# Hyuna's Self-Portrait

Square canvas. Bust of a young Korean woman looking straight at you. Big, dark, semicircular eyes. Flat at the bottom, round at the top. Almost black.

Pink, sealed lips. Almost smiling. Orange-black hair, up in a bun, and bangs that fall to her eyebrows, framing her pale, smooth face. Relaxed everything. Bare shoulders. Shoulders and bottom half of head supported by a white pillow. A loose, low cut black tank top, and a single, loose beige bra strap, over her bare right shoulder. A light golden chain around her neck.

The painting cuts off right above where the tops of her breasts would otherwise begin. The viewer's eyes are constantly drawn back to the woman's eyes in the center of the canvas. Look at me, she says. Look me in the eye. Tell me you want more.

Her left shoulder is slightly opened. We see her arm disappear off the page, and then her left hand reappear at the top right of the canvas. Fingers on the top of her head, not quite posing, more so fixing her hair. Hand a bit blurry, implying movement. Right shoulder closed. The right hand does not reappear. Why? Is she touching herself? No, the astute viewer understands. (Though to be fair it's easy to think this, because everything about her is lovely and sensual and we want it to be true). The right hand disappears below because the right hand is taking the photograph. The selfie. Yes, this painting, *Hyuna's Self-Portrait*, is a painting of this subject's selfie. Hyuna's selfie.

Behind the white pillow, ruffled by the weight of her head, is a sturdier, darker pillow. Purple-gray. And behind that purple-gray pillow, an off-white wall. So behind the Korean woman sitting up in bed, there's no

detail that tells us anything of note. Again, the eyes are drawn back to hers.

Her gaze is at once inviting and threatening.

Look at me, it says. Look me in the eye. And tell me you want more.

And we do. There's more than just this. Why did she take this selfie? That's the first question. Who is it for? Too revealing to put on social media. Personal use? What would be the point of that? That leaves one answer: she took it for an individual. A lover. She took it to entice, or tease, a lover. But also in a very safe way. Revealing nothing of her body below the neck and shoulders, in the frame. Telling whoever she's sending the photo: "So far, I like you exactly this much."

I don't trust you, but I'm not pushing you away, either.

I'm pulling you in, at my speed. You see, I'm holding the ropes.

So there's her motivation. But what about the artist's? Why depict this in a painting? Well, whatever the artist's intent is, whatever hidden meanings, or personal meanings, may lay behind it, *Hyuna's Self-Portrait* is, at the end of the day, a painting of a beautiful woman. And that makes it a beautiful painting.

Maybe that's enough.