

ACID CANDY

MILES ALDRIDGE

Introduction by

Glenn O'Brien

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*“MILES SEES A COLOR COORDINATED,
GRAPHICALLY PURE, HARD-EDGED REALITY”*

- DAVID LYNCH

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"There is less to this than meets the eye."

– Tallulah Bankhead

Once I was visiting a painter friend's studio and he showed me a new canvas depicting a gremlin-like man dressed in a strange, folkish purple costume with a ruff, wearing a large, bizarrely shaped hat with a huge brim almost the shape of the infinity symbol and with an identically clad, smaller gremlin man sitting on the hat's brim. I said, "What's this about?" And he said to me curiously "Haven't you ever had that dream?" I said no and I bought the painting. Miles Aldridge constructs dreams.

That is his artistic and commercial practice. He understands the essential ingredients of the dream and he uses impeccable instinct in crafting something like "stills" from the fractured narratives that we normally experience nocturnally and unconsciously. And, as shown here, he creates these dreams while illustrating today's fashions for their potential buyers. A dream can make you conquer a new land or buy a new hat or a painting or a philosophy. Aldridge knows that dreams are an

exquisite tapestry of right and wrong, a chain of happenings in which what is "right," that is what is logical or normal, conflicts with what is wrong, what defies our waking order of things, our expectations and sensibility. Dreams disrupt what is perceived as reality. Dreams happen to some people. And some people make them happen. Something of a dream has to be familiar and follow the logic of reality. Something in the dream has to be quite wrong and flout logic and decorum. Something has to suspend the natural order or push it beyond the tacitly established limit. The dream scenario is constructed through usual techniques of staging, but against the notion of plot, and mysterious symbolism occurs, suggesting another level of meaning, an apparent transition point in the alogical train of events, perhaps a portal to the next scenario.

Today when we see something that seems wrong our instinct is to click on it and see what happens. Aldridge's images click for us. Nudity out of context. Click. Cats acting human. Click. Babies, cigaretttes and cocktails. Click. I love the sound of buttons being pushed. Even the atmosphere in Aldridge's photos is otherworldly, interplanetary, scintillatingly wack. His acidic color palette signifies a phase shift in the atmosphere, in the magnetic field. In the twentieth century we explored how a world could be reimagined through color, through Technicolor or Ektacolor or neon or dayglo, or through the prism of an artist like Disney or Douglas Sirk or Andy Warhol or William Eggleston. We saw that artists' color senses could actually mutate our diurnal environment. We saw that what we once called the visible spectrum was



just the beginning. Man can mutate Surrealism no longer exists. In his don't apply. Our minds are cells in a better than ours. (Well, yours maybe.) nature through filters, microchips 1924 Manifesto of Surrealism Andre Aldridge's dreams have better and the miracle of plastics. The light Breton wrote: "I believe in the future When I think about ideas of reality I casting, better sets, better hair and can change through the lens of the resolution of these two states, dream keep going back to something said make-up, better composition, more atmosphere, as carbon and inert and reality, which are so seemingly by Larry Flynt, the infamous publisher interesting color.... gasses and ozone build up, perhaps contradictory, into a kind of absolute of Hustler magazine, "Parody has Let's face it, he's not the only dreamer we will see different. Jumping Jack reality, a surreality, if one may so so become so real, we're gonna stop in the studio system of the dream Flash is a gas and Earth can be Oz. speak." doing parody." academy, but he is one who gets it. A woman can be a Warhol. The reason that Miles Aldridge's Life has become more dreamlike. Like Helmut Newton, Alfred Hitchcock, Art has always been about photographs are not surrealism is We can react to this condition in Guy Bourdin, Douglas Sirk, Syd Barrett, dreams, and you could define art that this is the future and these various ways. We can make an Cindy Sherman or Salvador Dali... as a sort of conscious dreaming, two states, dream and reality, have extra effort to achieve something yes we can't count the surrealists out an attempt to access regions of resolved themselves in the fabric of resembling traditional reality, or either. the psyche not accessible through consciousness. We live in surreality we can give empower our dreaming Aldridge is a dream technician conventional means. Surrealism was and the mechanics of mentality, faculties to create fanciful states of a high order. Just when the term an attempt to make art using the which seamlessly blend traditional of mind that explore the possible post-modernism seems quite tired, techniques of dream by empowering forms of perception with increasingly reverberations of image and action. he gives it a boost by working the the unconscious mind and making complex external media, have There is a certain art to either practice. line of contradiction with rigor and it productive through various created a transcendent "reality" which There is no doubt as to Aldridge's verve. Aldridge understands that in techniques ranging from the is as fictional as it is "documentary." tendency. He is a public dreamer. He the post-Surrealist world, the world psychoanalytical to the shamanic. We live in a new electronic hive mind creates slices of dream state for mass where surreality is reality, there is no Miles Aldridge's photographs where old ideas of individuality and consumption. Why do we need such strict demarcation between dream look like surrealism but they are not. group, conscious and unconscious products? Because his dreams are and reality, art and commerce, art and

