

Who Do You Think I Am

Staged photography involves the artificial construction of a temporary 'universe' for the purpose of the photograph. In this staged universe, the photographer is not only its creator but also its observer. Staging oneself inside this 'fake' universe introduces an additional layer of construction, artificiality and observation. The photographer observes oneself inside this universe and perceives this space and the act as real but the observed self in this artificial construct is as much of an illusion as the construct itself, as the act and the space where it manifests.

The multi-media installation *Who Do You Think I Am* is based on a photographic series of at once ambivalent and striking self-staging scenarios by the portrait and documentary photographer Benita Suchodrev, taken in bizarre, thematically designed rooms of a former 'Art Installation hotel' in Berlin. The series is built on manufactured 'disturbances' of image and space where identity and the 'real' are both questioned and taken for granted.

Surrounded by selected props, in this personal project the photographer ironically questions her fictitious 'quasi-identities', behind whose feminine and glamorous *façade* flash artificiality, compulsiveness, external control, abundance, solitude and void. Suchodrev wears a skin-colored latex dress that serves as a 'sheath' and second skin that simultaneously protects, exposes and 'confines' her. Through the digital sequencing and selective animation of individual photographic Stills, the two-dimensional, partially self-reflexive images are vivified and 'decomposed', thus creating new aesthetic dimensions of these metaphorical, ambiguous 'disturbances of the self'.

Selected works from *Who do You Think I Am* will be presented as part of the group exhibition "Imagine" of the Free Class Eva Bertram 2017/18 at the New School of Photography, Berlin.