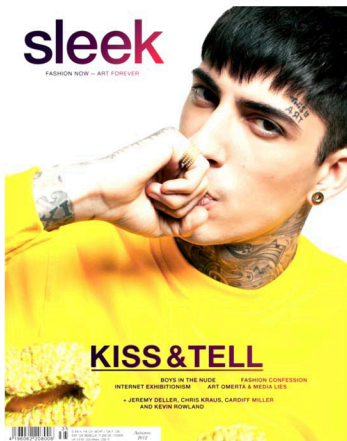


# UP CLOSE AND IMPERSONAL

The physique reconsidered,  
in “Body’s In Trouble” by Talia Chetrit.  
*Text: Hili Perlson*



Sleek 35, Autumn 2012

THE FUNNY THING about the medium of photography is its fundamental illusory nature, its inherent manipulative quality: documenting something that can't be captured. When representing that most recognisable fixture of Fine Art, the female nude, it's this duality that allows the body to unfurl as a centuries-old projection surface.

In her series “Body’s in Trouble”, young American artist Talia Chetrit explores this duplicity of representation to underline the titular trouble with projections, and she does so with a specific aesthetic that has the critics and curators exalting. “I’m interested in how reality can be translated and how that reality can become disorienting through the medium of photography,” says Chetrit. Photography, she specifies, is “a manipulation that is often disguised as a reproduction. This opposition is what excites me about photography – a permanent record of something that never existed.”

Chetrit’s aesthetic approach has a tempting simplicity to it: candid, high-contrasted studies of forms, details, texture, light and sometimes colour characterise her visual language. But is simplicity really the right way to describe the experience of viewing them? She blends views of the body with found objects and items from her studio, employing different perspectives in each work that effect a displacement of the viewer’s corporeal stance and point of view. The body itself is imbued with a familiar aura reminiscent of a modernist fascination with industrial production. The body, however, is not alienated or mechanised. On the contrary, Chetrit homes in on the surface, showing strikingly straightforward depictions of details and skin – body hair, stretch marks, veins and so on – and thus renders organic a subject as explored as the female nude. Un-eroticised, un-beautified, and maybe a little fragile, the body regains a vivid fleshliness that our Photoshop-injured eyes may no longer be accustomed to.

Chetrit doesn’t rely on any post-production tools, either digital or analogue. The manipulation happens at the moment the photo is taken, she asserts. With her manipulations, however, she assaults notions of body and evidence, material and form. The shadow of a breast on an

arm, a view of her studio from between two legs held up in a handstand, a body obliterated by a roll of black velvet with only the legs, spread, showing on both sides – the photographs are parts of a whole, they cast a net of tiny signals. While the mere suggestion of a narrative may leave the story untold, its impression is deeply evocative.

Looking at the series, it’s interesting to notice that the relationships between the works are not formal; rather they function within this web of signs to communicate with each other in their own subtle semiotics. Chetrit’s style has often been described as alluding to notable moments of early Twentieth Century surrealist photography, Man Ray and László Moholy-Nagy in particular, and at the same time borrowing from stylised commercial photography, cool yet inviting. The impersonalised body becomes a still life of still lifes, referencing styles, art historical milestones, commenting on codes of representation and the long infatuation of the commercial mainstream with absorbing the visual language vanguard. The body, captured in photographs, unfolds its own instrumentalisation by the medium.

Until October 19 2012 at Sies + Höke, Düsseldorf. [www.sieshoeke.com](http://www.sieshoeke.com) and [www.taliachetrit.com](http://www.taliachetrit.com)

Following eight pages, consecutively: TALIA CHETRIT, *Body’s In Trouble*, 2012: *Legs/Velvet*, 94 x 73.6 cm, *Double Nipple*, 63.5 x 50.8 cm, *Hand*, 76.2 x 61 cm, *Hair*, 76.2 x 61 cm, *Ear*, 61 x 50.8 cm, *Crotch*, 63.5 x 50.8 cm, *Nipple/Chain*, 50.8 x 40.6 cm, *Studio Through Legs*, 94 x 73.6 cm. All works silver gelatin print. Courtesy of the artist