

STUDIO10

SUSAN SILAS

the self-portrait sessions, 2016

(8 from a suite of 8 images)

For Immediate Release:

We are pleased to announce a solo exhibition of artist Susan Silas at Studio 10, in Bushwick, New York. The exhibition will open on **Friday, March 17th** from **7 p.m. to 9 p.m.** and run through Sunday, April 9th 2017.

Just as excavators poured liquid plaster to reveal voids where, for some 1500 years, anonymous bodies were abruptly frozen in mid-gesture beneath tons of Vesuvius' ash, artist Susan Silas captures and reveals similar reflexive gestures, her multimedia portraits seemingly etched for eternity. Yet, like those remains in Pompeii, Silas's work might be as transient as data captured by a surveillance camera, later reconstructed, but somehow permanently embedded within our collective memories. Transitory permanence is difficult to define, yet it might become the singular hallmark of our time. L. Lewenz

In this exhibition, titled *the self-portrait sessions*, Susan Silas will present photographs, bronze and beeswax sculptures and two video works. The works in this exhibition began as an exploration of privacy and what the artist refers to as self-intimacy. In these images, she places herself in front of a large mirror, and returns her own gaze. The reference to Lacan's mirror stage is obvious and yet the degree to which our self is constituted through our own self-reflexive gaze vs. the gaze that is cast on us by the outside world is deeply intermeshed and impossible to tease apart. As we submit to myriad platforms in which we voluntarily hand over information about ourselves or simply photograph ourselves and share these images ad infinitum, the assumption that privacy is sacrosanct and that interiority is both vital and indispensable, no longer seem to be universally shared values. Hence the notion that artificial intelligence can replace man, and may in fact. In her photographs there are multiple reflections but the mirror has disappeared from view, creating a liminal space or ambiguity, about which space is "real" and which is a reflection.

Ms. Silas explored self-portraiture in the late 70s and a few of those images resurfaced when her family home was sold. One b & w image from 1979 is included in the exhibition. She also began to cast her face in plaster in 1992. This project was picked up again in 2012 and she now casts her face yearly in the spring, keeping track of the changes in her appearance from one year to the next. Five plasters have

been cast in bronze and in beeswax for the exhibition ranging from the first cast made in 1992 up through 2015. The casts show dramatic change, first in a twenty year leap, and then more subtle changes in yearly increments. These casts drew inspiration from the life masks of President Abraham Lincoln on view at the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, the extraordinary beeswax busts from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century by the Italian artist Medardo Rosso, and especially by the eighteenth century German sculptor Franz Xaver Messerschmidt, whose “character heads” evolved out of a ritual of making faces in front of the mirror. By contrast, in a series of eight color photographs, she shows changes in expression taking place from moment to moment, foregrounding photography’s strongest asset; the ability to record a precise moment that has been irretrievably lost.

Studio 10 is located at 56 Bogart Street in Bushwick, New York.
Gallery hours are Thursday to Sunday, 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. and by appointment.
For further inquiries contact Larry Greenberg at [718 852-4396](tel:7188524396).