fashion, secular and religious, male Warhol's Liz, mass-produced for Planet expands or diverts the mind in a cool, immersion. and female, master and pet, past and Stepford. casual manner. These pictures are Iconographic interpretation is fine, present, I and thou. It is, as we like I asked Miles what the title "acid recreational mind changers. There is a but a warm bath is better. A dream or to say now, what it is. It is what it is. candy" means and he told me it refers wow to them, but there is also a giggle. a photograph is not just about what it All is one. (At least!) to the hard boiled sweets he had as This isn't about breaking on through means. That takes the fun out of any Aldridge's feverish madonna a kid. And he paraphrased Alfred to the other side. We already broke dream or any picture. It's about what it icon is both saint and sinner, her Hitchcock who referred to his work on through to that other side. This is does to you. How it makes you feel and ecstasy is both religious and sexual, as "not a slice of life, but a piece of about exploring a world that renews what you do when you feel that way. and how far is that from the source cake." To an American the title "Acid itself within the instant non-stop. This A dream is about how you use it. It's of myth itself, from the "reality" of St. Candy" would suggest a kind of sugar is about mutation as lifestyle. This is about how it means. Theresa? Aldridge recreates the Bride coated pill containing lysergic acid about image as virus and about radar of Frankenstein as a fashion shoot. diethylamide, or LSD. love. It's about seizing control of the Power courses through her couture Which reminded me of a remarkable dreaming apparatus and using it for draped body, lighting the lighbulb in snatch of conversation I once our own devices. We're here. We think her bare hand. She is the world, Gaia overheard. A child asked his father queer. Get used to it. as the Bridge of Frankenstein, brought "Why did Elvis die daddy?" and Looking at Aldridge's vision isn't really to life by the power of the grid, the without missing a beat the father the point. It is something you look electric lady of Jimi Hendrix, just as she replied "Because he thought medicine at, but it's also something you have is the Statue of Liberty or libertines. was candy." I don't know what that to absorb, almost without analysis. It's a new world. And Aldridge's green has to do with these photographs, if It's more about what they nail salon clad ultrachic suburban shopper, with anything, but there is a psychedelic, lady says in the dishwashing liquid radioactively red nails and lips, ashen consciousness altering quality to TV ad: "You're soaking in it." The face, jet hair and emergency yellow, is them, an hallucinatory edge that best photographic images are for



...I walk into a pub, The Seven Stars The men are silent. Their faces are on Brick Lane. A naked woman is still, only their eyes move, following her kneeling on a billiard table. Her body as she rolls from man to man. is white against the green baize and In this half remembered scene are coloured balls. Her face is painted in many of the things I think about; the colours of candy, with green eye- not just the naked woman and her shadow and orange lipstick. Against audience but also lurking inside this the wall around the billiard table are memory are the night interiors of men. They silently watch her body Edward Hopper, the strange nudes move, passing an empty beer glass of Paul Delvaux, the lighting of from one to the other, filling it with American musicals, the comic drama coins. She comes off the table and of Fellini, the pop songs of the jukebox, rolls her body against the audience. the blank expressions of silent cinema Their rough hands gently stroke and and real life. caress her white flesh.

