

Martha Rosler reads Vogue

Alison Jones, Martha Rosler, Milly Thompson

Exhibition: 13th March – 4th April 2010

Open: Thursday - Sunday, 1 - 5pm

Events: Alison Jones and Milly Thompson in conversation 20/3/10

'Martha Rosler Reads Vogue' looks at the luxury magazine and the veils through which the amorous glances of commodities charm and fascinate with their illusions:

Identification, aspiration, wealth, social superiority, class appreciation of the finer things in life, all these are imbricated in an orgy of bourgeois values; the enduring symptom of women's asymmetric relation to power insistently realized through the private world as to-be-looked-at-ness and being-for-others; the elliptic worlds of fashion, art, media, entertainment and the nexus of money; the co-dependency of the artist producing recondite commodities, possession of which bestows distinction within this realm.

The works in the show by Alison Jones (ink drawings), Martha Rosler (video) and Milly Thompson (prints) span 3 decades. The show reflects on post-feminism as anti-feminism where invidious forms of oppression are obsequiously returned through the discourse of the free market and consumer culture. New forms of individuality and self-objectification concur with the old forms of the to-be-looked-at-ness of femininity.

Historically the video *Martha Rosler Reads Vogue* (Martha Rosler, 1982) coincides with the moment a backlash against feminism was first identified and the term Post-Feminist was coined. The values Rosler interrogated then are now ubiquitous within popular culture, but granted legitimacy through the seeming incorporation of feminism within mainstream politics.

Alison Jones depicts the ongoing asymmetry of women's relation to power through the parade of private wealth and culture as seen through the lens of *W* magazine. Women are photographed contemplating the high art photographs of Helmut Newton and Thomas Ruff. Newton's models pose undressed at sybaritic feasts or as objects on pedestal tables; Ruff rephotographs anonymous internet pornography.

Milly Thompson's graphic digital prints are aestheticised utterances reiterating the subliminal messages of aspiration and desire. Spoken in different registers from the romance of the French language to the plain crude, the electric pulse of neon signs glow as if through raindrops in the dark night of the soul at 3 o'clock in the morning.

Grey Area Gallery, 31 Queens Rd, Brighton, East Sussex

Grey Area is a not for profit space in Brighton. Set up in 2006 it has become a platform for experimental contemporary art events in a non-sterile project space.

<http://www.greyareagallery.org/index.php?/exhibitions/martha-rosler-reads-vogue/>