

Augusta Wood, *Bacon* (1985, 1992, 2008), 2009



## AUGUSTA WOOD

Angles Gallery

"I HAVE ONLY what I remember" is a trip down memory lane for photographer Augusta Wood. Wood mined her family archive for photographs taken in her grandparents' home, specifically looking for images that focused on the interior of the house. She later returned to the site and projected the historic images onto the bare walls of the now vacant home. Montaging projected images that span five decades creates an overlap of time, evoking people and places that no longer exist but who live on in memory as well as in celluloid. As a child Wood had an early introduction to art and architecture through her grandparents, who were artists as well as avid collectors. They lived in a modernist style, architect-designed house in upstate New York whose walls were adorned with original works by Bacon, Picasso, Lichtenstein, Miro, Rauschenberg and Matisse. Wood is interested in not only recreating what lived on the walls of the house but also in preserving the aura of those who lived there.

*Bacon* (1985, 1992, 1992, 2008) depicts herself as a young girl playing a grand piano. Behind her hovers a large Bacon painting. This image is overlaid by another image of the same room at a different time. The piano bench is empty and the Bacon is gone. In its place is what appears to be a painting by Matisse. But what is there is an illusion. The room once occupied by the painting and the piano is now empty. The only "real" elements in the picture are the sockets, the walls and the floor, everything else is a projected element. By layering multiple projections onto a wall or into the corner of a room, Wood can retrace the history of the place and what happened within its walls.

While the majority of the images focus on the art and the furniture, a few make reference to those who visited and lived in the home. *Formal Living Room* (1966, 1978, 1987, 2003, 2008) is an image of two women seated on a couch. The women wear black dresses and their hairstyle is reminiscent of what was popular in the '60s. One of the women is her mother.

Behind where the women are seated is a horizontal row of framed images. The piano is on the right. The architecture of the room as it exists today forms the frame for Wood's intervention. Here she layers images from the different eras, collapsing time into a single frame. In our mind's eye we recreate history and try to deconstruct the elements to ascertain the timeline. The actual events are less important however, than the references generated through the imagery and the layers of projection, which in essence become layers of memory.

Each image has its own story to tell. The story of a house. The story of an art collection and the story of the small girl who came to visit and later appropriated and assimilated those experiences into her own art. This work is personal yet universal.

How often does one visit a place and think about what used to be there? Wood was fortunate to come across an archive of images and had the foresight and opportunity to view them in the context of where they were made. The images are not nostalgic or melancholic but more matter-of-fact about what was and how memory of that experience is triggered. Wood is interested in the "psychology of interior spaces and the depth of their influence." By using images of the past to create new works Wood pays attention to overlaps both in time and space. The layering of the projected image alludes to the transition from past to present; a past that might have been forgotten, is now forever preserved.

—Jody Zellen