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the girl stays in the picture



PHOTO BY ALEX PRAGER

art

THE GIRL STAYS IN THE PICTURE

Alex Prager's new gallery show is a must-see.

Damsels in distress are a common theme in Western art (Picasso's women don't even get an even number of arms and eyes), and even modern art photographers have to resort to sex to get a woman to look powerful (thank you, Nan Goldin). But 30 year old California native Alex Prager, whose third solo exhibition premieres in New York City and Los Angeles this year, strays from the usual pattern. Her photographs have a 1960s cinematic feel, and portray women on the edge of beauty and disaster.

Prager's hometown of LA serves as her biggest inspiration, but she also takes cues from Cindy Sherman, creating in-depth narratives within each solitary shot. The larger format photography (Prager uses a Contax 640, which is bigger than average 35 mm cameras) opens the playing field to the characters she creates in each photograph. These character's names, which are also the artworks' titles, comes to Prager after the developing process (the actual models are Prager's friends).

Media buzz ensued after the success of her first two solo exhibitions, Polyester (2007) and The Big Valley (2008-09) and Prager became one of the latest recipients of the International Photography Award (IPA) for Fine Arts Portraits. Her latest exhibition, Week-end, is a culmination of photos that all create a sense of foreboding drama and together weave a story of theatrics and promise – just don't expect any major rescue scenes featuring Prince Charming in the next room.

The Week-end exhibit will be featured at the Yancey Richardson Gallery in New York City from January 14th to February 20th and the M+B Gallery in Los Angeles from January 30th to March 6th. Some of her work can also be seen at www.alexprager.com.