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Cover picture

Marlene Dietrich with Skull (gouache on paper, 1975) by Stanley Lench (1934–2000)

Marlene Dietrich was at the peak of her film career between the 1920s and 1950s. She was well known for retaining her beauty through the use of wigs and cosmetics, and Lench reflects this in the over-emphasis of the actress' facial features, hairstyle and long painted fingernails. The skull on the left undermines the preservation of youth by acting as a *memento mori* – a reminder of mortality.

Lench's bold and colourful work often depicts his childhood fascination with popular icons and stars of the silver screen. He experienced prolonged bouts of mental illness throughout his life, which on occasion forced him into a reclusive existence. Lench explained that he became an artist to 'cheat death and time'. This statement reflects the themes of Lench's work, but also highlights his ultimate goal: to be recognised and remembered for his art.

We are always looking for interesting and visually appealing images for the cover of the *Journal* and would welcome suggestions or pictures, which should be sent to Dr Allan Beveridge, British Journal of Psychiatry, 17 Belgrave Square, London SW1X 8PG, UK or bjp@rcpsych.ac.uk.

