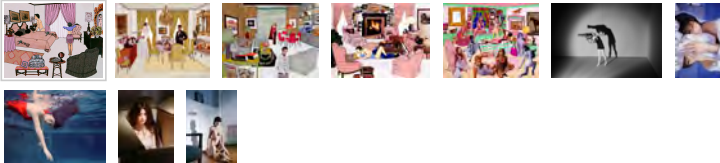




SEE HUE

ABOUT CALENDAR CONTACT BLOG  

ISSUE 02



Laurie Simmons is an internationally recognized artist. Since the mid-70's, Simmons has staged scenes for her camera with dolls, ventriquist dummies, mannequins and occasionally people, to create images with intensely psychological subtexts. Her photographic based works are collected by many museums including in New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Museum of Modern Art, The Whitney Museum of American Art and the Guggenheim as well as The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, Walker Art Center and the Hara Museum, Tokyo.

In 2006 she produced and directed her first film titled "The Music of Regret", starring Meryl Streep, Adam Guettel and the Alvin Ailey 2 Dancers with cinematography by Ed Lachman. The film premiered at The Museum of Modern Art, New York, and has been screened at many international museums and film festivals including the Whitney Museum. Simmons was featured in Season 4 of the PBS series "Art 21: Art in the Twenty- First Century". Her most recent exhibitions were at Salon 94 Bowery, NYC, and with Wilkinson Gallery both at Art Basel and in London. She has upcoming solo shows at Koyama Gallery in Tokyo and The Gothenburg Museum in Sweden.

Simmons lives and works in New York City and Cornwall, Connecticut with her husband, the painter Carroll Dunham.

Laurie Simmons

Age: Hmmmmm

Website: www.lauriesimmons.net

Medium: Photography/Film/Video

Location: New York City/ Cornwall, Connecticut

Influences: Too many to name as they're ever changing and happening daily.

Education: BFA Tyler School of Art

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EH: A Rembrandt piece is surely art, though it looks nothing like Warhol's Campbell's Soup piece- which is also considered art. The broad description of art allows us to speak about it in the way we do. In this modern age do you see the necessity to define art, and why?

LS: Art needs parameters and needs to be defined. I guess if art is not defined as such I am out of a job. For me the critical aspects of this artist life are intention and context – what you mean and (literally) who you hang with. Artists are omnivores. Everything is fair game, and one tries to isolate and unhinge a vision or idea from it's mooring and own it. Context is everything.

EH: What is your most prodigious ambition as an artist?

LS: What does prodigious mean?

EH: What was the inspiration behind your vibrant series, 'The Instant Decorator' (One of my favorites of yours)? What notions derived the witty narratives?

LS: In the summer of 2001, I received a gift of a book called "The Instant Decorator." Actually the friend who gave it to me told me to make art out of it. I don't like being told what to do so I put it away.

Immediately following the September 11th attacks I couldn't get to my studio, as the neighborhood was closed off. I took out the book and started making collages out of the 16 see through pages that were meant to have swatches of fabric and floor and wall coverings placed behind them. The idea was you could pre-visualize a room before you actually decorated it. It was a crazy concept for a book, kind of beautifully made and it provided me with a finite project. I started cutting out characters as well and by late November 2001 I had a group of 8 finished photographs. I made these by photographing the collaged pages and making large-scale photographic prints.

EH: Delineate your creative process.

LS: Basically I know I need to keep making things so to that end I am always looking for new things to make.

EH: Who, in a societal setting, is The Love Doll to you? A beautiful woman suffering the throws of being a commodity? Suffering the human condition of loneliness? A human replica so real, that will forever remain an object? A woman detached from her culture?

LS: The Love Doll is the first doll I've ever found that's life size and can be placed in a human scale setting.

EH: Throughout your entire career, small dolls, dollhouses, finger puppets and cutouts have been your medium. You've stated in an interview with Paddle8 that finding a life-size doll was the best thing that ever happened to you, that the whole world, was now your dollhouse. May you elaborate on that?

LS: I've known all along that what I find interesting about dolls and dollhouses might seem precious or twee to some, though that is the least of what interests me about small-scale objects. I also always wondered if that subject matter might be less interesting to men and I want everyone to look at my pictures. I'm interested in controlling light and space, which may sound like a formal interpretation of what I do. Working in human scale shuts down one conversation and opens up another. I really like that.

EH: What emotion best describes where you derive your inspiration- how do you react to it?

LS: When I'm shut down or stumped listening to music really helps me find my way. It takes me out of myself in a way that's almost the opposite of the effect visual art has on me.

EH: Choose one of your favorite art works in history, and interpret it.

LS: Fountains in Rome never let me down. You get sculpture, trickling water, and the possibility to throw a coin and make a wish. Romans were really proud of bringing water into the city and commemorated the points where that happened thus the amazing fountains.

Fontana dell' Acqua Paola on the Janiculum is my favorite at night because the theme is water and it's the one I'd most like to swim in though I love the Trevi because of Anita Ekberg and Marcello Mastroianni's wading scene in La Dolce Vita. The best sculpture is around the Fountain of the Four Rivers in Piazza Navona – Bernini's design. Global shortage of clean drinking water or any water at all is something we'll be looking at more and more in our lifetime. I like the idea of water being celebrated and not taken for granted.

EH: What new projects have been occupying your time?

LS: I've been photographing my house this past summer for the New York Times, the idea of the story being that I use my home like a big dollhouse/set. It's been crazy to try and do the same things I've always done in doll house scale in human scale - like realizing their should be light on in a certain window and running up two flights to turn it on and then deciding to turn it off.. It's much better exercise than the way I usually work.

EH: Any last words?

LS: I don't think so but thank you for inviting me to answer questions on Eye See Hue.

