

Machiko Edmondson's Hyperreal Paintings Confront Our Impossible Standard of Beauty

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By Anna Furman

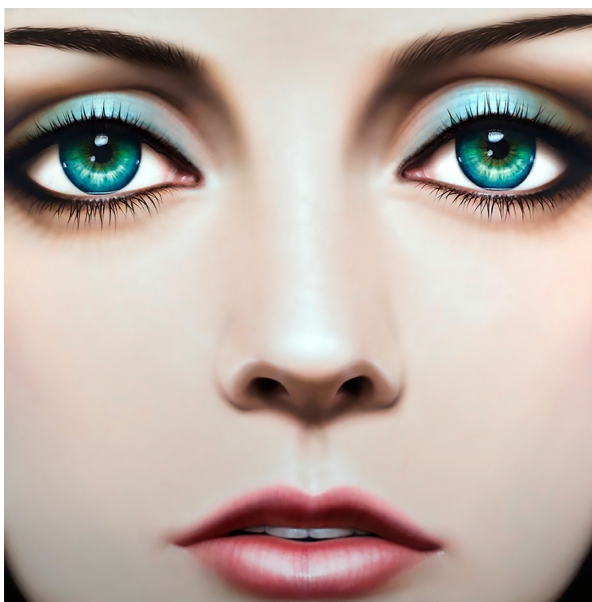


Machiko Edmondson – Cadence, 2015 UNIX Gallery

Machiko Edmondson's work is, to borrow a term from French philosopher Jean Baudrillard, hyperreal—more real than real. This extreme level of clarity is on display in "Everything in Equal Measure," a new show at UNIX Gallery in New York, where Edmondson's meticulously detailed oil paintings navigate our impossible ideals of beauty.



Machiko Edmondson – Moonage Daydream, 2016



Machiko Edmondson – Sign, 2014

In each painting, Edmondson zooms in close on a female model's face, cropping the image on a cheekbone, an arched eyebrow, or bottom lip. Their faces possess impossibly smooth, poreless skin, decorated with cartoonishly large eyes that pop off the canvas in an array of prismatic colors. In *Dichotomous* (2016), the model's eyes are of markedly different shades, adding a fantastical quality to the work.

The work engages money-making trends set by fashion photographers and their benefactor, the beauty industry. Cheeks are contoured and eye shadow is well-blended, as if a professional makeup artist was hired for the job. It's easy to imagine these images being captured in a photo studio with carefully calibrated lights, then heavily photoshopped and placed in a glossy magazine editorial.



Machiko Edmondson – I love You Till Tuesday, 2016

More often than not, the women betray only the hint of a smile, and their emotionless expressions offer little information about personalities or mood. I Love You Till Tuesday (2016) is an exception: The subject's oily black eye makeup drips into the neatly contained tracks of a tear—the one suggestion that she's a living person with real emotions, not some waxy mannequin covered in product.

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“Machine Edmondson: Everything in Equal Measure” is on view at UNIX Gallery, New York, Mar. 3–Apr. 30.

<https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-machiko-edmondson-s-hyperreal-paintings-confront-our-impossible-standards-of-beauty>