Too good to be true/Too true to be good
“No one, [Freud] announced, lives in the real world. We occupy a space of our own creation - a collage compounded of bits and pieces of actuality arranged into a design determined by our internal perceptions, our hopes, our fears, our memories and our anticipations.

W. Galin, Feelings, 1979
II. Catalogue—
Figure 01
Leni Riefenstahl
Olympia: Fest der Schönheit
1938

Figure 02
Unknown
The Discobolus of Myron
460–450 BC
Figure 03 / Opposite
Roy Lichtenstein
Temple
1964

Figure 04 / Top left
Darren Harvey-Regan
More or Less Obvious
Forms, 2012

Figure 05 / Top right
Darren Harvey-Regan
More or Less Obvious
Forms, 2012

Figure 06 / Bottom left
Darren Harvey-Regan
More or Less Obvious
Forms, 2012
I'm part wolf, 18, incognito添加剂, bright, honest, very unique, musically inclined, and extremely artistic. I like long black hair and a great complexion. I consider myself attractive, do love to meet every. I have many (just wonderful) plans, dreams, fun, ambitions and this too. Tall, cute, I have brains and definite goals in life. I have long hair in the water and golden brown eyes. I have glowing, round, green, shopping, hip-hop, joy, and fashion. I'm average. I want to be noticed,invested, and loved seriously under romantic music but not go to the way. I have a great time, sensitive, sweet, smart, unique, and of course, very attractive. I'm a very attractive girl and a caring person. I'm also very honest, sensitive, and responsible. I very mind and love to dress, go to parties, clubs, the beach, movies, traveling and just about anything. I am a casually natural, but not overly PC. I value family, I am following my passions. Trendy, fun, healthy, natural. I have both pleasure and friendship. She is very pretty, already, very cautious, sophisticated, advanced, unforgettable, present, and confident. I am very serious. I love vampires, fox, and books. She is an internet crooner, an e-mail junkie, and a OS RAR donor. She sees growth, challenges, and me. She is a great, an excellent, and a great. She loves books, tapes, movies, rock, world music. She loves horror, slightly weird clothes, really bad movies, obscure local bands. These are a few of my favorite things. Fortunately, I can art, write, and play. Most is easy for me. She is tall and stylish. I love excitement and adventure. She works out. She is a good friend. She has diverse interests which include tennis, hiking, hiking and dancing. Hey, what's up? I'm 18 with curly hair, fast-growing eyes and a very good complexion. I'm attractive and a very optimistic and a good sense of humor. I'm easy to talk to. I have many friends. I'm a good listener. I love to go to concerts, go to movies, swimming and more. I'm a touchy and very strong, soft, and honest, and a sense of humor. I love for fun, cuddle love and loneliness. I am a very quiet, soft, and safe. I cut the action for any occasion. She is a sensitive, nice, modest and at work, Bethany Brown andness. An attractive, long-haired, and trouble, spiritual young man. I love amenities and telling stories. Great Adventure and Action Park I also have a standing side and would love to ride the carousel or get stuck on a Ferris wheel. I want to take a trip with someone. I'm not a very nice and smooth, softer, more romantic, and sensitive. My goal is to see a restaurant once day and travel occasionally. I'm impossible adventure-better would have lived this. I come complete with sex, job, kids, hiking, bike, and tickets tocheck. I'm a hardware, tall, thin, to rest, my name, smooth, sweet.
Figure 14
George Hoyningen-Heune
Actress Loretta Young reclines in Tulle
1934

Figure 15
Shea Hembrey
SEEK Art Biennale
2011
Figure 16
Lernert & Sander
Natural Beauty
2011

Figure 17
Albrecht Dürer
Rhinocerus
1515
Figure 18
Thomas Demand
Embassy
2001

Figure 19
Juno Acalypso
Joyce Series
2013
Figure 22
Haus-Rucker-Co
Mind Expander series
1967-1969

Figure 23
Antonio Marguet
Exotic Juicy Tutti Frutti
2011
Figure 24
Stanley Kubrick
2001: A Space Odyssey
1968

Figure 25
Fritz Lang
Metropolis
1927
Figure 26
Ed Atkins
Even Pricks
2014

Figure 27
Duane Hanson
Supermarket Shopper
1970
Figure 28
Bryan Forbes
The Stepford Wives
1975

Figure 29 / Top
Oliver Wainwright
Pyongyang
1999

Figure 30 / Bottom
Oliver Wainwright
Pyongyang
2002
Figure 31
Allen Ruppersberg
The Color of Perfection is Pink
1969

