

Melissa Wilkinson

La Petite Mort

Artist Statement

This series of paintings relates to my interest in dichotomies: obscuring and revealing, attraction and repulsion, good and evil, the past and the present. I appropriate imagery from a variety of sources in order to develop a pastiche that fractures the conventional male gaze and positions art historical models as both subject and spectacle. I choose to dismantle epic narratives from the past to create a schizophrenic perspective. The images break from their original sources into fragments, creating a complex visual experience that both irritates and seduces.

The romantic process of painting allows me to meditate on issues of gender, identity construction and beauty. Though the paintings are initially conceived of using digital processes, they are made employing traditional techniques borrowed from the old masters. In doing so, I endeavor to uphold these painting processes while dismantling the elitism with which they are often associated.