

Castle Keep
James Dean Diamond
Curated by Samia Ashraf



Castle Keep

James Dean Diamond's haunting characters and sirens inhabit the fictional and romantic world of a 'Castle Keep'. The 12 large-format black-and-white and colour works each depict an independent and beguiling solitary figure. The pieces respectively measure 150cm x 100cm and collectively act as the 'keepers' against the prevailing 'reality' media circus that consumes contemporary British culture.

Using portraiture to convey a human presence through his ectoplasmic beings, Diamond moulds each subject's personality to reveal individual traits in an esoteric way. The casting, styling and make-up are integral components for the creation of these tableaux, and by utilising a high level of craftsmanship the result is somewhere between caricature and factual representation.

References are made from disparate historical sources including Renaissance and Mannerist simulacrum, as well as interlacing a Gothic edge. The stylised poses, lighting and palette adhere to the painting sensibility of the Renaissance period, while the haute-couture garments adorning these females echo the lavish clothing worn by the gentility. Distorting and exaggerating the facial features, the hands and limbs, Diamond recalls the techniques employed by the Mannerists. The Gothic era is located in the tales of knights and maidens when a 'castle keep' was the secure area of a fortress – whereas the black-and-white pieces add a sinister dimension by alluding to early horror and noir films. Diamond's artwork reflects upon his gothic punk youth, when he longed to be removed from suburban life and to be among theatrical female protagonists.

The 12 works from the series 'Castle Keep' are each 'Untitled'

Dimension: 150cm x 100cm

Medium: C-TYPE

Edition: Eight per piece

1998–2003

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