

Melanie Schiff: *Pains*



LA><ART
7000 Santa Monica Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90038
September 11 – October 24, 2015
Opening Reception: Friday, September 11th, 2015 (7pm – 9pm)

LA><ART is pleased to present *Pains*, an exhibition of new work by LA based artist **Melanie Schiff**. Schiff's continued artistic interests in histories of

photography, spanning classical genres of landscape, portraiture, still life and performance significantly informs this new body of work. Eschewing the pervasiveness of accelerated image production and consumption, Schiff's series of carefully constructed photographs offer quiet, intimate scenes for contemplation and reflection. This emphasis on decelerated production and close reading engages with longstanding efforts by the artist to represent varied meanings of experience and the body while simultaneously recognizing the strain and weariness of such an endeavor. With each photograph representing different nondescript locales the artist has frequently visited or occupied, *Pains* is a meditation on how careful attention to one's surroundings produces desire—a kind of agony experienced when searching for something in the quotidian.

Over the past three years, Schiff has visited various sites near or around her home in the Los Angeles area. As these sites became more frequented by the artist, they were photographed and re-photographed. Through the use of multiple and long exposures, as well as the refraction and reflection of light, Schiff transforms these seemingly banal sites into enigmatic locales of discreet intervention. As her attention to these locales becomes increasingly acute, obfuscating the representation of that site also becomes increasingly significant. In addition to the photographic processes that Schiff implements to obscure the site of representation, the artist uses twined linen veils in many of her photographs to further conceal and call attention to those locales. The linen veil is utilized as a cloaking device while it also imbues the site with a sense of purpose and curiosity. The sensual material softens light and charges the image with a signifier that suggests religious history, phenomena, identity, and sexuality. Schiff's use of portraiture extends the loose narrative introduced by the veil, providing a performed element within the structure of the photographs. The disorienting perspective of the body in her photographs eludes linear narrative, underscoring the artist's efforts to recognize the complexities of constructing meaning from lived experience.

Schiff's preoccupation with pictures that express careful attention through obscuring and disorienting the everyday revisits longstanding investigations into the ineffable moments that surround us. The exhibition's title reminds us that rendering the conditions and relations we confront day to day is an effort, a way of expressing a low-level ambient pain. And the quiet persistence of that effort stands in stark contrast to the brash cacophonous position in favor of quick resolution. Rather than be absorbed by this clamoring, *Pains* conveys a precariously reflexive position, the agony one endures when searching for something.

About the Artist

Melanie Schiff (USA, b. 1977 in Chicago, IL) attended University of London, Goldsmiths College, before receiving her BFA from New York University, Tisch School of the Art and her MFA from University of Illinois at Chicago. Schiff has held solo exhibitions at Kate Werble Gallery, New York, NY (2014); CAM Raleigh, NC (2013); Kavi Gupta, Chicago, IL (2012, 2009, 2006, 2004);

University Galleries of Illinois State University (2012); Santa Barbara

Contemporary Arts Forum, Santa Barbara, CA (2009); and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL (2007). Her work has also been exhibited at venues including MoMA PS1, Long Island City, NY; Museum of Contemporary Art, North Miami, FL; Indianapolis Museum of Art, Indianapolis, IN; Marian Goodman Gallery, Paris, FR; Meyer Riegger, Karlsruhe, DE; and Foxy Production, New York, NY. Schiff participated in the 2008 Whitney Biennial, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY. She currently lives and works in Los Angeles, CA.

About LA×ART

Founded in 2005, LA×ART is the leading independent contemporary art space supporting artistic and curatorial freedom. LA×ART is an incubator for the next generation of artists and curators, artist collectives and artist run spaces. The organization is committed to producing newly commissioned works of art, to present experimental exhibitions, public art initiatives, and publications with emerging, mid-career and established local, national and international artists.

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LA×ART is open Tuesday through Saturday 11am – 6pm