

Gallery Gurls



Erica Deeman Goes Beyond the Surface

contemporary art, female artists, reviews

Upon first blush, a vastness of white space sets the tone for the works featured in [Erica Deeman's](#) NYC solo-exhibition debut at the [Laurence Miller Gallery](#). Taking center stage in each of the larger-than-life portraits, darkly cast silhouettes of Black women grace the foreground in stark contrast to the gleaming white light that surrounds them in each frame. While the women are positioned from a side profile with completely bare shoulders, the details captured in each sitter begin to form a narrative between the exhibited portraits.



Installation view of 'Silhouettes'. Courtesy of the Laurence Miller Gallery.

Moving through the space, the visual aesthetics of the works and their overall presentation in the viewing space, provoke the feeling of somehow intruding on sacrosanct space; an angelic white glow bolsters the silhouettes of these women in such a way that they appear to transcend the frame itself, channeling the conceptual root of the works.



'Untitled No 2', 2014. Digital C-Print, 45" x 45". Courtesy of the Laurence Miller Gallery.



'Untitled No 3', 2014. Digital C-Print, 45" x 45". Courtesy of the Laurence Miller Gallery.

The intersection of womanhood and Blackness -- or simply a relation to the African Diaspora -- are all met in the varying faces, hair-types, faintly distinguishable skin tones and expressions that are reflected in each of the portrait subjects. In spite of the compositional uniformity of the works, each piece successfully amplifies the inalienable presence of each specific woman, as if to validate her mere existence in a way that hints at overarching themes in society as it relates to Black women in particular. That, paired with the allusion to nudity -- based on their bare shoulders and the absence of any other clothing or adornments -- all work together to speak to an often voyeuristic, critical, and/ or othered lens that make up the very specific socio-cultural space that Black womanhood inhabit.



'Untitled No 2', 2014. Digital C-Print, 45" x 45". Courtesy of the Laurence Miller Gallery.



'Untitled No 2', 2014. Digital C-Print, 45" x 45". Courtesy of the Laurence Miller Gallery.



'Untitled No 6', 2014. Digital C-Print, 45" x 45". Courtesy of the Laurence Miller Gallery.

Who are these women? What are their stories? The anonymity baselining these portraits, fosters curiosity about the lives these women lead and their personal histories, while the uniformity of the compositions draw the viewer's eye to the many unique details that reflect their differences, both literal and figurative. Through Erica Deeman's simple yet poignant display of the works, the eloquent posing and raw presentation, and the radiance that surrounds them, all work together to profoundly exalt their presence and further the investigation into how we define ourselves, and one another.



'Untitled No 2', 2014. Digital C-Print, 45" x 45". Courtesy of the Laurence Miller Gallery.



'Untitled No 2', 2014. Digital C-Print, 45" x 45". Courtesy of the Laurence Miller Gallery.



'Untitled No 30', 2014. Digital C-Print, 45" x 45". Courtesy of the Laurence Miller Gallery.



'Untitled No 2', 2014. Digital C-Print, 45" x 45". Courtesy of the Laurence Miller Gallery.

ERICA DEEMAN: Silhouettes, the first show at the gallery's new space, will be on view through October 28, 2017 at the [Laurence Miller Gallery](#).

erica deeman, silhouettes, laurence miller gallery, chelsea gallery, female artist, photography

Kimberly Henderson

Kimberly Henderson is a freelance writer, editor and mixed media artist based in Harlem, NY. By day, she works in various capacities for the public radio program, [This American Life](#) and it's counterparts, [Serial Podcast](#) and [S-Town](#). Moonlighting as a contributor and editor for [The Art Story](#) and various arts publications, she also provides creative services for several professional artists of varying mediums. Her arts endeavors are based in Modern and Contemporary art, with specific interest in broadening the presentation of works by artists of color, by way of community engagement as a means of inclusion. Her experience is fostered through artist residency programming and the ways in which artists are using new media and social media outlets as a vehicle for expression.

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