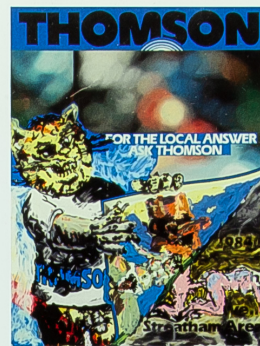# PAiNT
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130. Glenn Brown
The Real Thing, 2000. Oil
on wood, 82 × 66.5 cm
(32 ¼ × 26 ¼ in)

131. Richard Patterson
Thomson, 1995. Oil on canvas,
148 × 111.8 cm (58 ¼ × 44 in)

132. Richard Patterson
Motocrosser II, 1995. Oil and
acrylic on canvas, 208 × 315 cm
(82 × 124 in)

This play on painting and photography as voyeurist or participatory was extended in a series of paintings by Patterson on a character called Thomson. When speaking on the phone, the artist found himself irritated by the *Thomson* trade directory, with its image of a cat on the cover: 'it was so sanitized, implying nudity without genitals. This kind of generic cartooning we have, that our culture does, creates something incredibly bland and inoffensive. So it seemed that Thomson had to be regenerated as a more aggressive sort of animal/human.' Having redrawn the cat as a painterly, carnivalesque character, in the resulting painting Patterson made him appear to pull back the pages to show all sorts of sexual activity going on / **131** /. 'The Thomson character is also a kind of self-portrait, because of the voyeurism of painting.'

This situation, where painting does not so much copy or quote photography as wobble back and forth between it, can also be seen clearly in the *Nurse* paintings of Richard Prince / **133**, **134** /. Just as in his De Kooning paintings / see **45** /, some elements seem painted, others derived from photographs, although often we are not sure which. Prince uses inkjet printing to reproduce and enlarge the covers of romantic stories about nurses: it is part of a lifetime project to examine the American dream at its most mundane, a project that began with enlarging and exhibiting the macho cowboy photographs used to advertise Marlboro cigarettes. These are profoundly ambivalent paintings, at once sexy and violent: witness the bloodstains. We do not know whether to see them as beautiful or tacky, as full-bloodied paintings or as a conceptual charade of paintings. Perhaps it is this uncertainty that makes them so fascinating.

As noted earlier, painters' attitudes to photography have changed: an older generation (those who came to artistic maturity in the 1970s or before) grew up seeing photography as a competitor, even an enemy; a younger generation (that which emerged in the 1990s) grew up surrounded by photographic media. As one older artist (Ronald Jones, born 1952) said of a younger (Elizabeth Peyton, born 1965) and her contemporaries, they 'made their peace early on with photographs and all the rest. ... there would never be the anxiety over the loss of the real which traumatized my generation'. When Peyton paints after a photograph there is no sense of her making an ironic comment about representation: we know the world through photographs, and we know famous people through photographs. People at a rock concert hold cameras high above their head to take snapshots of the stars, to get closer, to hold that moment of fervour and love. Peyton's work segues relatively easily from paintings after paintings, to paintings after photographs, to paintings after life. Like Peter Doig or Luc Tuymans, she uses photographs as memory traces, as fragments of the past, as a ground on which to improvise. 'Photographs give you distance', she comments. 'They let you alone to work.' A photograph of Kurt Cobain is her starting point for an avowedly painterly, unashamedly lyrical image / **135** /.

