

## **SAM HEYDT**

### **ARTIST STATEMENT**

Memories of the past are dictated by the present.

Globalization and technology go directly from obscurity to meaninglessness. As the myth of progress continues to perpetuate inequality, oppression and violence, the social landscape becomes increasingly fractured. We live in a time of deferred expectations and anxieties, of Hollywood disaster movies and self-fulfilling religious prophecies, suicide bombers and drones. The collateral damage of these new forms of political dissidence is drowned out by the noise of the media. The sustained narrative of the tabloids takes form as the modern day "coliseum". Identities are no longer built, but bought into a lifestyle in mimesis of a flickering media image. Advertising lures us in with its pornographic self-awareness and promises for the future it truncates. Relentless materialism, debt and a growing class disparity are symptoms of an invasive denial that the American dream is just that, a dream. There is no truth to search for, but an illusion to deconstruct. The Cartesian gap between desire, the locus of memory and reality reveals how the act of archiving is a result of the societal impulse to preserve the past and cement a coherent collective memory hinged on imagery.

Heydt's work continuously examines different phenomenologies of our increasingly fractured social landscape. Her interests lie in the mutability of history and the material inequalities of a world increasingly defined by patterns of peace and war, economic stratification and transnational divisions of labour handicapped by its own historical and institutional (dis)placement. Still lives on the verge of decay, delicate visual impressions evoking the feelings of memory, images that reflect changing interpretations and exploitations of women's bodies, and epic representations of global waste – all ephemeral moments, captured in distinct and memorable images. The bold swathes of color and rich texture render her images of mines, industrial refineries, landfills, and other scarred landscapes, perversely beautiful and painterly.

Blurring the boundaries between public and private, a complex narrative of Heydt's personal experiences is illustrated swaying on the fault lines of unfixed identity, semantic plurality, sexuality, repressed memory, social transgressions and cultural polarities. Banal details of motel rooms, scarred landscapes, abandoned houses, still lives on the verge of decay, conspicuous consumption and socioeconomic polarities – ephemeral moments born of her experience and expressed through a pastiche of styles and mediums. The role of semiology is explored in relation to the decay of values, the disillusionment of the social psyche and the exploitation of a world reduced to the bottom line. Transcending their subjective and site-specific locations - the impact of the photographs becomes shockingly universal.

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