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Laura Lancaster Reanimates Images Through Painting

Laura Lancaster brings dead or forgotten images back to life, reanimating them with paint. Yet the UK-based artist is not concerned merely with precision, which makes for intriguing, drippy works on canvas.

Lancaster, who lives and works in Newcastle, finds her inspiration from anonymous snapshots found at flea markets or on eBay. The photos are, for one reason or another, flawed, discarded and seemingly forgotten — they are dead images. Choosing photos with curious formal qualities and an intense relationship between subject and viewer, Lancaster brings these dead images back to life through her paintings.



Yet the artificial nature of this reanimation is apparent through the materiality and sheer abundance of paint. Paint drips down the canvases resembling both confetti and blood; it distorts the subjects' faces to the point of abstraction. The lost photos become powerful images, but the subjects are lost in the paint. This meditation on time, memory and death illuminates the space between that perfect photo of the nostalgic moment and all the lost memories, buried without remorse.

In a second category of works, Lancaster paints the text scrawled on the backs of photographs. She turns unconscious scribbles into unexpected subject matter, rendering the letters with the care of an image. Lines become masses of paint yet the words retain their legibility. Lancaster also toys with the relationship between word and image: Can the summation of the work on the back of a photograph capture the photograph in some way?

Lancaster's collection is open at the seams and dripping wet. She invites you to connect these strangers' memories to your own and make your own meanings. The paintings are more to be experienced than analysed. In the artist's words: "*Francis Bacon talks about the nervous system. It's more direct than the concept. The concept comes after. It tells you what the concept is.*"

Check out some of Lancaster's paintings below, courtesy of Workplace Gallery.