

## ART LTD November - December 2014

### LOS ANGELES

#### Fay Ray: "Part Object"

##### at Samuel Freeman Gallery

Fay Ray's dizzying photographic collages and patterned acrylic paintings are carefully constructed, densely layered works that explore the relationship between the real and the surreal. Ray's black-and-white ink jet prints are amalgamations of images of plants, flowers, glamorous women, and patterned objects including tiles, fabric and chair caning. Ray fills her compositions edge to edge, creating a kaleidoscopic collage of overlapping fragments, some with torn edges, and others carefully cut from their source. In *Automatic Love* (2014), the eye darts across the composition noticing scale shifts and resting on that which is recognizable; for example a woman's hand with polished nails; trying to understand the purpose of the juxtapositions.

Inspired by Surrealism, Ray indulges in non-sequiturs, inferring rather than stating meaning. The works are mysterious and seductive. In contrast to the enigmatic ink jet prints that combine polyvinyl acetate, gold leaf, sumi ink and the occasional vintage photograph are series of striated paintings. Made row by row; by spray-painting over and then

removing objects as diverse as marshmallows, feathers, lentils, bobby pins, almonds, mushrooms, stars, pine needles and lace, to create a textured ground. Upon close examination these seemingly minimal works are as densely populated as the collages. The *Part Object* of the exhibition's title refers to Melanie Klein's object relations theory which outlines "the idea of the self as constructed from positively and negatively charged experiences with objects (and parts of objects) in our earliest stages of life." Ray explores this idea most directly in three color prints:

*Juicing*, *Flower Cutting* and *Modeling Clay* (which is also available as a take-away poster). Via a sequence of 20 images, these works depict a nude woman from the neck down squeezing juice from myriad fruits into a bowl, pulling apart red flowers leaving their stems in a glass vase, and posing with a ball of clay nudged against different parts of her body. Though humorous, these comic-like narratives undermine the impact of the black-and-white works as they explicitly illustrate the body's relationship to objects where the other works more opaquely suggest it.

While Ray's ideas are articulated via multiple mediums (there are also bronze sculptures in the exhibition) her exploration remains an investigation of form and texture. Despite an uncertain feminist/feminine stance, what resonates in all her work is the confluence of the disparate.

—JODY ZELLEN

