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It's Nice That

"Kyung Me's detailed series tells the tale of a cat struggling with identity"

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## Kyung Me's detailed series tells the tale of a cat struggling with identity

Words Rebecca Fulleylove

Work Illustration

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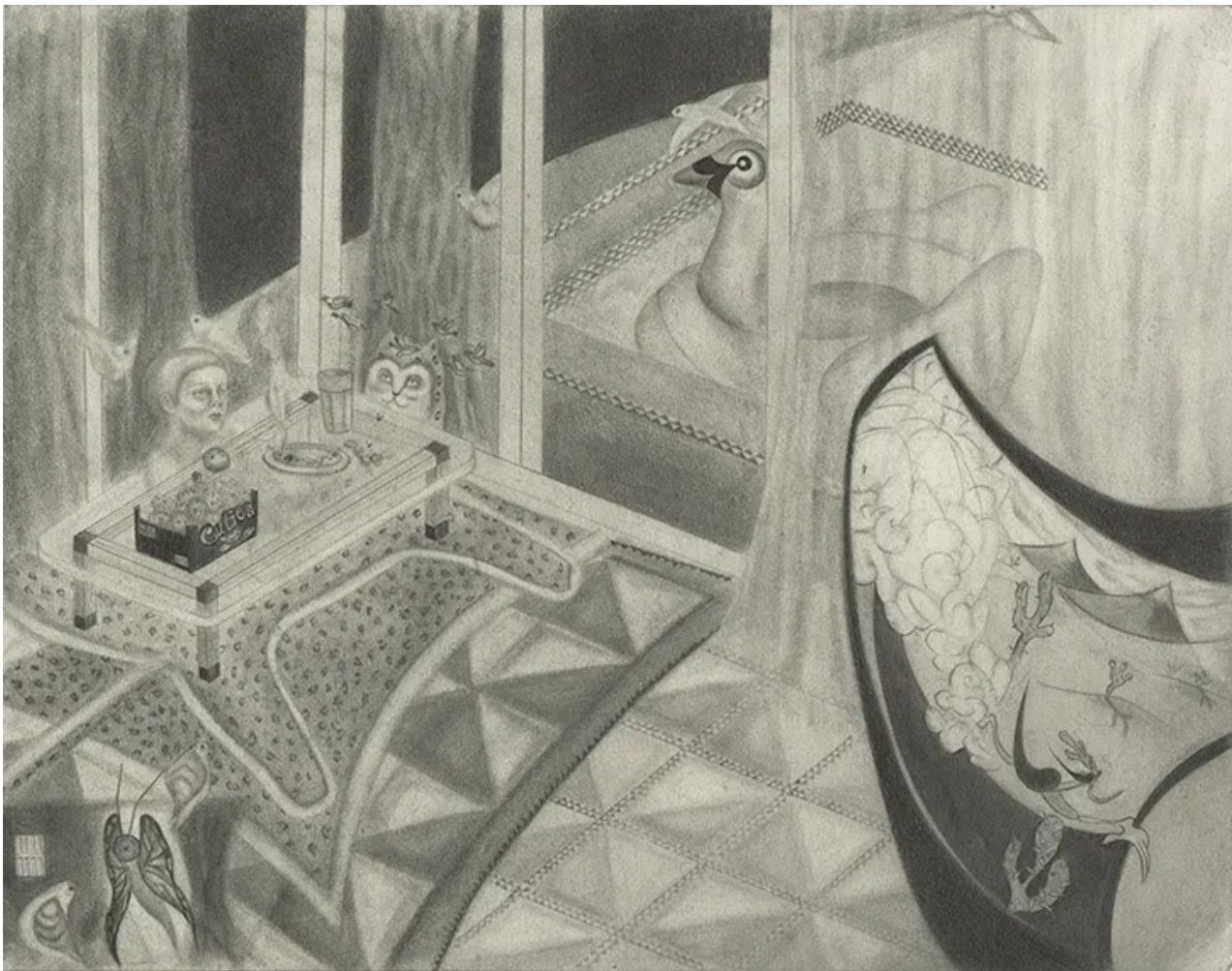
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Illustrator Kyung Me has created a series of illustrations about a character called Copy Kitty, whose quest it is to be adored. "Copy Kitty's target of affection is an innocent, cherub-like, blonde boy with a nebulous gaze. Copy Kitty plants herself in the world of the boy and expends all her energy trying to belong in his world,"

explains Kyung Me. To blend in, Copy Kitty disguises herself in elaborate gowns and adorns a “blank, inscrutable expression”.

