

JENNA WESTRA: She's Reading II

September 12 – November 02, 2019

Fahrenheit Madrid is pleased to announce our first exhibition, *She's Reading II*, presenting the works of New York City based artist Jenna Westra. The exhibition is conceived as a continuation of *She's Reading I*, which opens in Berlin the week prior. The titles reflect both the artist's "reading" of a scene in front of the camera and the viewer's "reading" of a photograph in constructing meaning. The feminine pronoun further refers to a ritualistic creative process where the female gaze is activated, and the performers are empowered. The show will introduce a series of photographs shot in black and white and color film in the Balearic Island of Mallorca during the Spring of 2019. Non-professional models interacting with each other and the Mediterranean landscape predominate the installation.

As a first approach to the work, Westra creates an image sketchbook – a sort of situational order – with simple verbal descriptions of choreographed scenarios and directions for her models; once on set, she embraces elements of chance and the unforeseeable possibilities that emerge from a collaborative effort. The artist's work captures her medium-specific curiosity which evolves into a creative freedom that is embodied through her lens. Westra's formal style bears influence from photo-documentation of postmodern dance and performance of the 1960's and 70's. She employs photography as a conceptual and exploratory practice.

Westra's work illustrates a critical standpoint on earlier art and literature that established an analogy between women and fruit and florals. Her compositions are often closely cropped, converting bodies into mixtures of angles, curves, and lines while suggesting visual information beyond the frame and revealing a limited experience of a given situation. Relying on the essential and inherent traits of analog photography and film, Westra exploits the medium and its elements in order to create delicate and subtle compositions culled from the intentional scenarios she creates. Her photographs suggest moments of intimacy, eroticism and play, while also reminding us of the ongoing exchange present in the acts of performing, directing and documenting.

Jenna Westra (Hunter MFA, 2015) is a New York based artist working in photography and film. Additionally, she teaches photography at the Parsons School of Art and Design. Most recently Westra's work has been the subject of solo exhibitions at Anthony Greaney Gallery, Boston, MA (2019); Fourseasonsberlin, Berlin, DE (2018); and Lubov, New York City, NY (2018). Notable group shows include *Ansichten eines Clown* at The Court, Pescara, IT (2019), *I'm Trying to Explain* at L21, Mallorca, ES (2019) and *NADA New York*, solo booth with Hassla (2018).

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