

## Press Release

Puppies Puppies  
*Una mujer fantástica (A Fantastic Woman)*  
September 14 – November 3, 2018  
Opening: September 13, 6 – 9pm  
Gallery hours: Tue – Sat, 11am – 6pm

For the exhibition *Una mujer fantástica (A Fantastic Woman)* at Galerie Barbara Weiss, the Los Angeles based artist Puppies Puppies recreates a decisive moment of possibility from her personal history through a multi-media installation. Comprised of an architectonic adumbration of a cinema interior, a projection of Sebastián Lelio's melodrama *A Fantastic Woman* as well as several mirrors and a performance that reference the film, the installation navigates the complexities of latinx transgender identity in the present. Seeing Lelio's movie was an immensely empowering event for the artist, contributing to her own decision to change her gender, as it showed, for the first time, a latinx trans woman on the screen of a mainstream theater. The possibility that emerged for Puppies Puppies while seeing Daniela Vega – the main actor, a woman fighting for her dignity the face of condescension and contempt – is marked through the theme of the mirror. They emerge here not in their by now familiar role as absolutely indifferent objects, as pure surfaces, but as highly personal objects at the intersection of individual and collective identity, as objects that subtly draw the viewer into the installation.

The installation is accompanied by two photographs that portray Cielo Oscuro, a friend of the artist on the first day of a hormone replacement therapy, and by a drawing from Alison Veit that depicts Puppies Puppies in tears. Through these different references, the exhibition constructs a complex temporality of identity change, a process that is marked by a variety of emotions ranging from depression and desolation to empowerment and euphoria. In addition to these elements, all of which are located in the gallery space, the exhibition extends to the streets of Berlin with a poster campaign based on the original advertisement of the movie. In spatial terms, this constellation highlights once again the interdependence of inside and outside, public and private.

The assemblage aspect of the exhibition is a seminal component of the conceptual dimension in Puppies Puppies's work more generally, defining her very specific relation to the history of the ready-made. For in the artist's practice, the ready-made no longer operates as a marker of indifference and detachment, but as a personal, even intimate and fragile object. Félix González-Torres comes to mind in this regard, an artist to whom Puppies Puppies made direct references on multiple occasions. As do Marcel Broodthaers and Sturtevant, who in their own way gave Duchamp's well mannered indifference an ironic twist in order to save the readymade from its incipient canonization.

Questions of the relation between individuality and collectivity are equally at work in the artist's construction of her own persona. Existing, at first, solely as a social media profile filled with images of puppies, Puppies Puppies has to a certain extent remained a fictional character ever since. The speculation went from "a single person living in Chicago" to "duo" to "artist group from LA." Never personally attending the exhibitions, Puppies Puppies was represented by performers, dressed up as SpongeBob, Gollum, Voldemort and other mass cultural characters, while the artist herself changed personal pronouns from "he" to "they" to "she." Neither reducible to the biographical nor to the dream of anonymity, these practices seek to explore new modes of artistic identity and existence in the present.

Puppies Puppies has received widespread international recognition, with solo exhibitions in Paris, Rome, New York and LA in the past two years. Her work was included in the 9<sup>th</sup> Berlin Biennale as well as the Whitney Biennale in 2017. Puppies Puppies has an upcoming solo exhibition at Halle für Kunst, Lüneburg.