But what is she trying to hide? “I think she is trying to hide the fact that she doesn’t know what she is and really doesn’t want to find out – is she a cat, a stuffed animal, or a dead cat rug? She doesn’t know, but she just wants to be regular,” says the illustrator. The series culminates in Copy Kitty “suffering from a vortex of paranoia and horrible thoughts”, and in the last drawing we see her on the floor, smoking, her “memories and fantasies all nonsensically meshed together”.



Above  
Kyung Me: Copy Kitty

Each drawing in this series took 20 hours, and is full of references to Korean art, *Looney Tunes*, and 1950s illustrations. While it’s a surreal tale, the universally relatable themes of identity and acceptance allow the viewer to easily digest Kyung Me’s elaborately detailed, black and white drawings, and the ideas present sit close to home. “As someone born into a body of an Asian girl, I was

conditioned to believe I had to assume a certain identity to be accepted – I would always just do things that I thought other people wanted. To be adored and admired was another painful challenge,” explains the illustrator. “I assumed new identities for years to pander to romantic partners. I was left identity-less when the relationships died. In the series, I wanted to talk about the self-internalisation of a projected identity. When I started making *Copy Kitty*, I realised my entire identity was built off of so many misguided notions. I didn’t know who I was at all. I wanted to dismantle ideas about my constructed identities.”

With these conflicting notions and a need to explore, the style of this series is in contrast to last time we showed the illustrator’s work, where her naively-drawn characters were made up of scrappy line work and soothing colours. The progression is a natural one though and fits in with the story and characters Kyung Me is trying to portray. “When it comes to drawing, I find what style suits my mood. I made *Copy Kitty* during a time I was weak, tired, and had vertigo. I found solace in rendering little triangles for hours.

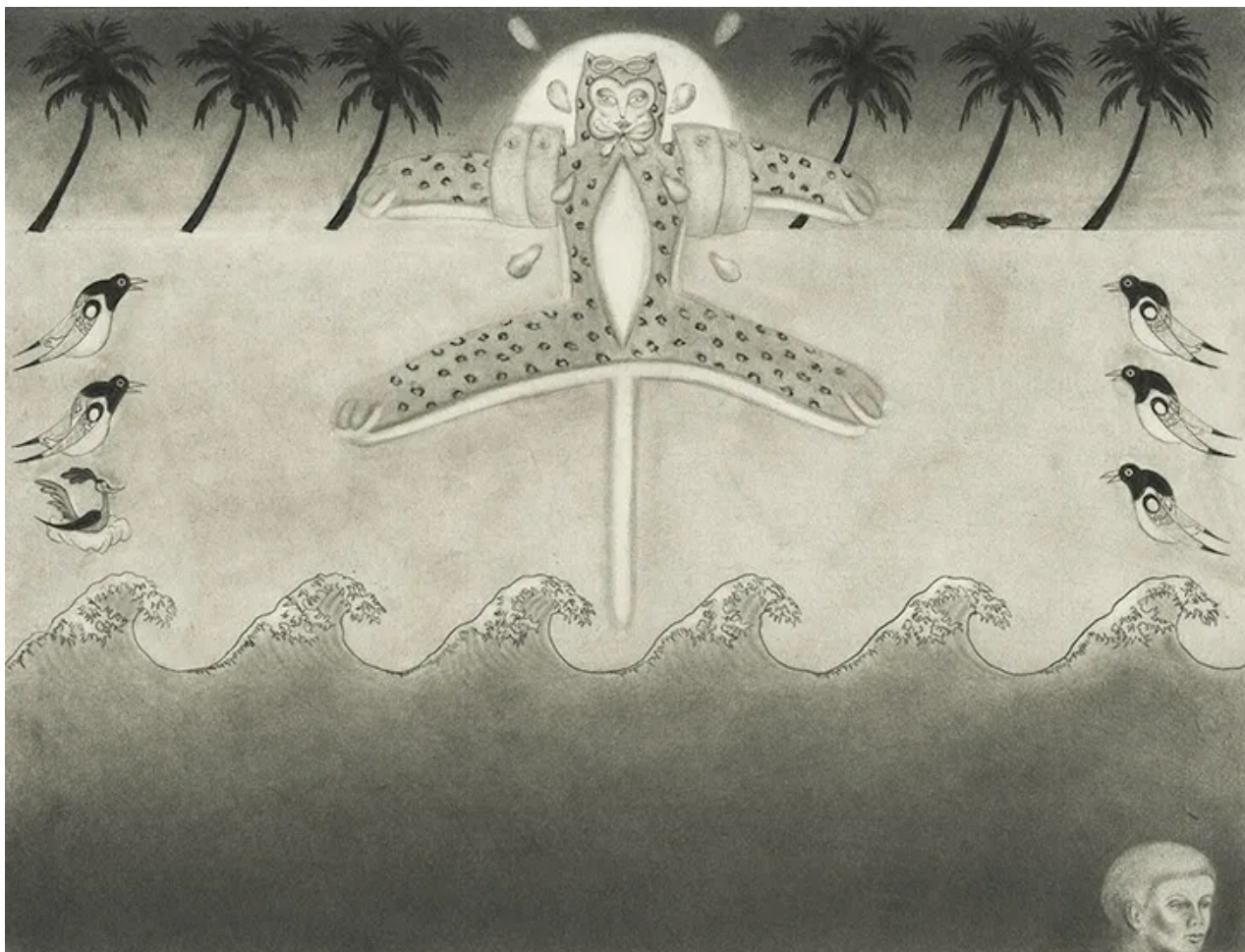
“I think it’s important to switch it up a lot, especially while I’m still young,” explains the illustrator. “If I were still making *Bad Korean* drawings, I would be sad for myself. Those drawings took no more than an hour sometimes and during that time, my life was much more fast-paced. I didn’t have time to work on drawings as long as I wanted to. While rendering the *Copy Kitty* drawings, I had more time to reflect and ruminate.”





