

CONTEMPORARY FINE ARTS

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Marianne Vitale
"Oh, Don't Ask Why"

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Installation view,
Contemporary Fine Arts 2015

In the center of the room a single stretch of decommissioned railroad track stands erect, a totem.

Once a functionary unit that conveyed carloads of men out to the Western frontier, it now regards its weary reflection in the large mirror of an old saloon bar that sits hunched before it. Twin ruins, dissipated, they silently share their memories. What is that rustling sound? The prairie wind? The room is silent.

Back then, a bar was a gathering place for hardened folk to trade their stories, to look at pictures, to hear the tinkling art of the piano player. There was one law outside this vital institution, another one within. Sometimes they overlapped, and people died. The blood was gone by the next evening.

Referred to as "common crossings" in the railroad industry, cast manganese steel structures lay at the intersections of the nation's rail networks, designed to ensure the wheel of a train crosses the gap in the rail without dropping into that gap.

Treated with explosive shock-hardening to increase service life, they were laid down horizontally across America, bearing the brunt of millions of tons of cargo sliding over them.

The common crossing is there to smooth anticipated rough patches, to make seamless butchered transitions, to bolster the sense of a direct route. The common crossing fuels the [mis]recognition of an ego-ideal. We'd be constantly derailing, falling off the tracks, and off the deep end without it. The bar has the same use-value, smoothing over the fissures and anxieties in this case via lubrication. We go off the wagon to stay on the rails.

The stretch of track stands in the room, regarding his grizzled face in the well-worn saloon mirror. An artifact of the industrial revolution, almost a caricature of brawny capability, he admits no weakness save his own outmoded inutility. Then can we anticipate that the bar will serve as an induction furnace and smelt his steeliness, make him aware of his own transient nature, as he literally reflects upon himself? He would become liquid, indeterminate, at the meeting point of oppositions. An uncommon crossing.

Following „Archeo“, the sensational exhibition on the New York Highline 2014-2015 and institutional exhibitions in the Tensa Konsthall in Stockholm, the Kunstraum Innsbruck and Le confort Moderne in Poitiers, Contemporary Fine Arts is pleased to present **“Oh, Don't Ask Why”**, the first german solo exhibition of 1973, East Rockaway, USA born Marianne Vitale.

Vitale lives and works in New York City.
The show will be accompanied by a catalogue.

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