

ROMAN ROAD

CODE 2 Stand 079

Thursday 31 August – Saturday 02 September 2017

Opening Hours

Bella Center
Center Boulevard 5
2300 Copenhagen S
Denmark

Thursday 31 August: 4pm – 8pm
Friday 01 September: 11am – 8pm
Saturday 02 September: 11am – 6pm

Roman Road is pleased to be taking part in Code 2, hosted at the Bella Center in Copenhagen from 31 August to 02 September 2017. Bringing together varied pieces by Natalia LL, Alix Marie and Chelsea Culprit, our booth addresses our relationship to bodies through works that explore sexuality, objectification and carnal desires. The display also looks at how the presented artists have introduced existential and erotic threads into analytical art through innovative uses of orthodox technologies and process and by often merging and reinterpreting artistic mediums.

For Natalia LL, the human body and its erotic mystery has been a constant source of inspiration. The booth features works from her *Intimate Recordings* (1968-69), a prominent early series through which she makes apparent her fascination with sensuality and her interest in the body as pure form. The works consist of a series of more than 30 photographs capturing a copulating couple. The images are sexually explicit and focus on the naked body, but they are also sculptural and fragmentary; the tight framing and soft light emphasises the shapes of the lovers' bodies, bestowing the pictures with an abstract quality. From a distance, viewers can recognise the content of the images but they need to be close to clearly see the situation and its unfolding. The presentation of the works choreographs the beholder, gesturing them to take a step forward and move with the sequence of photographs, witnessing, perhaps unwittingly, the phases of the couple's sexual act and the voyeuristic side of photography.

Often mixing autobiographical narrative with popular mythology, Alix Marie's practice is concerned with the representation of bodies and the construction of gender. With her latest series *Flex* (2017), shown for the first time on Roman Road's stand, she has begun researching and investigating masculinity, looking at both biological and socially defined factors of its construct. As her new work examines, muscularity is considered a particular attribute of masculinity. Employing cropped images of male bodybuilders' arms taken from FLEX magazine, she has used the dye sublimation printing technique to create three-dimensional photographic sculptures resembling beanbags. The works are all hand-sewn by the artist into the shapes of the flexed arms, exposing a way in which men often show off their muscles and at once propagating a display of phallic-shaped objects which question the expansion of sexual objectification in male bodybuilding.

The idea of the objectification of the body is further explored in Marie's collection of *Pharmacopornographic Relics* (2017). Made by using and casting various Japanese sex toys, namely dildos and Fleshlights, she examines literal examples of gendered body parts turned into objects for sexual pleasure. With this new series she exposes the artificiality and evolution of such devices, leading us to consider how technology is changing sex and, by extension, our present and future relationships with the human body. In *Dumb Ashley with Watermelon Boots and Tiger Eye* (2017) and *Erzulie Danto, Erzulie Frida with Warrior Boots and Orchid Pussy* (2017), Chelsea Culprit similarly interrogates the sexualisation and objectification of the female body. With these unique works – which resemble shower curtains or forensic room dividers – she highlights how the appearance of eroticism is inscribed on the human body through social norms.

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ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Natalia LL (Natalia Lach-Lachowicz), born in Żywiec in 1937, is a Polish visual artist working in photography, video art, performance and installation. From 1957-1963, she studied at the PWSSP (known today as the Academy of Fine Arts) in Wrocław, where she completed her MSc degree. In December 1970, Natalia LL co-founded PERMAFO Gallery in Wrocław, together with fellow artists Zbigniew Dłubak and Andrzej Lachowicz and art critic Antoni Dzieduszycki. The gallery, which was active until 1981, promoted new media and art built on the process of recording reality. Since 1975, Natalia LL has engaged in the global feminist art movement and her art became an instrument in the fight for equal rights in Poland. The originality of Natalia's work has garnered much critical attention and has seen her featured in international exhibitions and institutions, including in *The EY Exhibition: The World Goes Pop* at Tate Modern from late 2015 to early 2016. She currently has a retrospective exhibition titled *Sum ergo sum* at the Centrum Sztuki Współczesnej in Toruń, Poland, on display until 01 October 2017.

Alix Marie (b.1989) is a French artist based in London, working across the mediums of photography, sculpture and installation. She graduated from Central Saint Martins College in 2011 with a first class honours degree in fine art and later completed an MA in photography at the Royal College of Art, where she received a distinction for her dissertation work about photography and fetish. Her work explores our relationship to bodies and their representation, through processes of objectification, fragmentation, magnification and accumulation. The photograph is considered as object and she continues to take her practice forward into new directions by investigating its potential for materiality and three-dimensionality. Since 2009, Marie has been featured in exhibitions internationally and has taken part in residencies in Slovenia (2012), Morocco (2013), Scotland (2014) and Iceland (2017). She was recently selected for the 11th edition of Foam Talent Call and will be featured in the travelling *Foam Talent* exhibition that will launch in Amsterdam on 31 August 2017. Her first publication *Bleu* is also forthcoming this year with Morel Books. In 2018, Marie will have a solo show as part of the Düsseldorf Photo Weekend after winning the prestigious 2017 Portfolio Review Award.

Chelsea Culprit (b.1984) is an American artist living and working in Mexico City. Her work entangles representations of the body's capacity for work, play, display and expression. Her practice combines two-dimensional representation with sculptural elements, exploring the limitations of the body, the performed authenticity of identity, and the figure of the fallen woman. Recent solo exhibitions include: *You Have the Right to Remain Elegant*, Galería La Esperanza, Mexico City (2017); *Miss Universe* at Yauhtepec, Mexico City (2016); and *Blessed With a Job* at Queer Thoughts, New York (2016). Chelsea Culprit has also recently been featured in a number of international group exhibitions, including *Meshes of the Afternoon* at Roman Road, London (2017).

ABOUT ROMAN ROAD

Roman Road was founded in 2013 by Marisa Bellani and initially began as a project space. The peculiarity of the premises has had a direct impact on the gallery's programme since its beginning. Tall and with a small footprint, the space led the director to challenge artists to employ the architectural elements in order to develop or restructure a body of work. Artists have frequently been asked to use the exhibition as a medium and have managed to transform the gallery room into a unique work of art. In 2014, the building underwent refurbishment to instate an additional private viewing space that gathers varied works by the gallery's represented artists, which are viewable by appointment. Since completing this renovation in 2015, Roman Road has established a qualitative programme, including participations at art fairs, and has seen its represented artists become internationally recognised both by institutions and collectors.

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