

REVIEWS

PERSONNE

SCHLEICHER + LANGE - PARIS

When the surrealists explored the workings of the unconscious through the practice of automatic writing, they were among the first in a long line of artists to take an interest in psychoanalysis. Likewise, drawing on psychoanalytic theory, this riveting group show curated by Bettina Klein is centered around the notion of the persona, which in Jungian psychology signifies the outward manifestation of the ego, a mask facilitating social interaction while concealing the individual's true nature.

Exploring the limits between individuality and sociality, the 'self' and the external world, the show addresses the theme of human frailty through a collection of photographs, found objects and an audio work.

Setting the tone for the exhibition, Eiko Grimberg's *Tonspur* (2006) is a looped recording in which a male voice can be heard emphatically insisting that madness is a social construct. This sentiment is echoed in a second piece by Grimberg, the sound and image montage *Madwoman in the Attic* (2006). A voiceover narrates, in a matter-of-fact way, the story of Alfred

Stieglitz's cousin, who one day decided to stay in bed and remained there till her death thirty-seven years later. Comprising photos of Stieglitz's wife Georgia O'Keeffe lying impassively in bed, the work interweaves history, fiction and reality, while questioning the divide between normality and abnormality. The inflexibility of Grimberg's protagonist is mirrored by Gert Robijns's *Prêt-à-porter* (2009), which features a jacket hanging on a stick, its pockets weighed down by stones. Disfigured by their downward pull, the garment hangs frozen in mid-air, unwavering and immobile. Equally redolent with psychological implications, Becky Beasley's *Hide # 2* (2004/2006) is a photograph portraying an object concealed beneath the inscrutable folds and shadows of heavy black drapery.

Like Jung's persona, the fabric's enigmatic creases conceal far more than they give away.

*Rhama Khazam.*

GERT ROBIJNS, *Prêt-à-porter*, 2009. Stones, jacket, wooden stick, 165 x 35 cm. Courtesy Schleicher + Lange, Paris.

