



SPECIAL FOCUS:

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MARGHERITA MANZELLI
GREENGRASSI

Skipping over the details, let's just say that I don't know how anyone ever travels to Cornelia Grassi's gallery by public transport without arriving hot and sweaty and in a foul temper. But here something funny happens. Margherita Manzelli's paintings are captivating, on the whole, and the spleen just melts out of me (a gallery assistant runs to clean it up). The Italian painter hasn't exactly rung the changes on her formula: one bony, neurotic, exhausted-looking woman in various languorous attitudes. But the holographic illusion of psychological depth in the portraiture and the sense of ambiguous metaphoric stasis are terrific. Manzelli may be swiping at painting's own lassitude, but so what. The woman peers out, always meeting our gaze, from a box draped with a striped rug; from the distant end of a tablecloth. A small portrait changes the pace. The show feels exquisitely hung. It's only after about ten minutes of measured looking – of carefully painted veins and sequinned vests and fathoms-deep eyes – that I wonder if I feel revived through being confronted with someone both more enervated and more resilient than me. Time to go upstairs...