

REPUTATION

AMALIA ULMAN

Curated by Pierre-Alexandre Mateos and Charles Teyssou

The pioneer of a still loosely defined practice, Amalia Ulman uses social networks as a stage for her performances. From Downtown Los Angeles, she has begun a narrative arc impregnated with false pretenses and strangely familiar twists and turns. Having moved into an office, she discovers herself as a business woman and adopts a pigeon named Bob; a grotesque alter ego. Adept at the paranoiac-critical method, she begins a descent into which the US elections and viral dynamics accumulate in a Piranesi labyrinth of psychoses. Gradually transforming the world into a magnetic field of evidence, her online persona becomes the point where all the signs of a conspiracy delirium converge.

For her exhibition REPUTATION at New Galerie, Amalia Ulman has transformed each room of the space into a diffracted mirror of her virtual universe. Center of different social mutations and passing processes, the first room is a partial reproduction of her office in Los Angeles. Encircled by pigeon spikes, it is a highly corrosive mixture of counterfeit items, hermetic symbols, and WASP nostalgia.

Downstairs is a mural about office life obviously inspired by the cartoons of The New Yorker. Small betrayals, low-blows, and Monday morning sadness coexist on a drab, cheap surface of laminated tile and other objects like juggling balls and deflated balloons.

In the final room Bob transitions from a working class hero, into a god of sorts, canonized as an animatronic version of himself. In this presumably static cabinet, the air becomes scarcer as his conjugal expectations and social ambitions increase. Can a feral pigeon become a white dove? Is the artist a girl, a woman, a mother or a whore? Are we being watched by the paperclip or are we the paperclip?