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8 GREAT PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITIONS TO SEE FEBRUARY 2018

February 1, 2018



Shadows In Paradise
Marianna Rothen

The characters of Shadows in Paradise are portrayed by Rothen herself and by her models/muses/friends. The photographs were made in Rothen's home in upstate New York, shot both in 2015 when the house was in a decrepit, nearly abandoned state, and then in the summer of 2016 after obsessive renovations. Carlo McCormick writes in the book introduction:

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“We know this place; it is the landscape of what has been lost and the broken ground upon which the forgotten grows.... It is not a destination but a sidetrack of indetermination, it is a borderline Rothen does not so much cross as trace like a caregiver’s loving caress along the ridge of an accustomed scar. Marianna occupies these pictures like an unspoken kindness, the company and comfort we keep when we are alone and frightened of this world, and wherever she may be here, in the frame or behind the camera, she is never quite grounded or solid but hovering, ethereal and translucent, as much feeling as fact.”

The photographs in *Shadows in Paradise* reference three films: Ingmar Bergman’s *Persona*, Robert Altman’s *Three Women* and David Lynch’s *Mulholland Drive*. In Rothen’s female-helmed dream world her characters find themselves and lose themselves. These images portray characters that debuted in Rothen’s 2014 book *'Snow and Rose & Other Tales'*. When we last saw Rothen’s women they were dancing exuberantly in the nude, celebrating their male-free utopia. Now we see them struggling to stay connected to their idealized notions of self, coping with their shattered illusions, falling deeper into derangement. This new series explores life after happiness, after you get everything you want but nothing is as planned. It asks what it means to be a woman among women in a world where men are banished yet lurking.

Rothen creates her work with a complex alternation of analog and digital processes. Her subjects are captured digitally, then re-photographed onto Polaroid film which is digitally scanned and digitally printed for exhibition. Thus Rothen creates a unique retrograde cinematic tonality in her pictures.