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VALÉRIE BELIN'S PLASTIC BODIES

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After an age when all photos were said to lie, we seem to have returned, in this glum digital era, to an unquestioning faith in photographs: take a picture, or it didn't happen. But in her current retrospective at the Centre Georges Pompidou, in Paris, the French photographer Valérie Belin proves that our gullible times can still be shaken up. In her new series "Super Models," Belin presents store-window mannequins in three-quarter-length poses, their plastic bodies surreally superimposed with raster-dot patterns and concentric circles that recall the intense graphics of the artist Ryan McGinness. This series continues an earlier engagement with dummies: in the early aughts, Belin made creepy black-and-white headshots of mannequins, or else shot a wax Michael Jackson in soft, even light. The Super Models, however, advertise their artifice from the start, with visible arm joints and missing nipples, their images overlaid with all manner of digital effluvia. It's no longer news that beauty is a construction, that fictions can give rise to the real. But Belin's return to mannequins—plastic bodies in the real space of the studio, to be dressed up, fetishized, rearranged, thrown away—suggests that even our endless digital-image stream has room for the uncanny.