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Pickup Artist

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America Martin, By the Sea, 2012, Wally Workman Gallery, Austin, Texas

Her eyes caught mine and I stopped, mid-step on the crowded staircase at Wally Workman. It was love at first sight when I didn't believe in love at first sight. An entrancing portrait by America Martin. With the kind of lines that make you want to pick it up and take it home. And that's exactly what I did.

Her eyes turned my head. Like the frank, appraising eyes of this just ravished bather. She turns toward you with an open gaze, hand propping a tilted head.

And curves. Oh Lord, does she have 'em. Double, double-take curves. This woman's body moves across the canvas like sand dunes undulating, hips rolling before they touch the sea. Pretty peaks and delirious-deep valleys.

Color is a flirt here. At times, filling out the space between lines, emphasizing the form, stepping into the outline. At other times, color dances unrestrained by line. Now, a spontaneous moving into background, now a free-shift into foreground. Teasing out the feel of the piece. Creating a slip of ocean or angel-winged reeds.

This work makes you believe in possibility. You can have contentment and yes, maybe even mercurial joy. She calls out your hope, (even if kicking and screaming) and says, "look, it's in you." And that's the seduction of a true pick up artist, my friends. Come and pick up a beauty before last call.

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