GLENN BROWN Since he began exhibiting in the early 1990s, British painter Glenn Brown has inspired controversy. His practice, which is considered by some to be provocation for its own sake, essentially involves the remaking of works by other artists. He takes as his models paintings by artists as diverse as Rembrandt, Fragonard, Frank Auerbach, and Willem de Kooning among others, reinterpreting and abstracting the works into shadows of their former selves. Although this strategy of appropriation has many established adherents that can be traced back to at least the 1980s (in the output of such artists as Sherrie Levine, Richard Prince, and David Salle), Brown has been a vexing figure for many observers, and his "interventions" have continued to be viewed as a subversion of traditional notions of artistic integrity. 000 What Brown aims to dispel is the Modernist myth of originality and the presumed genius of the individual artist. Working from photographic reproductions (he has admitted to not always seeing the real paintings), Brown turns the impasto surfaces of postwar European abstraction into smooth-surfaced pictures, effacing the painterly gesture completely. Sometimes the resulting works are drastically distorted. Portraits become unrecognizable blobs as in the face of *The Marquess of Breadalbane* (2000). Elsewhere his alterations are subtler: heightened colors, added details, and so on. In *I Lost My Heart to a Starship Trooper* (1996), a Rembrandt portrait (a significant choice, since historically there have been many questions about the authorship of the Dutch master's works) is still immanently present behind the wildly incongruous title and reinterpreted brushwork. The result is neither, strictly speaking, a Brown nor a Rembrandt, but a kind of postmodern mongrel. 000 The surfaces of Brown's reproductions of reproductions are disconcertingly uniform and air-brushed. One critic described them as "involuted." The medium, and hence the image, seems to have been sucked into the surface rather than existing on it. Brown's work is also a commentary on the fact that most people don't actually see real paintings, as they are more likely to experience art as a silk-screened image on a coffee mug. He is particularly drawn to commercialized or what he considers "vulgar" works, like those of Salvador Dalí, and has also used popular science-fiction imagery as a starting point. One painting, *Ornamental Despair (Painting for Ian Curtis) After Chris Foss* (1994), is based on such an illustration by well-known science-fiction artist Chris Foss. The work is a double assumption: The title refers to a painting by Julian Schnabel made after the death of Ian Curtis, the lead singer of the group Joy Division. Brown invades Foss's small-scale rendering of intricate spaceships and asteroids floating in the galaxy and blows it up to wide-screen proportions. Likewise, his massive *Dalí-Christ* (1992) is an adaptation of the relatively small *Soft Construction with Boiled Beans*, Dalí's Surrealist icon of 1936. Brown's result is even more outrageous than the nightmarish original. Indeed, Brown revels in bad taste, but says, "My taste for kitsch is a taste for subversion." Perhaps, but Brown's critical project is serious enough to keep his work from slipping completely into nihilism. 000 Meghan Dailey

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<u>Selected One Person Exhibitions</u>: 2002 – Galerie Max Hetzler, Berlin 000 2001– Patrick Painter Inc., Santa Monica, California; Künstlerverein Malkasten, Düsseldorf 000 2000 – Domaine de Kerguehennec, Centre d'art contemporain, Bignan, France; Galerie Max Hetzler, Berlin 000 1999 – Jerwood Space, London 000 1998 – Patrick Painter Inc., Santa Monica, California 000 1997 – Galerie Ghislaine Hussenot, Paris 000 1995 – Karsten Schubert Gallery, London <u>Selected Group Exhibitions</u>: 2002 – São Paulo Biennial, Brazil; Sydney Biennial, Australia; "Dear Painter, Paint Me…", Musée national d'art moderne–Centre Pompidou, Paris (travelling to Kunsthalle Wien, Austria; Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt, Germany); "Painting as a Foreign Language", Edifico Cultura Inglesa, Centro Brasileiro Britanico, São Paulo 000 2000 – "The Turner Prize 2000", Tate Modern, London; "Glenn Brown, Julie Mehretu, Peter Rostovsky", The Project, New York 000 1999 – "Examining Pictures", Whitechapel Art Gallery, London (travelling to Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; UCLA Hammer Museum, Los Angeles) 000 1998 – "Abstract Painting Once Removed", Contemporary Art Museum, Houston (travelling to Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas) 000 1997 – "Sensation", Royal Academy of Art, London (travelling to Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin; Brooklyn Museum, New York) 000 1995 – "Young British Artists V", Saatchi Gallery, London; "Brilliant! New Art from London", Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota (travelling to Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, Texas) <u>Selected Bibliography</u>: 2000 – Sarah Kent, "Artificial Intelligence", *Time Out*, 25 October 000 1999 – Herbert Martin, "Glenn Brown", *Time Out*, 19 May; David Pagel, "Mixed Media", *Los Angeles Times*, 2 July; Mark Sladen, "The Day the World Turned Auerbach", *Art/Text*, n.64 000 1996 – Adrian Searle, "The Best of British Painting?", *The Guardian*, 11 November

1. Ride with the Devil, Sympathy for the Poor, 2001, Oil on panel, 28 x 22 inches, 71 x 56 cm
2. I Lost My Heart to a Starship Trooper, 1996, Oil on canvas mounted on board, 25 1/2 x 21 1/8 inches, 65 x 53.5 cm, Coll. Frac Limousin, France
3. I do not feel embarrassed at attempting to express sadness and loneliness, 2001, Oil on panel, 24 x 19 inches, 61 x 48 cm
4. Ornamental Despair (Painting for Ian Curtis) After Chris Foss, 1994, Oil on canvas, 78 3/4 x 118 1/4 inches, 200 x 300 cm
5. Dalí-Christ, 1992, Oil on canvas, 108 1/4 x 72 1/4 inches, 275 x 183.5 cm

1.

3.

2.