Figure 32
Hieronymus Bosch
Garden of Earthly Delights
1503-1515
Figure 33
René Magritte
Le modèle rouge III
1937

Figure 34
Chris Round
Transient Realities
2012
Figure 35
Alex Gross
Spores
2014

Figure 36
John Baldessari
Trust Me
1997
Figure 37
Rene Magritte
La Belle Captive (Beautiful World)
1962

Figure 38
Randa Mirza
Parallel Universe
2010
Figure 39
Sergio Rolando
Manifold Landscapes
1971

Figure 40
Sergio Rolando
Manifold Landscapes
1978
Jeff Koons

“I could go for something Gordon's”

1986
III. Context—
Olympia may have been an effective propaganda tool that promoted National Socialism as well as one of the best sports documentaries ever made. The Berlin Olympics of 1936 endure as a monument to the glory of the Nazi Superman in Leni Riefenstahl’s film. Olympia’s opening layers the inevitably Wagnerian score of composer Herbert Windt over tracking shots of ancient Greek monuments. One of antiquity’s most famous statues, Myron’s Diskobolos, dissolves into decontextual Erwin Huber recreating the discus-throwing pose. On the surface, the film appears to be a very well made sports film. However, as Germany’s intentions became clearer, critics became suspicious that the actual motive for producing Olympia was political promotion. To date, no one has uncovered substantive evidence proving that the sole intention to do so. Another interesting detail is the Discobolus’ pose, that is said to be unnatural to a human and even considered a rather inefficient way to throw the discus. To a modern eye it may seem that Myron’s desire for perfection has made him suppress too rigorously the sense of strain in the individual muscles.

Figure 01
Leni Riefenstahl
Olympia: Fest der Schönheit, 1938
121 min 600mm film

We tend to associate the idea of classical so that of uniqueness, but in no other period of western art history the creation of copies from great masterpieces of the past has been as important as in late Republican Rome and throughout the Imperial Age. The original bronze of The Discobolus of Myron is lost but the work is known through numerous Roman copies, often produced in marble, was cheaper than bronze. This copy explores the ambivalent relationship between originality and imitation in Roman culture and its insistence on the circulation of multiples as homage to Greek art without the intention to do so. Another interesting detail is the Discobolus’ pose, that is said to be unnatural to a human and even considered a rather inefficient way to throw the discus. To a modern eye it may seem that Myron’s desire for perfection has made him suppress too rigorously the sense of strain in the individual muscles.

Figure 02 (previous column)
Unknown
The Discobolus of Myron, 460–450 BC
Bronze

The Futurist painter Umberto Boccioni (1882–1916) commented that “the purpose of the artist is to create images, not to paint images.” Many of his contemporaries shared this belief, including it as an example of its fascist aesthetic.

Figure 03
Roy Lichtenstein
Temple, 1964
Photolithograph, offset printed
58.7 x 43.7 cm

Roy Lichtenstein’s emphasis on methods of mechanical reproduction – particularly through his signature use of Ben-Day dots – highlighted that all forms of communication, are filtered through codes or languages. His “fusing” talent could easily mislead the viewer into thinking that the dots are stencilled ‘fakes’. In the early 1960s, Lichtenstein was often casually accused of merely copying his pictures from cartoons. The extent of his changes, and the artist’s rationale for introducing them, has long been central to discussions of his work. Temple is especially interesting, since it is a modern copy of an ancient representation. However, Lichtenstein never saw the original temple. He copied this specific image from a leaflet promoting a travelling agency. You can imagine Lichtenstein chuckling at the effect — real building, representational copy, fake image.

Figure 04
Darren Harvey-Regan
More or Less Obvious Forms, 2012
Ctype print
61 x 54 cm

Darren Harvey-Regan reacts on the trend that photography is leaning more and more towards the blemish-free, flawless gradients of advertising; an image becomes more about the abstracted ideal, an illustration of a concept. His image-making is a reciprocal process with the world. The photographs are about adapted and altered materials that, however, retain their original properties and appearances. Harvey-Regan acknowledges that reality isn’t perfect but believes that we have become accustomed to the digital representations that suggest that it is. This changes our expectations; life’s imperfections make something attractive or beautiful and tie it to the reality of our lived experience.

