

STEVEN  
KASHER  
GALLERY

L'Œil  
de la PHOTOGRAPHIE  
THE EYE OF PHOTOGRAPHY

## Marianna Rothen, Shadows in Paradise

February 27, 2017



On view at Steven Kasher Gallery, in New York, is Marianna Rothen's latest series *Shadows in Paradise* and a two-channel video installation *The Woman with The Crown*. 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. The exhibition launches the artist's second monograph, *Shadows in Paradise*, published by b.frank books, Zurich.

The two-channel short film *The Woman with a Crown* is on view for the first time. The video is based on Princess Diana's 1995 televised interview in which Diana candidly and heartbreakingly describes the end of her marriage and her denigration by the royal family. Watching this fairytale gone wrong, the audience slowly realizes that Rothen is playing four characters all speaking Diana's words. There is a blonde sex worker from Wim Wenders' *Paris, Texas*, a sullen woman

STEVEN  
KASHER  
GALLERY

based on Frances Farmer, a pimple-faced farm worker, and Diana herself. The emotionally draining video is at once a family tragedy, an actorly tour de force, and a complex meditation on femininity.

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's introduction: "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.

Marianna Rothen, *Shadows in Paradise*  
February 23 – April 15, 2017  
Steven Kasher Gallery  
515 W. 26th St.  
New York  
NY 10001  
USA