

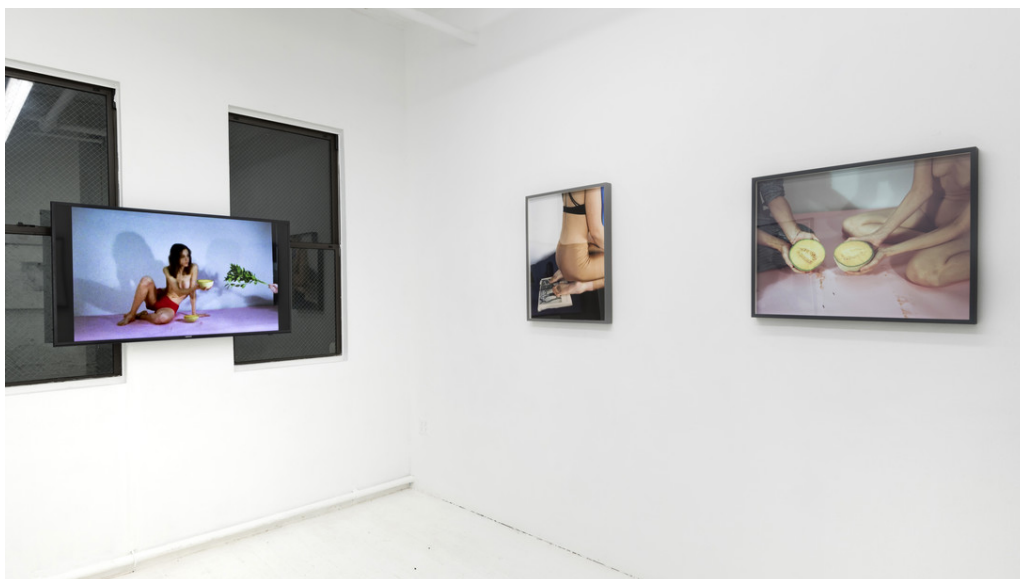
LUBOV

Wall Street International

New Photography: Jenna Westra

Between performance, film and re-enactment of power

16 APRIL 2018,
SARAH CORONA



Jenna Westra. Installation view, Lubov Gallery NYC

Jenna Westra uses the body to reimagine the set as a framework that activates the performers within it, transforming accidental or chance movements into intentional, choreographed actions for the camera. Taking aesthetic cues from performance documentation, her work invites the viewer to re-examine their role and active participation in image consumption.

Relying on the fundamental, immanent traits of analog photography, Westra exploits the formal elements of the medium to create delicate and subtle compositions extracted from the intentional events she creates. A quartet of non professional models and fruit props fill photographs suggesting moments of intimacy and play, while also reminding us of the ongoing negotiation and exchange present in the acts of performing, directing,

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documenting.

Her photographs, born out of performative events, suggest moments of intimacy, closeness but also denial. Fruits are a common element and are used in a playful and almost erotic way. Squeezing a lemon, or rolling a half melon, become part of an intimate play between the acting figures which loads the pictures with movement and a hint of eroticism, while the vintage inspired color palette of pinks, oranges and greys emphasizes a research that goes beyond the creation of meaningful image: it reflects today's generation Y, a generation that breaks most of the social rules with their very own interpretation of and expression through art, fashion and new forms of value sharing.

Indeed, in her 16 mm film, Westra applies her compositional devices to filmmaking through the introduction of a temporal element, releasing the subjects from the deadpan tone of her still images. This durational component reveals a partial experience of what happens in front of her camera.

The photographs of *Parts of Some Quartet, Fruits* become a constellation of seemingly separate events, a facade achieved through the use of various lighting techniques and multiple colored backdrops. Meticulous cropping, selecting, and rotating are tools that join a structural narrative together with a loosely held emphasis on the physical traits of photographic media. An anxiety surrounding what it means to both be observed and to be complicit in an act of observation is pervasive. If pointing a camera is an expression of desire, is it also inherently an act of exercising power? If so, it is our collective responsibility to reclaim the pleasure of looking. Jenna Westra is represented by LUBOV New York.



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Sarah Corona is an independent Writer and Art Historian based in New York. She holds a BA (with honors) in Fine Arts and a doctoral degree (with honors) in Art History from the University of Bologna (Italy), both with theses about Chinese Contemporary Art. She obtained the Certificate for Art and Business at NYU, New York in 2014.

<https://wsimag.com/art/37328-new-photography-jenna-westra>

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