

Alika Cooper : Manholes

There is something surreal in Alika Cooper's Manholes. In the literal sense of the French word surreal: manholes put us in touch with the "over-real," forming a passage to that strange otherness of a reality in excess of our conscious awareness. The strange underground passageways of the real beneath the surface would remain indiscernible to the ordinary attitude of perception and the self-certainty of consciousness; however, the work creates a gateway between the waking life of the self and the intuitive "over-real" disclosed by a poetic consciousness. The surreal manholes constitute an opening between the human subject and the abyss of sensuousness and feeling that exceeds our conscious awareness. And yet, one would have to free the concept from the tradition of Breton's surrealism; the manholes do not inhabit the dreamlike unconscious state of a psychologically isolated human nature, rather, they are orifices attuned to the constraints of the environment. The intestinal serpentine coils conjure a surreal unconscious ecology in which the human is existentially enmeshed.

ALIKA COOPER (b. 1979, Guam) lives and works in Los Angeles. She received both her MFA and BFA from California College of the Arts, San Francisco, CA. Solo and two--person exhibitions include Madeleine Cake SITUATIONS, New York; UPBRAID Night Gallery, Los Angeles; Wet Suits, Good Weather Gallery, Little Rock; Have A Sex fort gondo, Saint Louis; The Disguised Edge MULHERIN, Toronto; and GLASS Eleanor Harwood Gallery, San Francisco. She was the recipient of the Rema Hort Mann Foundation grant, the Magic- Trillium Press Yesland Prize, and the Jack and Gertrude Murphy Fellowship. She has participated in The Viewing Program at The Drawing Center, New York; MOTION PICTURE at The Saint Louis Art Museum; and was Artist in Residence at Galleria Studio Legale in Marzano Appio, Italy.