



Amy Ruhl

Between Tin Men: Gifts and Souvenirs

July 2, 2017–August 13, 2017

Reception: Sunday July 2, 6–9pm

Occupying the world of L. Frank Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* and its myriad sequels, Amy Ruhl's *Between Tin Men* reanimates the fairy tale with the narratives of radical feminism, Marxism, and modern love. Manifesting variously as performance, installation, and video, *Between Tin Men* follows the ongoing story of Nimmie Amee – a minor character in Baum's bewitching universe – and her infatuation with a Tin Man who has already lost his heart to another metal lover.

For this exhibition, *Between Tin Men: Gifts and Souvenirs*, Ruhl charms life into the various trophies of her adventures through Oz, turning the gallery into a shop that exists in direct opposition to its Disney counterpart. From a magic mirror, the female protagonists of *Between Tin Men* protest their entrapment in the commercial space of the gallery, violently rebuffing their status as art and as objects of desire. To the side, caught on the smaller stage of the cabinet display, these same faces are frozen in the enamel of collector's plates, packaged for purchase. Arranged like token keepsakes, these characters are made object in a way that both flattens and elucidates the ways in which they were already flat. Despite Jinjur's forcefulness and Polychrome's flamboyance, the reductive materialization of these characters poses subtle questions about the role of consumption in the construction of identity. Fluidly translating Nimmie Amee's devotion to the Tin Man onto the viewer's covetous desire for the objects in the store, Ruhl suggests that, whether sexual or material, desire seeks to fill an absence, to reach for a state of wholeness. Denying us the satisfaction of easy possession, Ruhl presents us with objects already full of personality; these plates are not leather jackets or ostentatious handbags but are fully-fleshed identities with histories of their own. Ruhl invites you to try a type with no promises that its features will slip easily into your own.

– Nicole Kaack

Amy Ruhl's artistic practice spans fields of video, performance, installation and writing. Her work has exhibited internationally at galleries, film festivals and venues such as Vitrine Gallery (London), Public Fiction (Los Angeles), Storefront for Art and Architecture (New York), Anthology Film Archives (New York), and Antimatter Film Festival (Canada). She has given artist lectures at UnionDocs, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, The Department of Performance Studies at NYU, and recently was a focus group participant in the New Museum Colloquium, *The Critical Matter of Performance*. Ruhl attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in 2012, held an Educational Residency at Harvestworks Digital Media in 2013, and will be an artist in residence at Yaddo in the summer of 2017. She completed her MFA at Milton Avery Graduate School of the Arts at Bard College in 2016 within the Film/Video Department.