

Angelic Rebels

Tessa Boffin, Katherine Hubbard, Portia Munson, Jeanette Mundt and Pamela Sneed

Organized in collaboration with Suzanne Geiss

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Detail: Tessa Boffin, *Angelic Rebels: Lesbians and Safer Sex* (1989)

The artists featured in 'Angelic Rebels' showcase a landscape of creative practice that has emerged in response to significant social, economic, and political changes over the past forty years and convey a strong belief in the enduring power of beauty and subversiveness.

A trailblazer in the UK's photography scene, Tessa Boffin's profound impact is evident in her brief yet powerful career from the mid-1980s to the early 1990s. Her seminal work, from which the title of this exhibition is taken, 'Angelic Rebels: Lesbians and Safer Sex' (1989), dares to disrupt the notion of lesbian "purity" amidst the backdrop of the AIDS crisis. Through a reimagining of Albrecht Durer's iconic 'Melencolia' engraving, Boffin takes us on a journey of self-discovery and enlightenment, introducing the concept of safer sex practices to

a despondent angel. As the angel rises in ecstasy, their liberation becomes palpable. No longer confined by societal constraints, they find themselves unencumbered but connected through a leather harness. Boffin's 'Angelic Rebels: Lesbians and Safer Sex' invites us to question the dichotomy between desire and responsibility.

Katherine Hubbard's interdisciplinary photographic, performance, and writing practice invites viewers to reconsider analog photography as a reflection of the corporeal. 'Angelic Rebels' features an ongoing series of unique body prints created in collaboration with Hubbard's mother, Antonette Berger, in a black and white darkroom. This ongoing project explores themes of turning inwards, caretaking, and various human experiences, which in turn restructure our lives. Berger's experience with LATE, a brain disease mimicking Alzheimer's, imparts a deeply personal dimension to this exploration, creating a mimetic interplay where the artist and her mother's histories intersect and are suspended in real-time. Hubbard's body print photographs emphasize the physical positioning of one's body as having an essential relationship to how one processes images, exploring this encounter as a time-based experience.

Portia Munson's expansive installations and artworks intricately examine the impact of mass production on identity formation, weaving together narratives of gender equality and the ecological crisis. In this exhibition, Munson presents a work from her recent series 'Serving Trays,' which hold ceramic and glass figurines. Delicately bound with string and arranged on elegant silver platters, these compositions serve as sacrificial martyrs, prompting reflection on our cultural sustenance and its toll. Munson's artworks act as a living archive, capturing

the control and manipulation imposed on women's lives and bodies. Through her assembly of these objects, she transforms them from passive tools into instruments of defiance, confrontation, and resilience.

In her continuous exploration of reshaping visual representation, Jeanette Mundt creates paintings that blend historical and iconic elements with more intimate or obscure references. Mundt raises questions about power dynamics and the gendered perspective, navigating the uncertain realm where our consumption of images intersects between everyday life and art. Her painting on view, titled 'Possess All of Me,' portrays Agatha of Sicily; an early Christian saint who endured torture and death after rejecting the romantic advances of Roman prefect Quintianus. Agatha suffered the horrific act of having her breasts cut off with pincers but was miraculously healed by an apostle who visited her. Despite her suffering, Agatha remained steadfast in her beliefs until she ultimately died in prison.

Pamela Sneed is a New York based poet, performer, and visual artist. Through her portraits, she pays tribute to both public and personal figures, using vibrant colors and emotional fluidity to capture their essence. Blurring the lines between collective Black experiences and individual stories, Sneed sheds light on silenced voices and marginalized histories. Her unique approach combines portraiture and abstraction, creating a visual language that addresses social justice issues. In 'Angelic Rebels', Sneed celebrates Black queer femme American blues singers, trans queer activist Cecilia Gentili, Harriet Tubman, and the women and girls of The Black Panthers.