



VOYAGER FACES

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[RISING STAR

Jennifer Louise Martin

IT'S BEEN A GREAT MONTH FOR ARTIST JENNIFER LOUISE MARTIN: she has just been taken on by trendy Primrose Hill gallery, Bohemia, Sharleen Spiteri has acquired a painting, and now the 30-year-old Londoner is having her face painted by leading make-up artist Georgina Hamed for this shoot. She is completely dolled up. "I'm obsessed with the idea of how paint can be a metaphor for make-up, just as paint was a metaphor for flesh," says Martin. She is also fascinated by the gap between fashion's glossy imagery and real-life beauty. "My paintings play with the idea of perfection and destroy that."

There's something very 1960s about Martin's whimsical beauties, tears rolling down their mascara-streaked faces – like Edie Sedgwick or Holly Golightly after a heavy night out. Drawn to beauty icons, she has "defaced" the model Kate Moss – using images from magazines, painting over them with emulsion, glitter and spray paint – on countless occasions: "She's a great blank canvas."

Martin always had a passion for painting and did a foundation in art at Central St Martins, London. She went on to study psychology at Leeds University, which led to a job in advertising, first as an account handler

and then as a creative. It was only when she was 25 and working in the art department of Deutsche Bank that her career as an artist finally took off – she won a residency and her first solo show with Raid Projects in LA. Describing it as "a dream come true", the show attracted the likes of actors Samuel L Jackson and Jack Black and led to the offer of a second solo exhibition at another LA gallery, Milo. Martin spent the next two months in her parents' freezing garage, churning out seven huge canvases, which nearly didn't make it when they got lost – temporarily – en route.

Her work is bought largely by "movie-industry and fashion types" and she has a client base stretching from London to LA. She is now turning her hand to murals and private commissions (she is currently creating an ice-cream cone collage for a client). Her giant 64in x 48in canvases of artfully distraught beauty queens will be on display – rather fittingly – at Hamed's retro-glam make-up emporium, Lost in Beauty, next month.

Sharon Walker

Jennifer Louise Martin's exhibition runs from 11 to 31 May at Lost in Beauty, 117 Regent's Park Road, London NW1; lostinbeauty.com. Bohemia, 138 Regent's Park Road, London NW1.

Photography: Edward Robinson