



Maggi Hambling's Deathly Visions

I get, I try to say more with less," she told me.

The weeks that Hambling spent recovering from her heart attack have been the longest stretch of time she has been away from her art since she was a teen-ager. This has been difficult; she's itching to get back to work. At home, her days usually begin with a drawing at five or six in the morning and end with a cigarette. At the hospital, she has gym sessions twice a day ("I've never been to a gym in my life") and can't smoke. Brown dropped off a sketchbook and some graphite pencils, but Hambling hasn't picked them up often. "Normally, I say if I don't work for a day and a half, I go potty. Pottier than ever," she told me. The title "Real Time" comes from "how I've lived my life," she said. "Real time is when I'm in the studio trying to make something, and the rest is just the rest."

At the hospital, I asked Hambling what she had been thinking about while waiting to be well enough to fly home. "Death will obviously dictate what I do next," she said, thoughtfully. And, then, "Well, it's quite a big thing!" When Moraes died, Hambling launched into a period of furious productivity. She drew Moraes in her coffin, but also made sculptures of her laughing, licking her lips, eating a meringue. "Drawing my parents and Henrietta in their coffins seems to me quite an obvious thing to do, because it's the last time you're going to see them," she told me. "Anyone you love goes on being inside you, don't they, when they die?"

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Artwork courtesy the artist , 2019.

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