Miles Aldridge, London 2008









































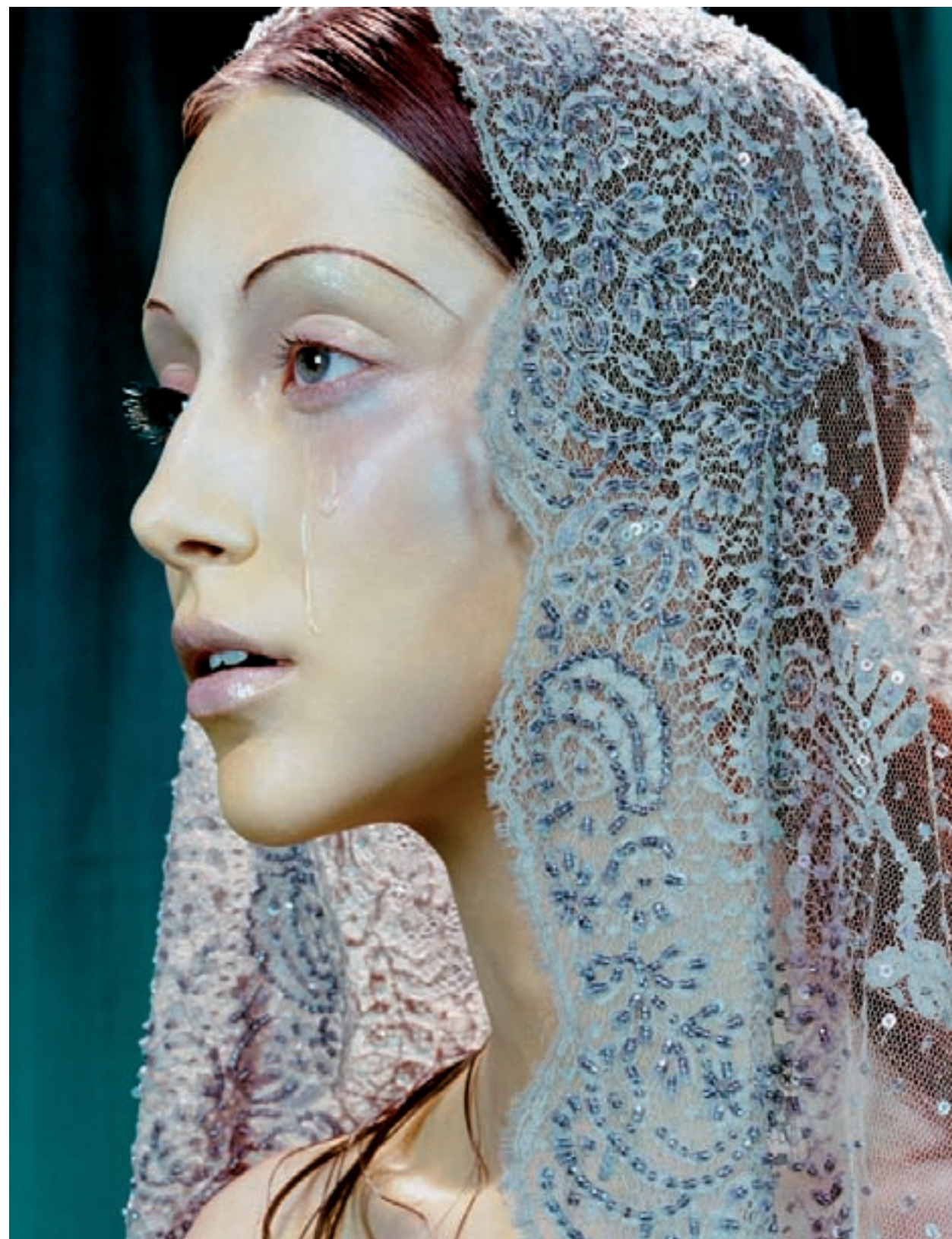








