

Kim McCarty: New Work. Michael Shaw. THE Magazine. June 2009, p.42 + Cover.



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Kim McCarty: New Work

Kim Light/LIGHTBOX, Culver City

Kim McCarty's new watercolors feature various versions of her characteristic nymphets, along with a set of leaves and a smaller and larger flowers arguably more sexualized than their human counterparts. Her tween-aged figures, a handful of large ones as well as a grid of twelve smaller ones, varied in their level of inferred sexual precocity; but they were all nymphs, specifically *water* nymphs, their liquid skin and bodies innocently flowing to life through the fluidity of the watercolor process.

While most of the leaves, hung vertically, resonated with the fall season in both shape and color, the figures' palette was difficult to pin down. Hot reds are set off by cool blues, and yellows and browns add earthy notes, making for a peculiar mix overall. It's a language of color McCarty has claimed for herself. If in the past her nymph-like subjects resembled the grandiose figures of Marlene Dumas, this particular body—no pun intended—is very much McCarty's own.

All the works are titled by date. With watercolor the live medium that it is, it's probable each was started and finished on that day. Further adding to the temporal quality, the pieces also suggest live model participation. *September 16, 2008*, featuring a girl with her head tilted up and her hands cupping her as-yet-to-emerge breasts, is the most dramatic of the bunch. But despite the volatile tension a nude pre-pubescent might pose, this young model and her counterparts come off virtually free of sexuality. The flow of the watercolor medium, combined with sharp silhouettes and occasional snippets of the white of the paper—spatial separations between body parts—has led to images more sculptural than sexual. These young human bodies are as much landscapes or still lifes as they are nudes, such is the extent that McCarty's process has subsumed content.

— Michael Shaw



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