

Art Viewer

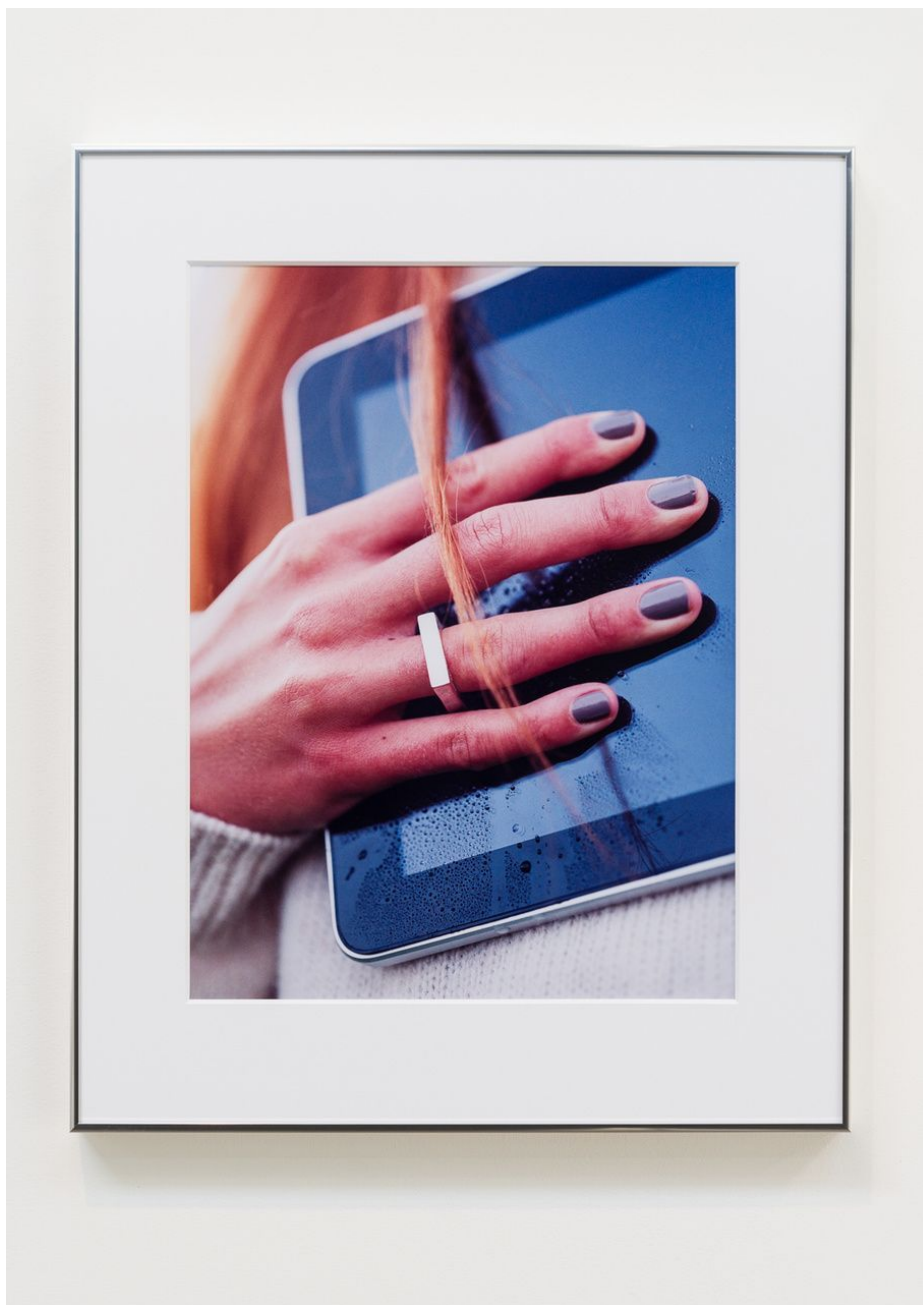
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Josephine Pryde at CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts