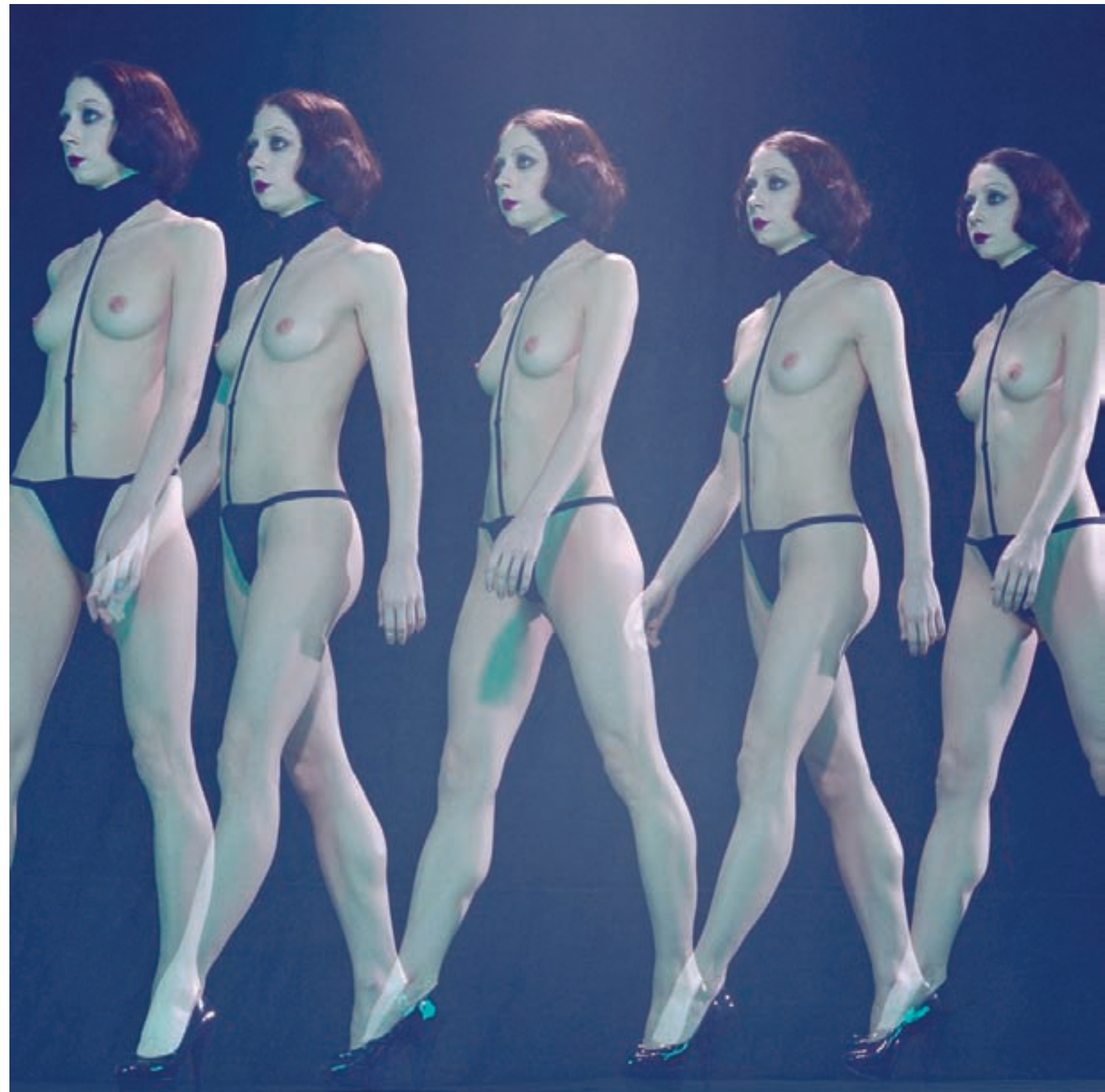
















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