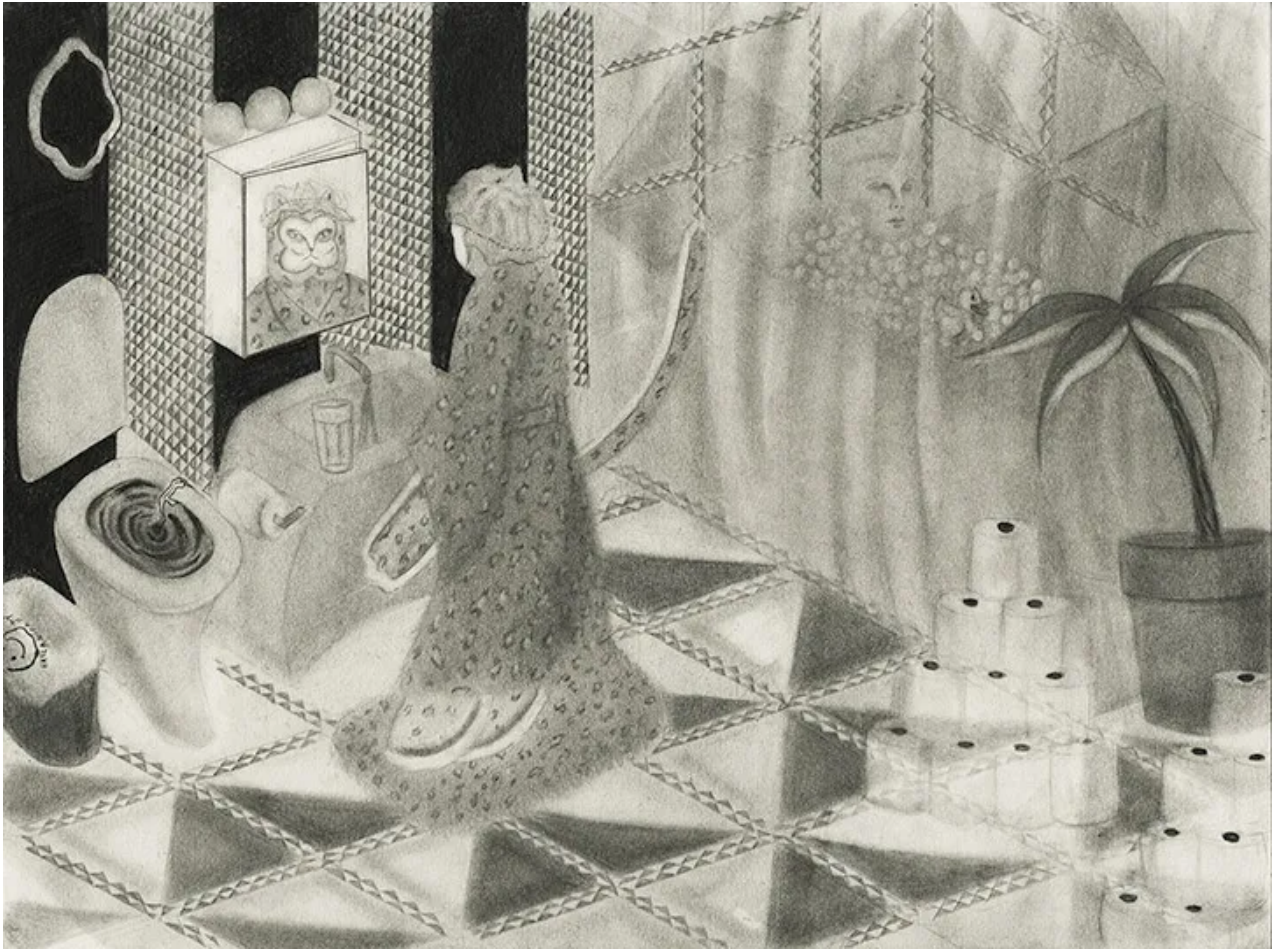
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Kyung Me: Copy Kitty





