

# Present Perfect



Maya Smira

Curator: Sharon Toval

Maya Smira is exhibiting a multi-channel video installation in which she documents women in their 30s, sitting silently facing the camera, attempting to fix their attention on it. There are no distractions from the subjects, who stand in the studio against a white background, filmed in close-up in a vertical format, as required by the “classical” portrait. Each woman is alone, facing the static gaze of the camera, cut off from the dizzying pace of life, in head-on confrontation with self, some from a place of seeking, while others reflect acceptance.

***... Andy Warhol started the long portrait video genre with his series “Screen tests”...***



The current exhibition addresses the struggles still remaining for women faced with the norms and

historiography which is essentially masculine. The power relations existing in the encounter between the surveyor and the surveyed have an ontological social position.

***... “a woman must continually watch herself...from earliest childhood she has been thought and persuaded to survey herself...” John Berger.***

The thematic foundation of the exhibition is based on John Berger's philosophy separating feminine and masculine social presence. The latter is external or material, dependent on the man's promise of

power which he exercises on others.

The feminine is internal in its perception, defining itself in relation to the moral norms and conventions applicable to women.

A woman always observes herself and examines her own image in relation to the social space defined by the man.



***...”Unto the women God said, ‘ I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband and he shall rule over thee’.***

***Genesis, 2:4, 3:24 | Adam and Eve***

Numerous questions arise from this social experiment regarding the moral norms and conventions the photographic subjects address. Can the historiographic alternatives change the status of the women facing the camera? Does contemporary woman's social status still feel threatened by the perceptual encounter between the observer and the subject? Has women's liberation succeeded in abolishing the convention blaming Woman for the expulsion from Paradise?



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