Figure 05
Otto Kuen
Fotoatlas Meublieur; 2013
61 x 54 cm

‘People talk about Otto Kuen like it’s some giant living in the hillside, coming down to visit the townspeople. We are Otto Kuen. Me, you, everybody, we are Otto Kuen. So Otto Kuen is going where we are going. So the next time you ask yourself, “Where is Otto Kuen going?” ask yourself, “Where am I going? How am I doing?” Berend Otto (1985) and Guus Kaandorp (1986) form Otto Kuen, an exceptional photographers duo. This series challenges the way we look at representational photography. Are we experiencing a well-photographed realistic painting, or is this simply a block of wood on canvas? Otto Kuen’s work is an example of aesthetic solutions to practical problems. The belief in creating new functions for the material leads them to surprising combinations and a distinctive series of images.

Figure 06
Juno Calypso
Joyce, 2013
London based artist Juno Calypso makes self-portraits in which she performs under the guise of a character named Joyce. Joyce created Joyce as a means of exploring constructed and societally enforced femininity, placing her within familiar, but alien surroundings to mirror her own feelings about the pressures of womanhood. It’s a tricky subject tackled with real photographic flair, and with tongue always firmly in cheek.

Figure 07
Chris Round
Inversion, 2012

Inversion marks a departure from Chris Round’s normal landscape based work into experimental still life. This series is an investigation into form and visual illusion using functional, mass-produced objects. By removing context – using a reflective surface that’s not immediately apparent – he is interrogating the duality of the real and the imagined, the prosaic and the beautiful. Round explores the physicality of depth and space, re-evaluating utilitarian aesthetic and function simultaneously.

Figure 08
Jurre Blom
The Future of Sex/Best of Both, 2014
Baron Magazine

Subverting notions of gender and the gendered body, photography duo Blommers & Schumm combines images of men and women contorted into yogic poses on a backdrop of grey ribbed classroom carpet tiles. This mix creates a subtle but powerful juxtaposition of the ordinary and the strange. Pale skinned and muscular, these forms are elongated across grey office carpets, their blurred gender is unsettling in the subtle juxtaposition between each body and its resulting de-humanising impact.

Figure 09
Anuschka Blommers and Niels Schumm
The Future of Sex/Best of Both, 2014

That every object, situation or person has already been photographed and shared once. For inspiration, he doesn’t look for images that are easy to find by keyword, but is fascinated by visuals that are indefinable. His work is ‘incomplete’ in a way that the images are filled with storytelling elements, but the full story is never told. The surrealistic elements come from the authenticity of the situations – a random snapshot at a birthday party, tourists looking at paintings, moments in-between important happenings. Blom’s representations beg for some kind of explanation but the image only remains a ‘still’ in a film. Something happened and something is going to happen, but none of that can be clearly seen in this moment. That makes his series uncanny; these seemingly familiar images don’t agree with reality for reasons unknown.

Figure 10
Jurre Blom
Me, you, everybody, we are Otto Kuen. So Otto Kuen is going where we are going. So the next time you ask yourself, “Where is Otto Kuen going?” ask yourself, “Where am I going? How am I doing?” Berend Otto (1985) and Guus Kaandorp (1986) form Otto Kuen, an exceptional photographers duo. This series challenges the way we look at representational photography. Are we experiencing a well-photographed realistic painting, or is this simply a block of wood on canvas? Otto Kuen’s work
In his work Singles, conceptual artist Claude Closky combines sentences of contact ads. The staged ‘mixtures’ only offer a list of good qualities. ‘I have golden hair and deep blue eyes. I’m a well-defined swimmer, with good looks and a billing sense of humour, all in one package’. Closky orders the data in two columns, one for him and one for her. When you start reading you can not help but think: ‘what an amazing people’. Only if you continue reading you start to recognize the inclination of the sentences. The clichés show the media world as a distant mirror of our daily lives. You suddenly realize how artificial our world is, in which reality doesn’t match up to our desires. Everybody stays in their own column of words, just like in real life, the dream of encounter will never take place.

Vogue, Vanity Fair, and Harper’s Bazaar he made stylish location and studio portraits of artists, film stars, authors, models, and upper crust society. He ended up in Hollywood, where six celebrity studies, noted for their use of shadows, blended the artist and person to define glamour portraits. However, the portraits he took also often depict the downside of the film industry. The wide-smiling actresses are clearly made of false happiness and his lens captured the thin line in between dream in reality in the early Hollywood stages. Pictured is actress Loretta Young, who only opened up on many rape scandals during her career years after her Hollywood haydays, proving that smiles can be unnatural. Hoyningen-Huene himself fled for the Nazi movement in East-Germany. For both, Hollywood was a tool of escapism from their actual situation.

