

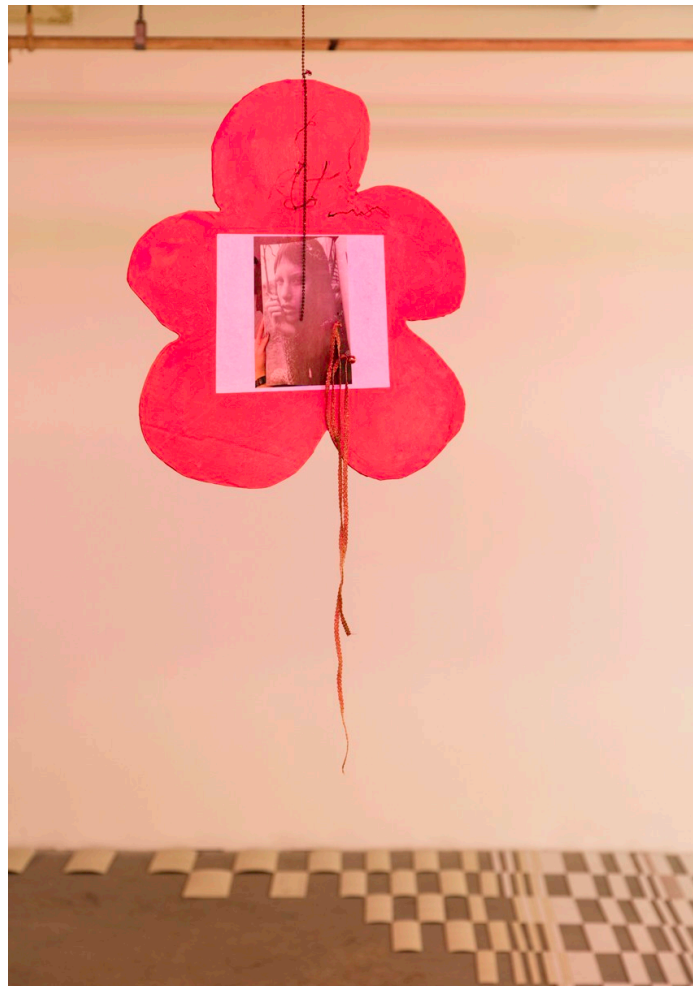
Contemporary
Art Review

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Maggie Lee at 356 Mission

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Text by Thomas Duncan



Maggie Lee, *Good Earth* (2016). Cardboard, acrylic paint, inkjet print, wire, 38 x 22 inches. Image courtesy of the artist, Real Fine Arts, New York, and 356 S. Mission Road, Los Angeles. Photo: Brice Wilcox.

Maggie Lee deals with memory and reconstructs her past experiences via filmic, sculptural and installation processes. Those who have not yet seen her film, *Mommy* (2015)—the artist’s poignant and innovative ode to her deceased mother—may dismiss the defiantly lo-fi production that is *Gigi*s Underground*, her current solo exhibition at 356 Mission. Lee’s deskilled aesthetic belies the complex nature of her diaristic output—a collaged and repurposed reality that brims with nostalgia, aspiration, and heartache.

*Gigi*s Underground* is an atmospheric exploration of the unexpected quandaries when adolescence transitions into adulthood (sex, friendship, ambition). The resulting desire-infused installation is a collapsed representation of a club, a runway, a film set, and a bedroom all at once. While the polygonal and heart-shaped iconography that appears in works such as *Superstar* (all works 2016) and *Gigi*s Friend*, respectively, function as a harkening back to a more innocent life, *Gigi*s* mid-aughts club kid ambiance reigns supreme, subordinating the individual works to its service.

Maggie Lee once said that editing is a lot like DJing. It makes sense, then, that *Gigi*s Underground* haunts back to 2006, when she was heavily involved with the New York electronic music scene. It is the memories of this social milieu—and the desire to return to it while dealing with her mother’s death in New Jersey—that ultimately drives the installation. It’s rare when artists lay bare the moments that got them to where they are now, as we often cringe at the recollection of our fumbling and awkward youths instead of embracing it. In the end, if we don’t have our memories, what do we really have?

Maggie Lee: *Gigi*s Underground* runs September 24-November 27, 2016 at [356 Mission](#) (356 South Mission Road, Los Angeles, CA 90033)