

FRIEZE

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Marie Angeletti



A slim black metal rail ran round the walls of Marie Angeletti's debut solo show, 'Mixed Feelings'. Fixed at the midway point, this minimalist dado traversed the boxy ingress where press releases are stacked, crossed the glassed frontage and created a limbo bar blocking the office. Attached, in various configurations – alone, or in pairs and triplets that sometimes felt logical, sometimes didn't – were 13 coolly composed photographs by Angeletti, a recent RCA grad who was selected for 'New Contemporaries' last year. Maybe the steel-framed images were magnetized and easily movable; certainly it seemed as though they could have been pushed like beads on an abacus, reordered like beads on a thread. Given its inconveniencing quality, this wasn't just an eye-catching response to questions of display. What Angeletti wants to foreground, right off the bat, is instability and modularity as they play out within, and between, supposedly indexical images.

Some of hers look found and re-photographed, some don't. One would hazard that, here, editorial photographs mixed with in-house documentation of objects for auction and Angeletti's self-shot photos, though part of her work's low-watt vexation is that we don't always know which is which. *Mf 1 VA Jewellery 01, 02 and 03* (all 2012), clustered together in a three-part aerial view of a jewellery display, deploy a sumptuous yet hard, contrasty look whose Avedon-ish tones are suggestive of a 1960s magazine advertisement. On its own, with its elegant wristbands, gilded butterfly brooches, necklaces, bracelets and combs neatly arrayed, it's a bit of a puzzler: a sort of mutely retro take on Christopher Williams. But when the image beside it, *Mf4, Urara yellow* (2012), features a Japanese girl in red underwear looking melancholically past us, we may start thinking about geishas even though the subject isn't quite inherent in either image. It precipitates softly between them, in a sort of mutual tincturing. (See the show's title.) From here the exhibition extrapolated, associated and unravelled smoothly. There were more Japanese signifiers and more historical ones. *Mf11, VA s_141* (2012) zooms in on the lower halves of three women in short skirts and heels, holding geometrically patterned leather handbags. *Mf8 Brazaville Coll. 01* and *Mf9, Brazaville Coll. 02* (both 2011) feature the same museum examples of ivory figures, including a squat laughing Buddha, under – somewhat literalist this, perhaps – shifting combinations of pinkish-purple light. *Mf10, Auction Catalogue 01* (2012) stars another figurine, this one a semi-recumbent woman stretching out her arms and holding what appears to be a tambourine; the figure is obscurely contextualized with a lamp, an ersatz spotlight. (Something to do with a graphic design snafu in an auction-house catalogue, it would appear.) Dancers, or performing women, recur in *Mf13, Ballerina* (2012).

If one were looking to tie this work down via iconography (precisely the wrong approach), one might be tempted to see Angeletti as here pursuing a semi-oblique feminist agenda orbiting around performance, role-play, adornment, containment. But she seems more interested in scrambled typologies and the uneasy pleasures of, to quote René Magritte, the treachery of images. If pre-existing, these photographs meant one thing in a catalogue, museum or wherever, and now they signify something else or, intrinsically, nothing at all: detached, rivulets in a larger directional flow. 'Thanks, Internet,' such work murmurs. Like many artists in their twenties, Angeletti wants to denote that presiding context without directly addressing it, performing its knock-on effect on materialist media. From her rail outwards, she does this with professionalized elegance, intelligence, poise and a good sense of pace. At

the same time, she speaks what is increasingly a generational language: one of pictorial ambiguity achieved through the juxtaposition of incommensurables; the fluxions of meaning between images that have superficialities in common – and thus provide an organizing structure for thought – and ones that don't. (Several images of plants here, for example, serve as strategic discords.) What one wants to ask – given that we increasingly recognize how this approach operates and our appreciation of such works might increasingly come from a kind of narrowing connoisseurship of embodied slippage – is where this goes next. Angeletti, at the outset of her career, looks savvy enough to seek out answers.

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