The title ‘Natural Beauty’ is deceiving. Created duo Lernert and Sander directed this surreal short which is 365 layers of makeup are applied in nine hours to see what is needed to go from a natural look to an outrageous one. The cosmetic overkill can be seen as a statement on today’s zeitgeist in which software like Photoshop define beauty. On the other hand, it could be a comment on the growing ‘natural beauty’ trend. Originally it meant ‘sans make-up’, now it equals make-up that promises to give a natural look. An artificial product to create the best ‘natural’ you.

Photographs can seem convincingly real or strangely artificial. German photographer Thomas Demand achieves a disquieting balance between the two. Demand begins with a pre-existing image culled from the media, usually of a political event, which he translates into a life-size model made of paper and cardboard. His handcrafted facsimiles of architectural spaces and natural environments are built in the image of other images. Once he has photographed his re-created environments—always devoid of figures but often displaying evidence of recent human activity—Demand destroys his models, further complicating the relationship between reproduction and original that his photography investigates.

Figure 22 Haus-Rucker-Co Environment Transformers Vienna, 1968

Haus-Rucker-Co were a Viennese group founded in 1967. Their work explored the potential of architecture through installations and happenings using pneumatic structures or prosthetic devices that altered perceptions of space. Such concerns fit with the utopian architectural experiments of the 1960s by groups like Superstudio, Archizoom, Ant Farm and Coop Himmelblau. Haus-Rucker-Co were exploring the potential of architecture as a form of critique, and on the other the possibility of creating design for technically mediated experimental environments and utopian cities. The different versions of the Mail Expander series (1967-69) are shown on this images. This project consisted of various helmets that could alter the perceptions of those wearing them, for example the ‘Fly Head’ disoriented the sight and hearing of the wearer to create an entirely new apprehension of reality: it also produced one of their most memorable images.
media. The necessity of creating one's own, personal conceptually, it plays on the current deodorant industry. A comment on the air freshener’s names extravagantly to series takes its title from a variety of car brand enhancers. Each photograph of the practice. Antonio Marguet’s sight of how we present ourselves infuses through media activities. The unnatural thing’s as ‘they are’. The ‘natural’ is alien to Antonio. His work reflects on certain things as ‘they are’. The ‘natural’ is alien to Antonio Marguet’s photography to returning to Earth to advance evolution. ‘a star child, an angel, a superman’ (said Kubrick) – before actually landed on the moon. Surréal, plastic and really rather fantastic: Exotic Juicy Tutti Frutti, 2011

Figure 22

Antonio Marguet
Exotic Juicy Tutti Frutti, 2011
80 x 130 cm

Duane Hanson was derided for his hyperreal sculptures of everyday Americans doing everyday things. But now they seem astonishingly timely. Hanson created hyperrealist figurative work at a time when it was academically anathema. His realism isn’t Madame Tussauds, and it isn’t marniequin in the store windows. Hanson was going for ‘realness’. The work archetypes is important here because Hanson was often dismissed as someone who worked in stereotypes – a world that is ontologically similar but wrong. Stereotypes are exaggerated characteristics temporarily tainted with conscious or subconscious contempt. In some ways, they even feel more authentic than the humans visiting the sculptures museums: they come from an era where authenticity was the default mode of being, an era when reality reigned, and where a word like ‘realness’ was still only something in an artist’s or a drag queen’s magic bag of tricks.

Figure 26

Ed Atkins
Even Pricks, 2013
digital film, 8 min

Even Pricks is a slick Tourrettes tic, an ‘I Like’ smog of Hotel California and handclaps, shimmering with the glossy seductive joy of CGI. Instead of bringing us the hard sell, it’s abundantly underfunded and seemingly sincere, recalling the sweetly troubling bass lines of 1970s French psychedelic pop and pasta-coloured dreams too good to be true. The characters in conceptual CGI artist Ed Atkins’s films are melancholic intertros – commentators on the everyday life torn away from the world of Facebook hyperactivity and the ‘like’ economy. In a flat and nearly perfectly synthetic reality, they seek authenticity and emotional depth. Even Pricks concludes a film series by Atkins in which the primary subject is depression. The artist is interested in the potential to express emotion through cold and flawless digital means and plays with the convention of aggressive advertising slogans and film trailers, urging the viewer to ‘this summer destroy their lives.’

