

NIGHT STUDIO
Vilma Gold Gallery

The whitewall gallery chamber is here ensconced in the hide of melodramatic stage spectacle. From expectations of the typically sleek, clinical “contemporary” presentation, we are enveloped in a dim sceptor, whose stillness is only punctuated by the slide projector’s rhythmic, blinking crunch. Isolated by stark, caravaggesque shadows of spotlight and positioned across two rooms are eleven selected works by Michaela Eichwald, David Harrison, Andrew Mania, Luther Price, and Carl van Vechten. They offer varied etudes on the intersection of material and myth, each amplifying the next in atmospheric tension.

From Eichwald’s bloodied, bloodless sculptures, which cast a plastic heart in ashtray-shaped resin as if a biting metaphor, to Mania’s tweed-curtained altar to the elusive gaze of the photographed nude (Narcissus in the woods?), this macabre patchwork forms a vigorously furrowed texture of senseless, broken, and elusive narratives. It achieves a surrealist elegance in stylistic vocabulary, fingering the edge in objecthood of the vague and beautiful; the vulgar and visceral.

Yet our stiff little actors are here endowed with such surprising agency less through sturdy critical distance than the precise psychology of theatrics - a funhouse curating of no Brechtian school! The exhibition is a vortex of pathological experiences of the image, trapping the viewer in the curdling milieu of his/her own neurosis, angled against traces of the sexual, whimsical, and fantastic. Its true effectiveness lies in sensorial complexity, subtle and direct as a gun pressed tenderly against the cheek, taking revenge upon the intellect to heart.