



ALEX RUSSELL FLINT

Fashion Forward



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The fashion designer Elsa Schiaparelli (1890-1973) wrote, “Before me, everything was black or navy blue or gray or brown or beige, things like that, for daytime. I began using shocking pink and ice blue and all kinds of bright colors.”

High fashion and color dominate in Alex Russell Flint’s *Recent Works* at Arcadia Contemporary in New York, April 22 through May 11. His earlier enigmatic narratives appeared as stills from unfinished films. Occasionally, his female figures were posed against a “arsenic green wall that was found lurking beneath layers of hideous wallpaper” in the 19th-century schoolhouse the English artist is restoring in France.

In his new work, he moves his figures from a broader context. He says, “After two years of living with the pandemic, all of our worlds became smaller. This probably shows in these pieces—they are more intimate and seasoned with



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some of the loneliness and separation and mixture of emotions that were very much in the air during this strange time.” He adds, “This collection of paintings is different from others of mine. A more restricted combination of colors that echo and visually create a dialogue from one picture to another.”

Flint continues, “All of the pictures for this show feature designer outfits, from vintage to contemporary. From Gaultier to Yves Saint Laurent to contemporary niche designers. Beautifully made and timeless, each feels like a work of art. Painting them is like cooking with fantastic ingredients.”

Appearing frequently is a diaphanous blue dress designed by Richard Du Puis. It was discovered in a disused warehouse, found its way to a vintage clothing store in London and into the collection of one of Flint’s friends. “I love the folds, the pleats, the transparency of the sleeves,” he says. “The skirt of it is like some kind of jellyfish or manta ray. The color and design of the dress feels of a bygone age and springs to my mind the fading glory of a Hollywood starlet.”

Orange Crush features another fashion find from a friend. “It’s a Hugo Boss jumpsuit I saw one of my friends wearing, and I instantly knew I wanted to paint it,” he explains. “It has a ’70s vibe to it and an odd integrated metal collar that instantly brings to mind restraint or enslavement of some kind and piqued my interest. I love the orange with the yellow pouf and the green of the sofa and the abstract shapes they made.”

The models in the blue dress featured in *Crash* and *Catch* have either forgotten to light a cigarette or forgotten it is lit. What came before and what is to come are up to us to imagine.

Flint says, “I hope that my paintings have a universality to them. I like to paint pictures charged with a sense of underlying drama; an implied narrative that is open to interpretation that often contains additional characters who may not be visibly present in the paintings themselves.” ●

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1 *Orange Crush*, oil on canvas, 20 x 34"

2 *Catch*, oil on canvas, 28½ x 36"

3 *Crash*, oil on canvas, 35 x 45½"