

OUTSIDE LA: “I See You” Ania Hobson

SETAREH X, Düsseldorf

by Sophie van Well Groeneveld | Sep 9, 2021



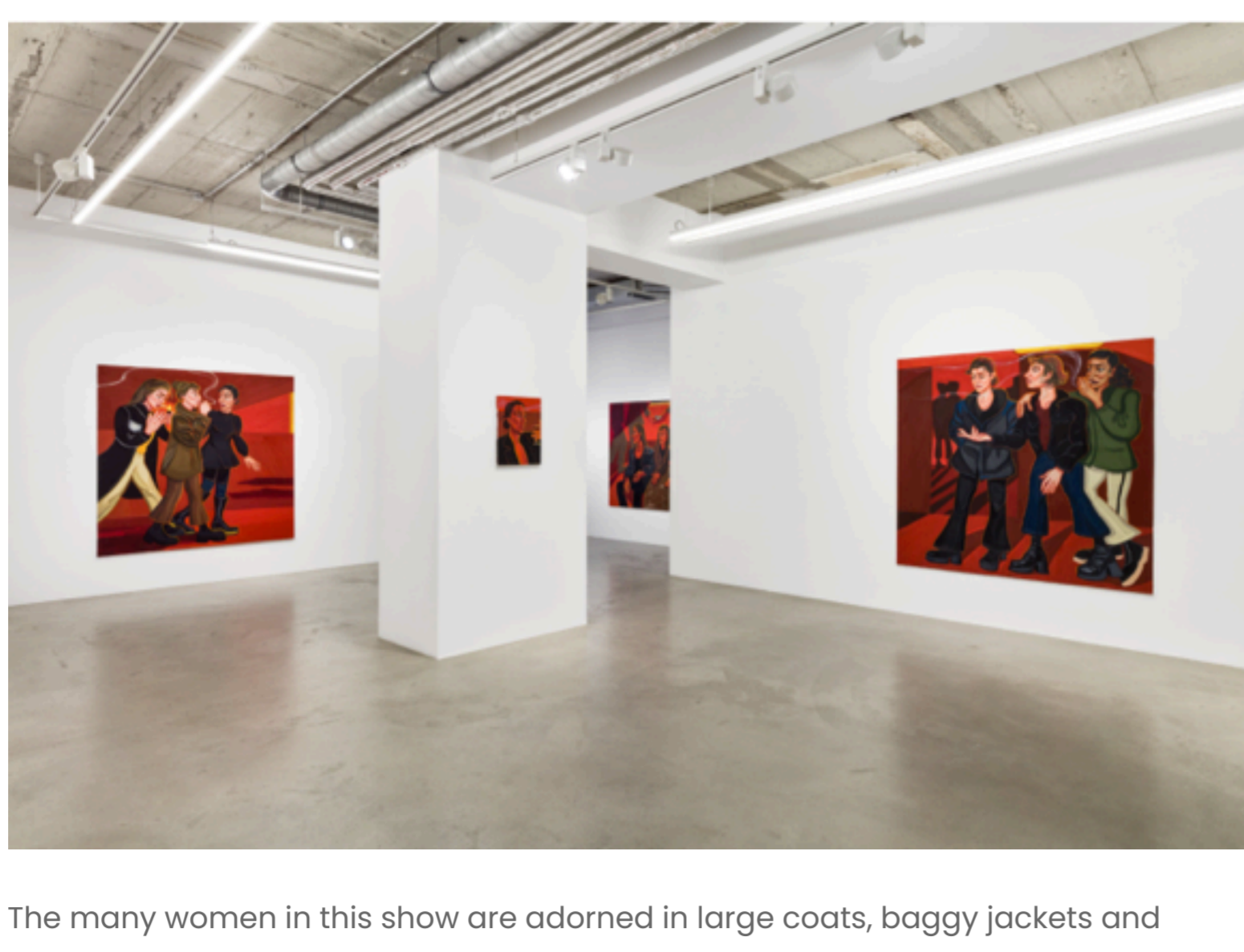
Ania Hobson's women often look like they don't want to be in the spaces they find themselves in: ready to leave the party, staring at wine to avoid a conversation, planning an Irish goodbye. Her characters are dressed cool and distinct in their clothes, expressions and poise. Ania Hobson (b.1990) from Suffolk, UK, paints large canvases filled by young people, often in groups, as they socialise and scheme where to head to next. They ponder their direction in life at a dining room table, catch up with friends, take a sofa nap, check out a hot passerby.



Red Wine Ladies, 2021, 140 x 120 cm, oil on canvas. Credit: Ania Hobson, SETAREH.

I See You is Ania Hobson's first international show outside of the UK, at SETAREH X in Düsseldorf. The exhibition features nine works, one of which sits in the window for passersby to catch three ladies (*Red Wine Ladies*, 2021) perched at a table with their hands crossed, sideways-glancing at their waiter. The women have cartoonish qualities with curvaceous arms, simply propped hands, while their faces – eyebrows raised, protruding foreheads, strong jaws – read higher emotional stakes.

Installation view. Credit: Johannes Bendzulla, SETAREH.



The many women in this show are adorned in large coats, baggy jackets and chunky boots, obscuring their figures. The graphic characters are always looking at a scene happening outside of the frame, the viewer's eye is not privy to. The viewer is not subject to what interests the women, nor what they participate in. In one painting, *Chuckling Drink* (2021), the splatter of a spilled wine glass is seen poured across two women, yet the character throwing it is not.

Hobson hones in on one space and one colour for the works in *I See You*, with paintings that are predominantly red and set in bars. The color of nightlife—red light—makes people look better, hides unbecoming details. Red evokes a hazy memory of an evening. It distances the night from reality. Red takes a varying role in the works: sometimes it is a backdrop, other times whole scenes are lit by it.



My Aries, 2021, 41 x 51cm, oil on canvas. Credit: Ania Hobson, SETAREH.

Some works depict intimate close-ups of characters cradling their drinks of choice (Sobieski vodka, martinis, wine), while larger scenes of clustered figures inside and outside bars see hair, bodies and cigarettes lit up in outlines of yellow and orange. The paintings have heat to them, felt viscerally against the backdrop of white gallery walls, leaving surrounding space for the viewer to imagine the scenes they cannot see. The characters often appear resoundingly gloomy. Perhaps this feels dated as those who are attending newly reopened nightlife venues are gleefully grasping it. However, Hobson's paintings feel very tongue in cheek, seeing the humor in the drama of nights, as people seek a mood switch, a different atmosphere.



After Midnight, 2021, 170 x 160 cm, oil on canvas. Credit: Ania Hobson, SETAREH.

Figurative painting has seen a massive growth in recent years, yet Ania Hobson's work feels like a fresh ode to bar life. The works are warm, silly and dramatic, while also endearing for the relatability of how drunk infused head spaces can dramatize the night time.

SETAREH X – Young Contemporary

0 Comments

Submit a Comment

Your email address will not be published. Required fields are marked *

Comment

Name *

Email *

Website

☐ Save my name, email, and website in this browser for the next time I comment.

Submit Comment



Get Your Copy Now!

Search Artillery

Search

