

'Self-portrait in Flesh with Clock'

by Chris Brake

Synopsis

A struggling artist makes their first sale.

Age Range

18+

Gender

Neutral

Length

3 minutes

THE ARTIST:

Cheque came through in the mail today.

Finally.

Took a merry month mind you, what with the posties going on strike and letting the letter-boxes run dry.

Still, five hundred.

Gosh.

I've never seen two zeroes on a cheque before.

Well, not one that was incoming anyway.

Five. Oh. Oh.

They look like shocked little eyes, the O's.

As if they can't believe anyone would splurge so much on anything painted by me.

I suppose my eyes looked like that as well, when it happened.

Two big O's. All caps.

I'd clocked the buyer on opening night; milling around half-cut on complimentary cava and wagging his finger at anything that matched his decor.

Cameron Oakley-Jones; the Pickering Biscuits heir.

The gallery owner, Judy; bob cut, bad breath, she never strayed too far from his side.

Armed, she was, with a bottle of blanco in one hand and a book of red dots in the other.

Topping him up with her left and closing the sale with her right.

And boy, did she strike oil that night.

Little red dots everywhere.

Place looked like a chickenpox party come the stroke of midnight.

Took a while for my sale to land though.

Mine was hung at the back of the space, up between the gents and the cheese dips.

But I'd read in the gossips he was lactose intolerant, and judging from the vats of vino he was necking I'd say he had the bladder of an African rhino.

So the chance of him loitering down at the arse-end was somewhere close to nil.

Nature eventually did call though.

And that's when it caught his eye.

Judy pounced.

Bottles up, stickers out, and before he could sip the dregs of his white I was red-dotted and winging my way to a high-rise condo down on the Isle of Dogs.

Five hundred nicker for an impasto on canvas.

'Self-portrait in Flesh with Clock'.

Suppose I must have matched his drapes.

Now I think of it, I wonder where he's put me.

I hope it's not the dining room.

I wouldn't want to loom too large over an evening soirée.

Not with my bits on show.

I'm hoping he's put me somewhere tasteful, like the hallway.

I've always thought I'm quite welcoming.

Then again, when I welcome guests I'm rarely in the nip.

It'll not burn a hole in my pocket though, the cheque.

Got to keep the lights on somehow.

Not that I use them much anymore.

They're a bit of an extravagance these days, lights.

Most of it'll go on materials again.

Getting ready for next month's show.

Not that it's guaranteed anything will sell.

Rare is the punter who haunts these affairs who ends up sloshed and goes on a spree.

Mainly it's an orgy of elderly twinks sporting rustic beanies and high-waisted cords, all mooching off the free beer.

Vultures, they are. The lot of 'em.

Still, the weather's meant to turn on Wednesday, so at least that saves on gas.

I'll bet I'm warm at the Oakley-Jones abode.

Hung above his luxury bioethanol fire.

Perched there, sizzling above the mantle.

Reclining.

All toasty.

And nude.

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Yes.

I bet he's keeping me warm.

I think I'll like it there.