

Time Out New York

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Art

Amy Adler

Casey Kaplan, through Oct 4
(see Soho).

Among the Cibachromes here is the profile of a young girl's nude body lying on the floor of a large sitting room. One leg is bent at the knee, and her head rests on a chair behind her. There's a dreamy smile on her upturned face. Her figure is relaxed, in sharp focus against the blurry background, and her flesh is pale and unblemished—but strangely opaque, a little unreal. There's something uncomfortably trophylike about the picture, as if what we're seeing is not just a casual nude but a private still life in a public display window. The moment's slightly synthetic pitch carries to a nearby triptych; there, the same supplicant appears outdoors and clothed, flattered by the camera's gaze and not shy about returning it.

Another suite of photographs is more blatantly erotic. Again we see the nude, now an expressionless, anonymous figure splayed across the cedar slats of a circular table, harshly lit against a sea of black. Her form is examined from up close, from a distance, from above, before, behind; each frame suggests a different point of entry.

The model in these pictures, all titled *Once in Love with Amy*, is the artist as she appeared at 19, when she posed for an older, obviously admiring woman. Now 31, Amy Adler is clearly well schooled in the ways artists such as Cindy Sherman and Laurie Simmons rescued women from their representation by men in popular culture. Here, she's given the enterprise a new spin by redressing the



Amy Adler, *Once in Love with Amy*, 1997.

exploitation of her own image by another woman. It's self-portraiture by role-reversal. While Adler once willingly catered to the whims of a practiced voyeur, she's now taken the situation literally into her own hands: The figures we see in the photos are actually paper dolls—nearly life-size drawings seamlessly set, posterlike, into enlargements of the original pictures and rephotographed.

This is very personal body of work that has a beguiling narcissism; it's also a study in the art of seduction that effectively puts both the viewer and the artist under its spell.—Linda Yablonsky