

Sies + Höke Galerie

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Talia Chetrit

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New York-based artist Talia Chetrit's first solo show in Germany, "Bodies in trouble," included three groups of photographs, billed in the press release as "movements." Chetrit, or a part of her body, was present in every one of the images, all from 2012, which drew on various photographic traditions, from classic New York street photography to the work of Cindy Sherman.

The black-and-white photos from the series "Hand on Body" each depict a disembodied male hand grasping something invisible under a sheath of black fabric. Titles such as Hand on Body (Breast), Hand on Body (Crotch #1), and Hand on Body (Thigh) suggest that parts of a female body are in fact the unseen objects, and the hidden figure being groped turns out to be Chetrit herself. The color photographs Untitled (Turn #1) and Untitled (Turn #2) were conceived as a diptych. Both images capture the artist's reflection in a mirror as she turns away from the camera and reaches for the handle of a door. Street Contact, a single black-and-white photograph that made up the show's third movement, was shot from high up in a building, looking down onto the street below where the artist stands in the crosswalk, her face directed up.

Taking a cue from this intriguing show's ominous title, viewers couldn't help but weave the photographs into a disturbing narrative with multiple perspectives. Perhaps the woman at the door was trying to escape an attacker, while the person gazing down at the street intended to jump, and the female beneath the fabric was suffering sexual assault. One last photograph confirmed the unsettling tension that ran throughout the show. Titled Imprint, it pictured the wet marking made by a naked buttock on a sheet of paper, as if the sitter, now absent, had been dripping with nervous sweat.

—Thomas W. Kuhn



Talia Chetrit, Hand on Body (Thigh), 2012, gelatin silver print, 24" x 20". Sies + Höke Galerie.