

artspace

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NEW HAVEN, CT 06510



Monique Atherton
Untitled (Peep Show)
December 2, 2016 – March 5, 2017

Monique Atherton will convert the project room into a live peep show booth, inviting viewers to communicate with her through the window of a soundproof booth by picking up a telephone and paying a small fee. The conversation will begin once the money is placed into the slot at the rate of \$1 per minute and end abruptly when time runs out. The conversation can last as long as a viewer is willing and able to pay.

The performance positions the visual arts within the context of a working class service industry. Here, *you pay for what you desire*, and the assumption that an exhibition space is a site of free intimate exchange is scrapped. The installation recognizes artistic production as labor and a service, (biased, sometimes unpaid, physically and/or emotionally damaging, and exploitative), and illuminates a range of power dynamics that play out between an artist and viewer, including producer and consumer, innovator and critic, performer and client, and entertainer and voyeur. Rather than reinforce these power structures, the work upsets their unidirectionality by requiring the viewer to also perform. The viewer is responsible for initiating the work and deciding its duration.

Atherton presented a preliminary version of this project one year ago for an MFA critique at the Yale School of Art. There, the work functioned as a commentary of art criticism within the academic context. Rather than mount her new work on standard lit gallery walls, she displayed her photographs and sculptures in the dark, taking questions from the critics from within the booth. The booth was the only lit space, so only parts of her body could be clearly seen. For its second iteration, *Untitled (Peep Show)* enters a public space for the first time. The performance continues Atherton's exploration into tension, love, work, vulnerability and the connection between artists and their publics. The installation builds on her extensive body of photographs and self-portraits printed on mail-order objects, which also set up the conditions for a viewer to understand oneself through the experience and body of another.

About

Using photography as a launching point and incorporating installation, sculpture and performance, Monique Atherton explores intense personal moments created by means of rules and omissions, acceptance and refusal, luring the viewer into the the various microcosmic states in which she exists. Her work aims to uncover unspoken desires, tensions and passions that reside on a subconscious level among the people in her images as well as between the artist and her public. Atherton was born in Japan and currently lives and works in New Haven. Atherton has exhibited in Washington, DC, San Francisco, New Haven and New York. She has been an artist-in-residence at the Wassaic Project and is a contributor to ArtFile Magazine. She has a post-baccalaureate degree in photography from the San Francisco Art Institute and received her MFA in Photography from the Yale School of Art in 2016.

Performances

Monique Atherton will perform in the booth on Friday evenings throughout the exhibition:

Friday, Dec 2, 6-8pm

Friday, Dec 16, 6-7pm

Friday, Jan 20, 6-7pm

Friday, Feb 3, 6-8pm

Friday, Feb 17, 6-7pm

Friday, March 3, 6-8pm

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