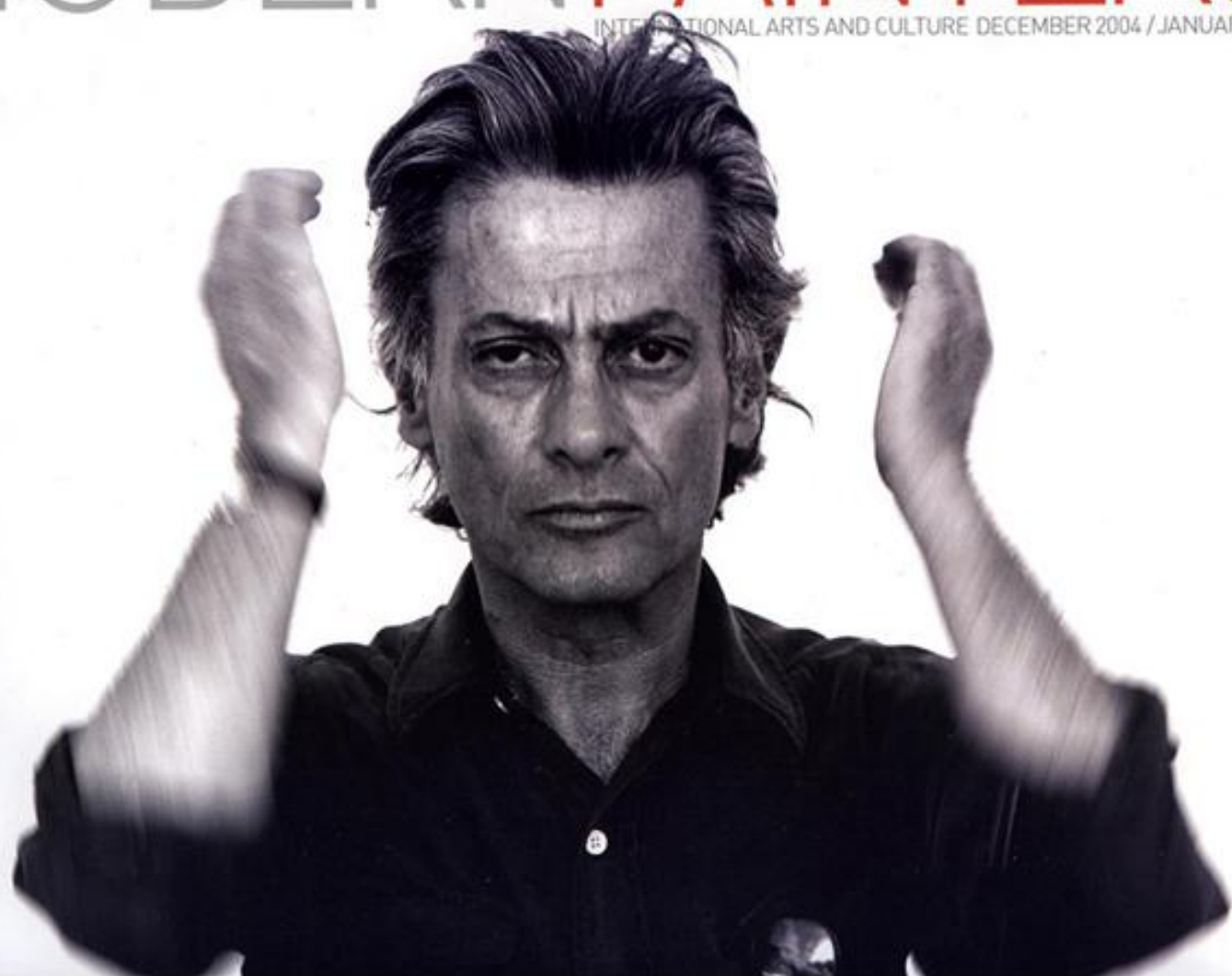


MODERN PAINTERS

INTERNATIONAL ARTS AND CULTURE DECEMBER 2004 / JANUARY 2005





François Boucher
Madame de Pompadour,
1759, oil on canvas,
61 x 68 cm

BY KIND PERMISSION OF THE TRUSTEES
OF THE WALLACE COLLECTION, LONDON

Amie Dicke / *I Suck my
Tongue in Remembrance
of You*, 2004,
cutout, ink on poster
paper, 175 x 119 cm

COURTESY THE ARTIST; D'AMELIO TERRAS
GALLERY, NEW YORK; PERES PROJECTS,
LOS ANGELES

New York

Amie Dicke: New Season, New Girls, New Looks

D'Amelio Terras

7 SEPTEMBER - 2 OCTOBER

A cautionary precept of Georges Bataille's 1962 study, *Eroticism: Death and Sensuality*, is that 'eroticism is assenting to life up to the point of death'. In these 19 cut-paper pieces, Amie Dicke illuminates Bataille's insight. Even without their skin, her girls beacon.

Dissecting fashion's fluff, fabric and fantasy, Dicke reveals its underlying morbidity. With an X-acto knife as her scalpel, she slices off the flesh and features of slinky models from bus-stop posters and fashion spreads. Leaving their hands, hair, feet and coyly pouting upper lips untouched, she carves the models' limbs, clothes and famous faces into sinewy designs, cuts out their eyes and renders the remainder of their sleek bodies as long, slick strings of magazine paper. Cutting into the space where they are posed, she depicts the models' toxic, erotic essence seeping out like perfume and infecting their surroundings.

In *Sleeping Beauty* (2004), Dicke's adaptation of the 'Princess and the Pea' fairytale, she cuts gashes into a pile of mattresses on which a ghoulish girl languishes. Unlike the original story, in Dicke's version a minute irritant does not disturb a hypersensitive girl's sleep and thereby prove that she is pure and deserves to be pampered; instead, it is the girl's ectoplasm that taints the bed. In *I Suck My Tongue in Remembrance of You* (2004), Dicke cuts open a Yves Saint Laurent advert featuring the parchment-pale, red-haired British beauty Karen Elson holding a phone close to her open lips. With her heavy eyelids nearly shut and her tongue wandering towards the mouth on the other end of the receiver, Elson's expression emanates ecstasy. After Dicke cuts away her distinctive, already otherworldly visage, what remains of Elson is the outline of a sinister siren. Despite what the person hearing her voice may imagine, she is revealed to be deadly. Like those phone-sex ads during the height of AIDS awareness which advertised anonymous dirty talk as quintessentially safe sex, the image of the phone connecting Elson to her lover is transmuted into a dystopic reality wherein the phone distances, and thereby protects, Elson's lover from her.

The Rotterdam-based artist whittles today's flat images of sunny or sultry sex-kittens into spectres of sexual iconography, reminiscent of the 1990s when fashion pages were populated by sad, scrappy, skinny girls whose beauty seemed prematurely weathered by heroin, rough nights and desperate sex. While fashion photography in that era was articulating (and some say romanticising) death as the omnipresent element in all erotic imagery, it was also representing a culture shaped by AIDS. Seen today, Dicke's Gucci succubi remind us that sex is still not, and never has been, safe.

AFH