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Art in Review



Kelli Connell

Double Life

Yossi Milo
525 West 25th Street, Chelsea
Through June 2

The list of Cindy Sherman's heirs keeps growing. Artists like Nikki S. Lee, Tomoko Sawada and Tamy Ben-Tor have followed Ms. Sherman's lead by photographing (or in Ms. Ben-Tor's case, videotaping) themselves in a variety of identity-exploring guises. But Kelli Connell departs from this formula.

For several years Ms. Connell has been photographing a young woman, Kiba Jacobson, whom she met in college, and then digitally manipulating the images to create the illusion of two women involved in a romantic relationship. Ms. Jacobson poses first as one woman, then immediately changes clothing (to maintain consistent lighting conditions) and poses as the other.

Instead of melodrama or sensationalist erotic couplings, Ms. Connell focuses on quiet moments. Elev-

en glossy lambda prints laid out like a storyboard — or, more pointedly, Ms. Sherman's "Film Stills" — capture the "two" women lounging on a windowsill, playing pool in a bar, visiting a carnival, taking a bubble bath or leaning in for a kiss. The greatest tension comes from wondering whether Ms. Connell can successfully maintain the game through the whole series. Luckily, her model looks different from nearly every angle.

As in Ms. Sherman's photographs, these are ripe with big ideas: doubling (genetic versus digital), narcissism, same-sex relationships, the simulated versus the real, and the role of images in fabricating narratives (which also links Ms. Connell to photographers like Jeff Wall).

More important, what could be a hackneyed exercise in digital gimmickry comes across as subtle and restrained — no small feat considering that this is Ms. Connell's first solo show in New York.

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