

frosch&portmann

Julia Kuhl *Do you love me?*

frosch&portmann is pleased to present *Do you love me?*, Julia Kuhl's first solo exhibition with the gallery. Born in in St.Petersburg, Russia, Kuhl grew up in New York, where she now lives and works.

Do you love me? comprises two recent series of drawings. The title, which may be interpreted as both a question and a challenge, refers to a Nick Cave song. The drawings are based on the artist's own photographs as well as images from friends' photo albums.

In one series, Kuhl casts herself in the roles of iconic female characters, reinterpreting them in the process. She begins by taking photographs of herself with props, then uses the photographs to create intricately detailed and sensitively rendered watercolor drawings. She depicts an Ophelia not entirely resigned to her fate, Electra as a reluctant shadow-boxer, and Amelia Earhart whose tragic end is foreshadowed by the fragility of her paper toy. Finally, Pandora is reimagined as an uninvited guest with a heavy suitcase.

The German playwright Heiner Müller once said - "We haven't come into our own as long as Shakespeare writes our plays." With these drawings Kuhl examines the archetypes she herself has absorbed and internalized.

The drawing *Flash* points to the key characteristics of the second series. In these pieces meaning is simultaneously illuminated and obscured. The text tends to point the viewer in a direction the image itself would not suggest, creating a titillating dichotomy. Here a bicycle seat is put forth as a symbol of obedience, an old boxing glove might signify a caress and a cardboard box that once contained the best of something now lies discarded. A drawing amplifying the word 'never' appears to point to some enormous impossibility. Another, reflecting Kuhl's interest in physics, slyly invites the viewer to guess Schroedinger's mood from the depiction of the back of his head.

Each of these salient yet subtle drawings invites the viewer to a game of hide-and-seek, where searching is the goal and the answer may never be found.

October 25 – December 9, 2012

Hours: Wednesday to Sunday, noon – 6pm