

# The approach

Amanda Ross-Ho

## WHO BURIES WHO

15<sup>th</sup> October – 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2014

Preview: Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> October, 6-9 pm

**WHO BURIES WHO** is a new installation by Amanda Ross-Ho that demonstrates her vested exploration into photography as an analogue to experience, the archaeology of activity and time as a material. The artist has transformed the gallery into a cryptic tableau, operating as both theatricised photography studio and abstracted crime scene. Employing symmetry, scale shifts and a forensic gaze, she creates an environment reminiscent of sites of production, examination and dramatisation.

The central work in the installation, *THE UNSUB*, is based on a found image mined from a vintage text used to describe the effects of light on objects for the purpose of interior decorating. In the source, a single mask is composited into the same picture plane 8 times using different lighting effects, producing a chorus of faces betraying simultaneous timestamps like a sundial. Like phases of the moon, or incremental nuances between Comedy and Tragedy, the confrontational gaze of the masks presents a dramatized diagram of universal structures. Produced to the exact proportions of the page in the original text, painted canvas provides a backdrop for the masks which are enlarged as individual photographs and a pair of photo umbrellas on stands frame the scene, suggesting a moment of capture. Photographic umbrellas are a tool used to direct light onto a subject, sculpting it for pictorial effect. Here, the umbrellas are stripped of their utility, operating as props and signifiers of a photographic condition, invisibly pantomiming the lighting effects taking place in the photos. The word *unsub*, short for Unknown Subject, is a term used to describe a person of interest in the context of criminality. Here, the term could also refer to the self-consciousness of the tableau as *photographic* subject.

On the direct opposite side of the gallery, *TWIN REFLEX (DOUBLE TRAGEDY)* acts as photographer in the production tableau created by *THE UNSUB*. This doubled found image illustrates the stereotypical pitfall in amateur photography of allowing the finger to obscure the lens. Here, the camera also obscures the face, creating another mask. The aperture that has captured the staged photograph, remains silently on the other side of the image, in the realm of the viewer.

Through shifts in scale, an anatomical intimacy with form is demonstrated and the sensation of a 'close up' is produced, heightening a viewer's awareness of their gaze as an optical apparatus.

Various other pairings teeter throughout the installation. A massive pair of upscaled blue nitrile gloves--native to both studio environment and the space of examination-- suggest undisclosed rigorous activity. Large-scale hair bands and bobby pins scattered on the floor refer to the 0 and 1's of binary language, representing a relationship between opposites and a constant flow of information and data. Replicas of used X-Acto blades suggest surgical precision now inert and dulled through activity. A pair of upscaled crystal glasses filled with simulated iced wine evokes the duality of a conversation in progress and act as a timepiece—the paused melting of ice suggesting the perpetrators of such a discussion have freshly left the scene.

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The title **WHO BURIES WHO** is appropriated from Harry Nilsson's track "Down by the Sea", made in collaboration with John Lennon in 1974. The song woozily describes a couple who have sold it all and escaped to seaside retirement after a long full life, taking stock of their remaining responsibilities...

"...And now the big question is 'Was it all worth it?' and 'Who buries who?' You bury me or I bury you?..."

Linguistically, **WHO BURIES WHO** is a core sample of a never-ending pattern, a looping question and a philosophical moebius. Like this bombastic query of finality, this exhibition investigates the questions and artifacts that time itself presents.

Amanda Ross-Ho (born 1975, Chicago) lives and works in Los Angeles. Recent solo exhibitions include *The Suburban*, Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland (2014); GONE TOMORROW, Mitchell-Innes & Nash, New York; CRADLE OF FILTH, Shane Campbell Gallery, Chicago; THE CHARACTER AND SHAPE OF ILLUMINATED THINGS, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago (2013); AMANDA ROSS-HO: TEENY TINY WOMAN, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (2012); TIME WAITS FOR NO ONE, The Approach, London; UNTITLED NOTHING FACTORY, Visual Arts Center, University of Texas, Austin (2011); A STACK OF BLACK PANTS, Cherry and Martin, Los Angeles (2010). Group exhibitions include *Parings: The Collection at 50*, The Orange County Museum of Art (2012); *George Herms: Xenophilia (Love of the Unknown)*, The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (2011); *Production Site: The Artist's Studio Inside and Out*, The Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; *Free*, The New Museum, New York; *New Photography*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York (2010); *Nina in Position*, Artists Space, New York; *Whitney Biennial*, New York (2008).

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### *THE UNSUB*, 2014

Painted canvas backdrop, eight lightjet prints, two photo umbrella stands, two black photo umbrellas  
305 x 549 cm (120 1/16 x 216 1/8 in.)

*BLUE GLOVE RIGHT #1*, 2014  
Stretch cotton sateen, acrylic paint,  
cotton piping, armature wire  
178 x 109 cm (70 1/16 x 42 7/8 in.)

### *ICED WINE (PINOT GRIGIO)*, 2014

Two lead-free crystal glasses, urethane,  
rubber  
107 x 51 cm (42 1/8 x 20 1/16 in.)

*BLUE GLOVE LEFT #1*, 2014  
Stretch cotton sateen, acrylic paint,  
cotton piping, armature wire  
178 x 109 cm (70 1/16 x 42 7/8 in.)

### *BINARY (BOBBY PIN AND RUBBER BAND)*, 2014

Edition 1/Unlimited  
Cast urethane, knit and dyed cotton tubing, foam  
rubber  
Bobby Pin: 50 x 4 cm (20 x 3 in.)  
Rubber Band: 9 x 6.2 cm (23 x 16 in.)

*8 SUN HATS (GREY CARD)*, 2014  
Acrylic on canvas, found straw hats  
239 x 104 cm (94 1/16 x 40 15/16 in.)

*DEAD BLADES*, 2014  
Edition 1/Unlimited  
Aluminium  
30 x 8 cm (15 x 3.2 in.)

*PAINTINGS TO DISGUISE A SET OF  
ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS (INVERTED/  
BLACKOUT)*, 2011-2014  
Gesso on canvas  
374 x 407 x 25.5 cm (147 1/4 x 160 1/4 in.)

### *TWIN REFLEX (DOUBLE TRAGEDY)*, 2014

Framed lightjet prints  
119 x 97 x 5 cm (46 13/16 x 38 3/16 x 1 15/16 in.)