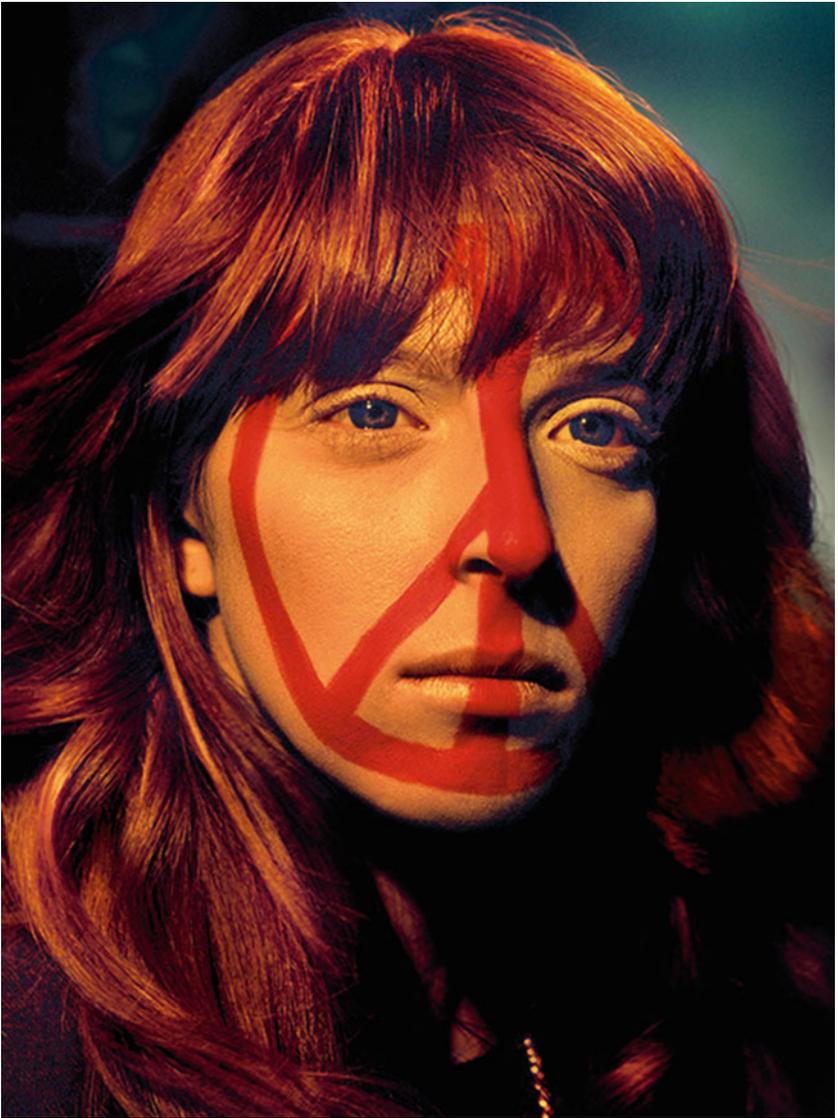


Art after the Hipster



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Wes Hill

Art after the Hipster

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PREFACE

Evoking a level of animosity from a bygone cultural moment, the hipster belongs to a time when the economic advantages of cultural innovation in the arts were seriously believed. What that time was, and where we are now, is this book's subject, examined through the lens of art history and the creativity hype of neoliberalism. Having been associated with post-World War Two bebop and beatnik subcultures, the hipster re-emerged in the early 2000s as a form of generic individualism that was easily identifiable even if endlessly mutable. However, in recent years "hipster" has become increasingly impotent as an accusation, shifting in its meaning to refer less to an external identity than to a mode of deflection in which authenticity and discernment are challenged only to be surreptitiously reinforced. Marking a transition from a period in Western art when irony and high-minded nonchalance reigned, the hipster appears in the context of contemporary art not as a critical standpoint in itself but as the continually deferred subject position of creative practice. Today, ethical considerations of identity overshadow discerning proclamations of cultural taste, making palpable an uncertainty about our capacity to untangle capitalism's thirst for reinvention from the artist's thirst for subverting norms.

Wes Hill

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