



Danielle McKinney, *Rouge*, 2021.  
Photo: Criag Smith

A figure kicks off her shoes, strolls languidly into a red room, and drops her weight onto the edge of a plush, sanguine daybed. Perhaps she has just arrived home from a date that screeched to an end the moment she began yearning for her own company, or a solo-sojourn to a foreign land, or a vivacious night out with her friends...

She is clad in billowing fuschia fabric that drapes seamlessly over her forearms and stomach, as well as similarly hued pink panties, and an angular black bowling hat. The curve of her shining legs draw the eye down to the ends of her daintily pointed feet, which are kissed by the same shade that adorns her torso and hips. The clarity of her features are eclipsed by the brim of her hat as her shadow dissolves onto the back wall.

Is she gazing down to the velvet coated floor? Or perhaps her own shoulder, or maybe at something that exceeds the frame? Surely, she occupies the frame with a fervent elegance and yet, this figure has secrets. Any information that could definitely point to the circumstance of the scene, let alone the details of the figure's interior life, are concealed, which breathes space open for glorious speculation.

Danielle McKinney's *Rouge* exudes harmony and glistens with the potential energy associated with the artist's decision to withhold access to her figure's interiority. Here, McKinney withholds the audience's access to the figure's interior life, thereby refusing the conception that we may come to "know" or "understand" the intricacies of a life simply by beholding a sliver of it. It is precisely from within the mouth of speculation that we may begin to understand the figure that inhabits the world of *Rouge* as an autonomous and self-determined figure. The scene is cinematic as it is romantic, and yet, its import lies precisely in the fact that we will never know what unfolded in the space around the particular moment McKinney has captured.

-Camille Bacon, arts writer