

Maggie Cardelús
Doing Life
opening November 22nd

kaufmann repetto is happy to present Maggie Cardelús's new body of work, *Doing life*.

The exhibition title, *Doing Life*, points to the conceptual underpinnings of Cardelús's work, work in which her everyday experience as woman, artist, and mother, give origin to an ongoing investigation that probes the dynamics of these shifting roles within the social fabric in which it is immersed.

The use of photographs, in particular family snapshots, takes Cardelús into territory that is both profoundly individual and universally shared. Snapshots are part of rituals that have become familiar to all cultures, and are vehicles by which a family nucleus constructs its own micro-history, and, as Diane Arbus wrote, constitute, "...a secret of a secret..." a sort of idealized self portrait.

The use of such reactive material on the part of the artist, is to reclaim that which Allan Kaprow defined as *art at the service of life*. In Maggie Cardelús's work, the domestic and familial sphere, marginalized by the artworld, is placed powerfully at the center of her artistic thinking. Her personal world becomes the instrument through which to process our most common human fears and compulsions, like the passing of time, or our fear of loss or separation.

To materially manipulate family snapshots, is for Cardelús, an attempt to crystallize a flux or flow undergoing continuous change. In *Doing Life*, these opposing tensions echo through an ensemble of works that, together, pull towards the figure of the artist as a single, mutating, self-portrait.

The entire exhibition is organized around an invisible horizon line that cuts through the space at the height of Cardelús's bellybutton, creating an esoteric landscape whose gravitational force is the the artist's subjectivity.

In the two large spaces of the gallery, hang two halves of a split, back-lit, enlarged snapshot taken of the artist. One half is meticulously cut-out, while the other has been dissolved and transformed using domestic cleaning fluids like bleach, alcohol, and silver-polish. The tension between programmed order and loss of control recurs in all the work in the exhibition, and is set on stage with the performance *D/Inner Time*, in which Maggie Cardelús's three children, literally dressed in their mother's body, impersonate her and respond to spectators. In this work, as in all the work, for every centripetal and self-referential move, there is a corresponding centrifugal one, in which the artist's ego dissolves into a potentially infinite number of representations.

The theme of artistic creation, in this context, merges with creation understood as demiurgic, as creator of life. A ceramic sculpture, hanging from the ceiling, modelled by the repetitive squeezing of clay between thumb and index, embodies that duality between nature and culture: the artists' thumbprints takes us to the very beginnings of human control over matter, matter both organic and out of control.

The very title of the exhibition is nuanced: *Doing Life* refers to both the artistic act, the generation of life, and to a narrative, more or less mystified, of her own existence. At the same time, it is also an attempt to appropriate reality, include everyone and everything within one's own small universe.