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WHAT TO SEE IN NEW YORK GALLERIES THIS WEEK

Aneta Grzeszykowska, 'No/Body'
11R, 195 Chrystie Street
Lyles & King, 106 Forsyth Street
Lower East Side
Through Oct. 16

By Karen Rosenberg



An installation view of Aneta Grzeszykowska's "No/Body," at Lyles & King, part of a double-solo exhibition there and at 11R. Charles Benton/Lyles & King

Get used to the double-solo exhibition, which is becoming less of a special event as galleries woo talent and fight “grow or go” pressures by demonstrating a willingness to share. In the best cases, however, the artist rises to the occasion with two shows that feel deeply intertwined yet could each stand on their own — as the Polish artist Aneta Grzeszykowska does at two Lower East Side galleries just blocks apart.

Jointly titled “No/Body,” these arresting exhibitions make up the second solo outing in New York for Ms. Grzeszykowska, who works in performance, photography, video and sculpture. Both use the body — the artist's, mainly — to cultivate profound sensations of self-alienation, as filtered through Surrealist photography and film, and, especially, the work of revered feminist artists like Alina Szapocznikow, Ana Mendieta and Cindy Sherman.

At 11R, in her new series “Selfie,” Ms. Grzeszykowska uses pigskin to make realistic-looking sculptures of human body parts and photographs herself interacting with them: displaying a female breast in her upturned palm, for

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instance, or painting lipstick on a masklike head. In a group of collages, "Halina," she inserts her own nude body into the photographer Wojciech Zamecznik's intimate portraits of his girlfriend — an exercise that feels more rote and academic, but is quickly redeemed by two whimsically weird videos, "Headache" and "Bolimorphia," in which Ms. Grzeszykowska orchestrates compelling black-and-white ballets of isolated body parts: part Busby Berkeley, part David Lynch.

At Lyles & King, Ms. Grzeszykowska transforms herself with full-body makeup so as to defy the reversals and negations of analog photography. In the video "Negative Process" she covers the front side of her body toe-to-head in black with white highlights, which are reversed in a subsequent series of negative prints so that we see her as an oddly flattened, cartoonlike figure inhabiting a world of humans. Photographs of the artist David Wojnarowicz roaming New York in his Rimbaud mask come to mind, as do those popular video tutorials on the proper application of contouring products.

This series, in particular, has some question marks and ellipses — the politics of darkening or lightening one's skin, for instance, remains unaddressed as Ms. Grzeszykowska embodies the photographic duality of positive/negative. But here and in the other half of her show, there are also some resonant, Sherman-esque meditations on what it means to maintain a constant state of camera-readiness.