

Em Davenport & Sasha Miasnikova
Good Consumer
4.07.25 - 5.10-25
Jessamine

What is the framework for an artist's relation to objects and consumption? How does one rectify their legitimate attraction and connection to items they find beautiful?

Em Davenport and Sasha Miasnikova both have channeled aspects of their commodity fetishism into their practices and this is not an accusation. There is an awareness or control in using the desire to purchase as generative. Well versed in the language of the contemporary feminine zeitgeist, good consumer reflects the fascination with objects and coveting by showing tribute through depiction.

Miasnikova often paints closet items she sees but doesn't and can't necessarily own. The color and form of these pieces on figures lounging or standing becomes a gestural recording of the possibilities of life with these objects. When Miasnikova depicts the clothing or household items alone, they then become part of a collage, flattened and eulogized. Their bright, pop colors sit on top of cotton and neutral colored panels. A sculpture stack of wax folded t-shirts mimics this stage-set alternate reality.

Davenport uses graphite to draw on mounted perfume boxes, as well as vinyl record sleeves, paying tribute to the ephemera of a purchase often discarded or stored, donated and pushed back into the cycle. Ready-made imagery, vintage household goods and accessories, and sketches from specific photos of reference conjure constant recognition. One of the LPs cheekily says, "prolétaires de tous les pays caressez-vous" in a twee, handwritten font. The result of this approach is a tongue-in-cheek, antagonistic regurgitation.

The quality of both work is textural, denoting time and handwork. This doting mirrors the time "good consumers" put into developing an identity through purchasing and the research necessary in finding and coveting specialized material goods. The evidence of a human hand transmutes the mass-produced. If processing culture through the self is encouraged to us usually through purchase, Davenport and Miasnikova are able to have this be the haphazard alternative of process.

Text by Lauren Cook