

Limelight

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Preview: Friday 23 June, 19:00 – 21:00

Exhibition: 24 June – 30 July 2023

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The exhibition questions the relationship between celebrities and fame as a metaphor for the ego, exploring the camera lens and screen as a barrier between individual perception and connection with others.

The paintings feature stills of Julia Roberts as Anna Scott from the 1999 Rom-com Notting Hill. Throughout the film the protagonist played by Julia Roberts (also an actor) features as many different personas such as an astronaut and a character from a Henry James novel. The exhibition focuses on the sub narrative and parody (of a film within a film and an actor acting as an actor) as a conduit to explore pretense, performance and multiple 'selves'.

The stills from Notting Hill are collaged with motifs associated with celebrity culture such as limousines alongside racing dogs and horses as place holders for elitism, winning and success. The paintings employ the landscape of dark and bright lights of a premier and the theme of cinema to explore contrasting narratives and points of view.

The laugh that remained the same

She spots the reproduced Chagall on his kitchen wall and tells him, "It feels like how love should be, floating through a dark blue sky". Then and there I'm reminded of the Prius Hybrids that would drive me at ten to midnight under a name that was not my own and a rating that put mine to shame, of the smoothness of the engine and how every road felt as though it had been freshly paved that very morning. I once spent twenty pounds on a drawing of my soulmate by an artist on Etsy who claimed to be psychic. It didn't look like you so I bought another, the second one didn't look like you either. A few nights ago I spent 7.99 on Amazon Prime renting a horror film you recently featured in and then 3.49 on a single episode of a TV Series, in which you had a recurring role. I emailed you that night, simultaneously congratulating you and resurrecting a past I know full well has no place in my future. Your characters are both nothing like you and utterly indistinguishable all at the same time. Some have a dress sense that's eclectic, outrageous, or of a completely different era and some appear to own items I recognise. Some don wigs and hair pieces and some speak in an entirely different dialect from that of your own. In spite of all this, your laugh lines continue to map the route from your crow's feet to the corners of your mouth by treading down the grass between them, and your laugh remains the same. Your laugh was the most organic sound I'd ever come across, it couldn't be coaxed, mimicked or forced, and yet it's credited, multiple times. I believed you were the most interesting thing about me, telling people it felt like a movie. Now I wonder if that's simply a consequence of your talent, that neither you, or the people around you, can spot the difference.

This accompanying text was commissioned for *Limelight*
Molly Gough 2023