Figure 27

Duane Hanson
The Supermarket Shopper, 1970
Fiberglass
1.65 x 1.67 cm

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Renaissance study of the body - this is a make the unreal believable, it creates it.

The real does not simply take for granted. The apocalyptic, the end of everything we inhabit paradise, but when we picture it in detail, or try to create it on earth, it has a tendency to become hell.

The Garden of Earthly Delights (middle) Hieronymus Bosch

Figure 32

Garden of Earthly Delights

1503-1515

2.2 m x 3.89 m

oil on oak panels

The Garden of Earthly Delights is a triptych painted by a diamond Hieronymus Bosch. No one can get their heads around this superabundant dream, or nightmare. It folds in and out of itself, monstrous in its violent transformations of scale, as tiny people gorge on giant strawberries and are crushed by severed ears. The painter interlaces different realities and unrealities, painting things perfectly natural in themselves, but hilarious and surreal in their natural and man-made surroundings. The perspective is impossible. Is the canvas transparent or opaque? Are we looking through it at images in the distance or are these images in front of us? This ambiguity sets up a visual paradox that cannot be resolved and the undecidability of the image and text than with logical relationships between image and text than with.

John Baldessari

Trust Me, 1997

ink jet on synthetic polymer on canvas

35 x 27 cm

The titles of Goya’s series of etchings ‘The disasters of war’ were reappropriated by conceptual artist John Baldessari in 1997. Black and white photographs of mundane objects are reproduced by the artist on canvas and accompanied by Goya-esque titles (some taken from the originals, some invented by himself). The ambiguity obtained by the association of pictures and texts echoes Goya’s own cynicism when the artist somehow understated the violence inherent in crude war pictures. In this image, baldessari is less interested in logical relationships between image and text than with what conceptual knots people can make from one bit of information to another and how they can fill the space.

What characterizes Magritte’s oil on canvas

Belle Captive

1937

110 x 73 cm

Detail of painting shows a sort of high altar. The curtain, as a means of concealment, makes the painter employ what is visible as a means of concealment to prepare a trap for it by compelling it to reveal itself. This ambiguity sets up a visual paradox that cannot be resolved and the undecidability of the image. Each one of the six canvases contains an easel that holds a painting within a painting, a procedure that establishes specular duplication with mise-en-scène effects. The painting on the easel replicates the landscape beyond it and the internal frame breaks the continuity of the image while accentuating it. Although the background and the foreground overlap, the perspective is impossible. Is the canvas transparent or opaque? Are we looking through it at images in the distance or are these images in front of us? This ambiguity sets up a visual paradox that cannot be resolved and the undecidability of the perspective elicits epistemological and ontological concerns in the mind of the observer. The image demonstrates how the painter employs what is visible as a means of concealment, making use of this concealment to prepare a trap for it by compelling it to reveal itself.

The series of images continues: the places he visited over and over again - these places were not how he imagined, or how he had previously pictured them. In discovering this he realized these new and transient realities contrasted with his own recollection and imagination.

The painter’s subversion of man-made environments and of nature’s retardation. The question can be asked - what is natural? Is it natural for humans to shape their surroundings? Is man-made an unearned natural? Is a playground natural? The combination of different natural and man-made elements. Round discovered an unfamiliar air about the places he visited over and over again - these places were not how he imagined, or how he had previously pictured them. In discovering this he realized these new and transient realities contrasted with his own recollection and imagination.

Renee Magritte

La Belle Captive (Beautiful World), 1962

oil on canvas

100 x 81 cm

What characterizes Magritte’s La Belle Captive series of paintings is the undecidability of the image. Each one of the six canvases contains an easel that holds a painting within a painting, a procedure that establishes specular duplication with mise-en-scene effects. The painting on the easel replicates the landscape beyond it and the internal frame breaks the continuity of the image while accentuating it. Although the background and the foreground overlap, the perspective is impossible. Is the canvas transparent or opaque? Are we looking through it at images in the distance or are these images in front of us? This ambiguity sets up a visual paradox that cannot be resolved and the undecidability of the perspective elicits epistemological and ontological concerns in the mind of the observer. The image demonstrates how the painter employs what is visible as a means of concealment, making use of this concealment to prepare a trap for it by compelling it to reveal itself.

Hieronymus Bosch

The Garden of Earthly Delights (middle)

Figure 32

Hieronymus Bosch

Garden of Earthly Delights

1503-1515

2.2 m x 3.89 m

oil on oak panels

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Prada thanks all those who — with intelligence, passion and professionalism — have contributed to this journey into the world of ideas.