

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Rona Yefman*Marath a Bouke, project #4*

November 18, 2011 - January 7, 2012

Opening Reception: Friday, November 18, 6-8 pm

For her first exhibition at Derek Eller Gallery, Rona Yefman will present an installation about Martha Bouke, an 80-year-old grandfather and Holocaust survivor living in Tel Aviv who assumes a feminine persona in both body and mind. This work is the culmination of nine years of collaboration.



Entitled *Marath a Bouke, project #4* (meaning “your father’s wife” in Arabic), this exhibition features a 21 image modeling portfolio, a two-channel video installation, and a new photo of Martha at the Tel Aviv Museum of Art. The images range from poignant to humorous to joyful to disconcerting as they traverse norms of age, gender, family roles, and eroticism. With her blonde wig and expressionless mask, Martha’s character challenges the conventional perception of an elderly man and tries to defy the Jewish trauma myth. As Yefman explains, the portraits reveal Martha as “a diva, a provocation, a fiction, an art piece, and a poetic soul.”

Rona Yefman works with individuals who “embody possibilities of freedom,” and describes photography as “a way to find freedom and passion. The camera allows things to happen, gives permission to explore a different kind of life or existence.” Her work blurs the boundaries between the documenter and the documented, artist and muse, and uses the subjectivity of representation and the performativity of her subjects as a spring board for creative possibilities. Yefman says, “I feel an obligation to be part of the work. If I say something about other people, I have to show something of myself. I too am a subject, I too am vulnerable.”

There is a slippage between how Martha desires to be seen—static, alluring, impenetrable, entrancing—and the dynamics of Yefman’s expansive project. The *cinema verite* influenced videos address the myth of the power relationship between model and photographer, as they show Martha attempting to direct the scenes. Yefman celebrates Martha’s flamboyance, but also articulates the fragility of the man behind the mask. The deeply empathic relationship between Yefman and Martha results in an engrossing and heterogenous narrative comprised of images, sound, text, and installation.

Rona Yefman graduated from the MFA program at Columbia University School of the Arts in 2009. She recently had solo exhibitions at the SculptureCenter, New York, Participant, Inc., New York, and group exhibitions at the Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna, Tel Aviv Museum of Art, and Lombard Fried Projects, New York. Yefman was born in Israel. She currently lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.

Derek Eller Gallery is located at 615 West 27th Street, between 11th and 12th Avenues. Hours are Tuesday - Saturday from 11am - 6pm. For further information or visuals, please contact the gallery at 212.206.6411 or visit www.derekeller.com.