July 19th, 2015

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LAURA BARTLETT GALLERY

Artist: Josephine Pryde

Exhibition title: Lapses in Thinking by the Person I Am

Curated by: Jamie Stevens

Venue: CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, San Francisco, US

Date: May 4 – August 1, 2015

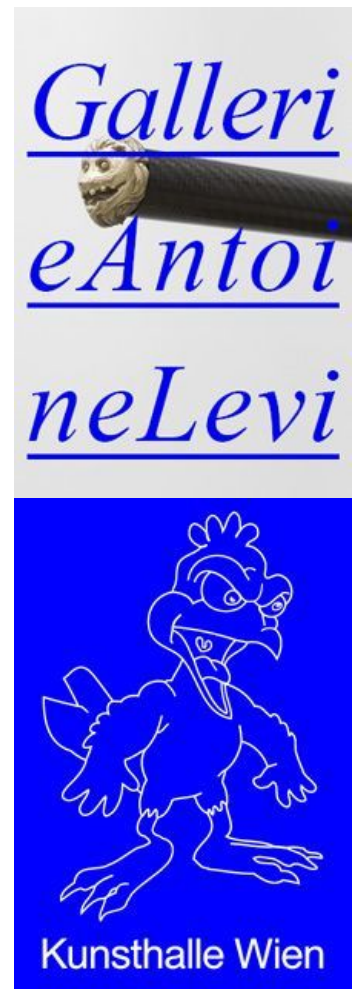
Photography: Johnna Arnold, images courtesy of the artist and CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, San Francisco

San Francisco, Calif., March 12, 2015—The CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts in San Francisco will present an exhibition of new work by the UK-born, Berlin and London-based artist Josephine Pryde (b.1967) May 5 through August 1, 2015. The exhibition is free and open to the public.

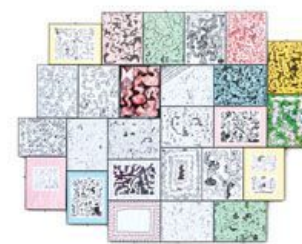
Pryde's dual practices of photography and sculpture will be showcased in this first solo presentation of her work in an American institution. Making use of the technical and iconic potential of photography in its various forms, Pryde creates visually arresting and conceptually precise images that play upon the relationship between two dominant historical uses of the camera: scientific analysis and artistic endeavor. *Lapses in Thinking by the Person I Am* will travel to ICA Philadelphia in September 2015.

Pryde's exhibitions— which often feature sculptural forms as well as photography— connect and flatten signifiers from political, pop cultural, and art historical discourses. In 2011, for instance, Pryde produced *It's Not My Body*, a series of digitally retouched scans of a fetus that superimposed an MRI scan onto desert-like landscapes and introduced psychedelic colors, constructing final images that were stylistically fluent with certain tendencies present in fashion photography. Spatial relations between works are carefully configured to create allegorical, sometimes quasi-narrative installations in which the complex network of artwork, artist, exhibition, and institution is foregrounded and performed.

At the center of Pryde's exhibition at CCA Wattis Institute is a new installation that takes into consideration the rise of interactive or 'relational' artworks as key symbolic events in the



activities of cultural institutions, revising the role of audience from that of viewership to experience-driven exchange. A fully functioning ride-on model train will travel along a point-to-point track, installed in the main gallery, where it will pass a series of framed photographs along its route. The train, a freight locomotive in the Union Pacific livery, pulling two boxcars, is covered in the patina of miniaturized graffiti; it takes passengers on a brief journey through the exhibition at approximately 2 miles per hour. Trains “bombed” by graffiti artists (in America, done so with the threat of felony charges) conjure an image that is both a globalized urban truism and an emblem of the shifting destiny of the graffiti artist: a figure of lawless self-expression but also a proponent of a discipline now celebrated by corporate executives and urban planners.



The train is shown alongside Pryde’s new photographic series, which feature hands touching, and in contact with, various materials: their own chest, a tablet, a phone, a touch-sensitive lamp base. The bodies in these photographs are always faceless, and the photographer uses tight angles in which hands express, author, control, and animate according to slight deviations in movement. These relentless close-ups of hands— there will be about 20 photographs on view— create a semiotic body language between the works, a gestural code that is defined by haptic control, perhaps an attempt by Pryde to consider the consequences of the mass transferal toward finger- based interactivity with touch-screen devices. These works also address classic feminist critiques of body language (the socialized differences of behavior between men and women) and reference the many works made by women artists that deploy imagery of hands: a symbol of domestic labor, idealized femininity, craft, and self-image.

This exhibition at CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts coincides with a period of critical acclaim for Pryde, with her work featured on the front cover of *Artforum* (April 2012), her inclusion in the major group exhibition *New Photography* at the Museum of Modern Art (2013), and *The Enjoyment of Photography* (2015), a monographic book on her photography, recently published by JRP Ringier in collaboration with Kunsthalle Bern and Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen, Düsseldorf.




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