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About the Author

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Rebecca Fulleylove is a freelance writer and editor specialising in art, design and culture. She is also senior writer at Creative Review, having previously worked at Elephant, Google Arts & Culture, and It's Nice That.

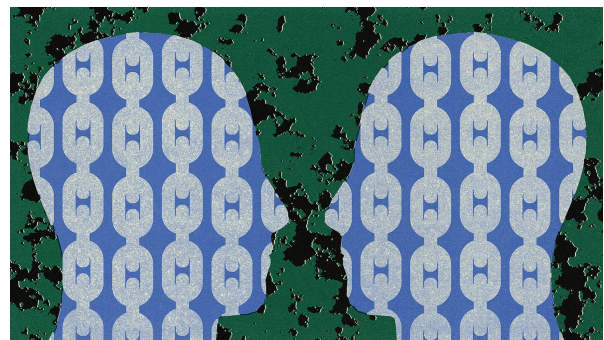
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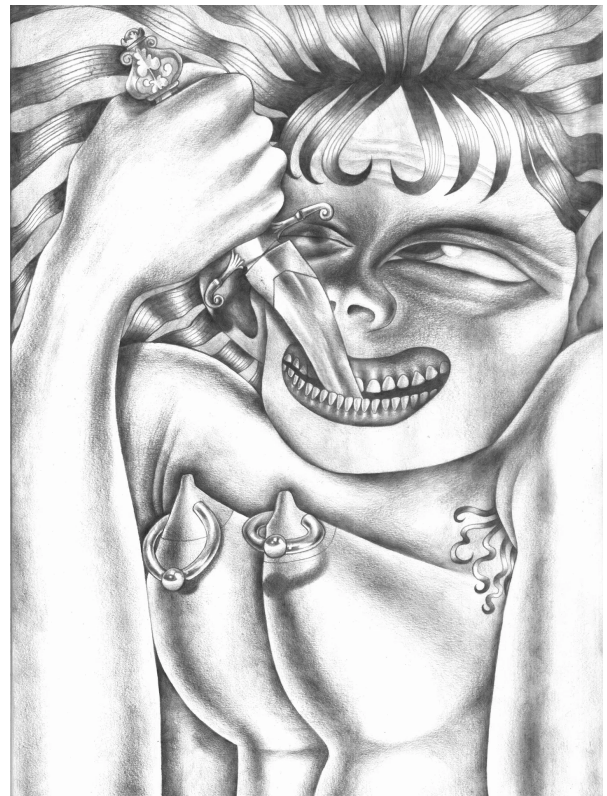
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