

## Zoë Taylor selects Marie Jacotey's Loveless bag collection for McQ

# Fashion

While it's not unusual to find suggestions of dark or psychologically-charged stories in fashion photography and film—an approach introduced by the photographer Guy Bourdin—most contemporary fashion drawing focuses on gestural, distorted or semi-abstracted bodies that are rarely situated.

So it's refreshing to see Marie Jacotey's illustrations for McQ Alexander McQueen, which convey a sense of emotional drama by placing a character in various environments while maintaining a sense of wry detachment.

Earlier this year, Jacotey was invited to make five drawings to celebrate the launch of McQ's Loveless bag collection. The series was exhibited in the label's east London flagship store over the summer.

The illustrations offer us glimpses into the life of a young female character who sits poised with headphones or a cigarette, self-absorbed amid stylish surroundings. The juxtaposition of her cultured and modern lifestyle with the emotional excesses of heartbreak makes for an unsettling yet humorous experience.

In an interview with Maisie Skidmore on the website AnOtherMag.com, Jacotey explained that her protagonist is “a composite of everyone who ever went through heartbreak... This girl is going through a tough break-up but we can feel how feisty she is. She's got guts.”

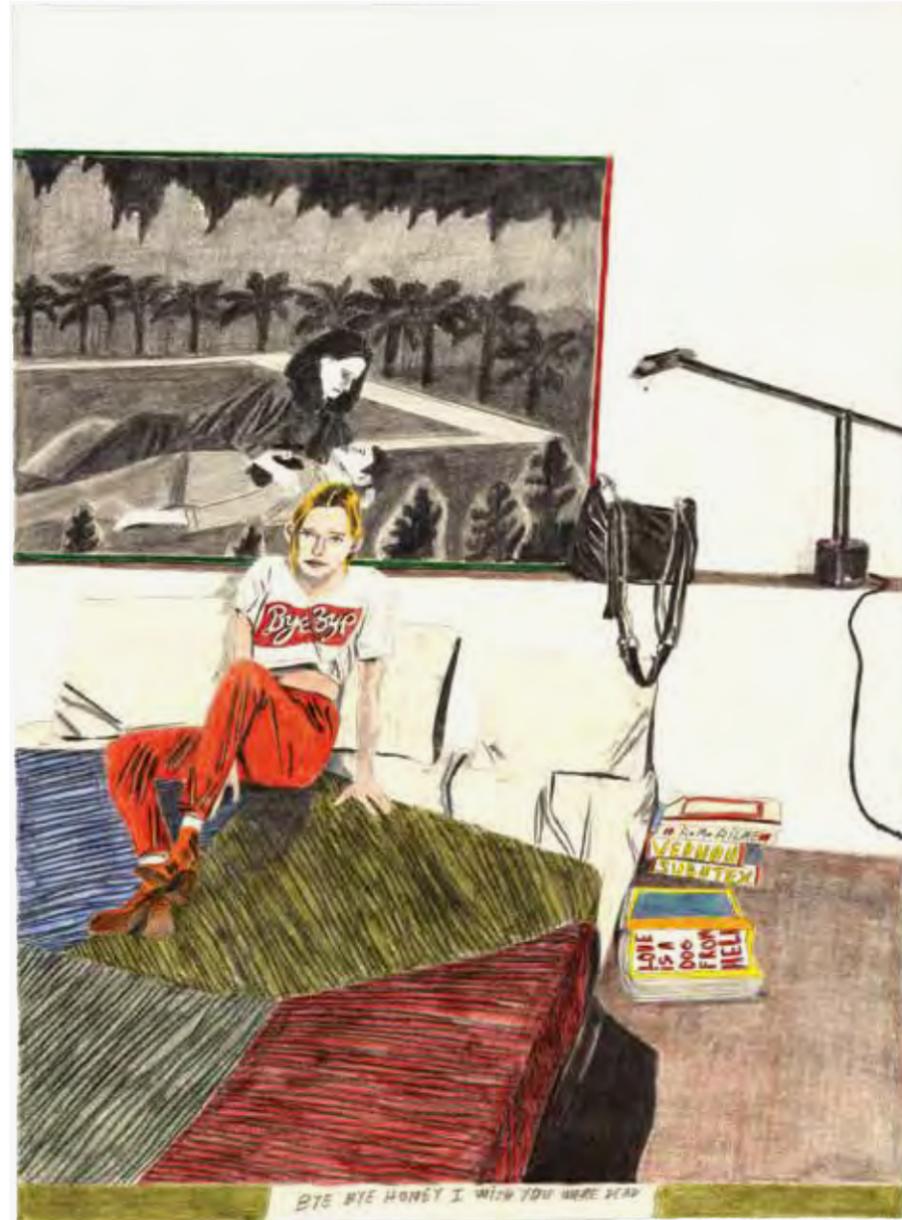
Strong, defiant female characters have always been central to the Alexander McQueen vision. The Loveless bag—a sturdy, no-fuss, black leather and metal accessory—appears with the girl in each drawing. Skidmore sees it as “a totem of her strength: the result of a break-up shopping trip, perhaps.”

Working intuitively with observations from daily life, Jacotey has likened her process to an archaeological investigation where “you keep digging the ground, unsure of what you're about to find, yet with a slight idea of what might be buried there.”

**Zoë Taylor** has collaborated as an illustrator with Marc by Marc Jacobs, *AnOther*, *The New York Times*, *The Guardian* and others. She is a lecturer on the BA Hons Illustration course at the University of Northampton.



Bye for now, bye forever, Marie Jacotey for McQ, 2016



**Bye bye honey I wish you were dead**  
Marie Jacotey for McQ, 2016

Fragments of the character's thoughts, written in capitals at the bottom of each image, are amplified by details of the *mise en scène*: the jagged spirals on a rug, the title of a bedside book (*Love Is a Dog from Hell*) or a T-shirt slogan, for instance. Jacotey has said that the text captions reveal the strength and aggression that belie the character's seemingly calm attitude.

This fragmentary approach extends beyond the captions and 'clues' embedded in the compositions to the way the illustrations work together in sequence. Rather than contributing to the unfolding of a plot, each image adds another dimension to an elusive emotional drama.

Jacotey has said of her drawings that "they appear to be the remaining fragments of a bigger story that we can't envision completely. Those snatches are, for me, a very close depiction of how I feel we can grasp reality; never fully, mostly through the memories we keep of past events that relentlessly escape and keep transforming." The experimental narrative forms that she plays with "mirror this feeling of unsettlement and uncertainty."

The illustrations that Jacotey produced for McQ fit seamlessly into her wider body of work, but they also highlight the possibilities for narrative-based exploration within fashion drawing.



McQ store installation

## Marie Jacotey for McQ

### Brief

I was asked to make five works relating to the new McQ range of handbags named Loveless.

### Materials

Coloured pencil drawings on paper and oil paintings on plastic dust sheets.

### Research

No prior research.

### Process

Spontaneous, I usually try and get a loose sense of the subject, then either sit at my table and draw or stand up and paint. We discussed the overall concept of this Loveless collection

with the creative directors beforehand and how my work could be relevant to it. Then, the story came together rather organically as I went along. I showed some rough sketches and was left pretty much free to make the works as I felt fit. It was a very fun and easy collaboration.

### Resistances

I can hardly remember any.

### Insight

Having fun is key.

### Distractions

Listening to loud music whilst working.

### Numbers

Five drawings and 12 paintings made over the course of a month for that project.

### Story

A loose narrative around that one fierce and feisty girl character, just out of a break-up. She is heartbroken but will get back on her feet sooner rather than later.

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