

LUBOV

Jenna Westra: *Twinchecks*

September 5–October 22, 2023

Jenna Westra's photographs take place in the overlapping spaces of performance, portraiture, and dreams. These are all zones for shared collaborative improvisation — living settings for interactions between memory and presentness, intention and chance.

Like photography, all human action unfolds memory. All the lenses, films, chemicals, papers, and other materials of analog picture-making are good stand-ins for our minds, eyes, mouths, bodies, limbs — for many mortal senses and forms. Likewise, memory and photography are twinned; bound together by their mirrored states of reflection and constraint.

A picture is bordered by its legible edges, while memory's frontiers are always more porous and free. Both states (of sight, of recollection) still knock on the same roots of perception, and on the same eventual nerve-endings of our being in the midst of other people, places, bodies, and machines.

A camera marks memory by disconnecting time from other time. The filmmaker Chris Marker wrote that "forgetting is not the opposite of memory, but its lining." Photography cuts and makes stasis from actions, joys, and experiences that can, in life, only ever be continuous and changing. In Westra's photographs these edges between initial reception and eventual memory are vividly apparent, but sometimes contradict their usual roles. These dividing lines wake us up to the limits of images, just as they tune us in to the endless puzzles posed by the people depicted within these particular pictures.

Westra's photographs make rhythms out of the edges of actions. In sequences we see limbs folding glyphs of poses and movements into whole strange sentences. The rhymes and reflections of these images are stable, available, solid. Their solidity slows us down, providing structure for the act of seeing, while their flexibility keeps us moving in the dance between sight and memory.

Like faces in dreams, the faces of the figures in Westra's work are sometimes obscured — they often turn away from us, engaged in some focus or action or thought that cannot yet be caught by our eyes. Some things in these pictures remain private — known solely by Westra's collaborators, never available in any complete way to the photographer, nor to the viewers of the photographs.

Photography records both dreams and realities in variable and unpredictable degrees of fidelity. Westra's pictures transmit her own precarious once-present, now-past states of experience — spaces of provisional collaborations and ongoing connections — at the same time as they project new views of shared life. Here we are, in rooms, with many possibilities for communication, rhythm, tenderness, invention, wit, and mutual support. —Josh Brand, August 2023.

Jenna Westra (b. 1986, Grand Rapids, MI) is a New York based artist working in photography and film. Most recently Westra's work has been the subject of solo exhibitions at Ludwig Erhard Haus, Berlin, DE (2022); Junzo Yoshimura House, Atami, JP (2022); Schwarz Contemporary, Berlin, DE (2021); Lubov, New York, NY (2020); Fahrenheit, Madrid, ES (2019); Schwarz Contemporary, Berlin, DE (2019); Anthony Greaney Gallery, Boston, MA (2019); and Lubov, New York City, NY (2018). Notable group shows include Benrubi Gallery, New York, NY (2023); Misako and Rosen, Tokyo, JP (2023); Nathalie Karg, New York (2023); The Court, Pescara, IT (2019); L21, Mallorca, ES (2019). Her work has been published and reviewed in *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, *Aperture Magazine*, *i-D Magazine*, *AnOther Magazine*, *Collector Daily*, *Elephant Magazine*, *artnet News*, *British Journal of Photography*, *Camera Austria*, among more publications. Hassla published her second book and first monograph, *Afternoons*, released in tandem with Westra's second exhibition at Lubov in 2020. This is Westra's third solo exhibition at Lubov.

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