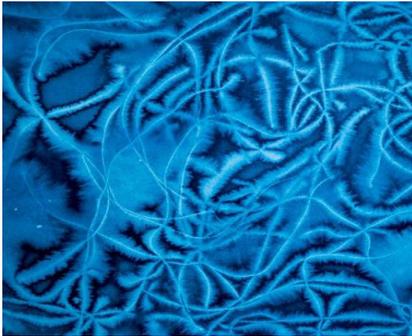


Bastienne Schmidt



Bastienne Schmidt is a multi disciplinary artist working with photography, painting and large-scale drawings. She was born in Germany, raised in Greece and Italy and has lived in New York for the past 20 years. Her art work is included in the collection of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, and Washington D.C. the Victoria and Albert Museum in London and the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris among others. Her work has been shown nationally and internationally in over 100 exhibitions among them the International Center of Photography. She has published 6 monographs, among them *Vivir la Muerte*, *American Dreams*, *Shadowhome*, *Home Stills*, *Topography of Quiet* and *Typology of Women*.

Schmidt explores through photography, painting and drawing concepts of identity and place. Photography fall for Schmidt into the realm of archeology, exploring layers of history and meaning, and reassigning value to them. Schmidt was born in Munich, Germany and moved at the age of 9 with her family to Greece. She spent her childhood surrounded by her father's archeological work, which instilled in her a desire to organize, map, and attempt to understand systems through her artwork.

In her project *Home Stills*, that was shown in a one person exhibition at the Southeast Museum of Photography and at the Houston Center for Photography is a in ironic, fantasist reflection on life at home. The home is often the perfect stage for domestic bliss and self-observation. The artist, Bastienne Schmidt, challenges this domestic utopia in her conceptual series 'Home Stills' in which she photographs herself as a stand-in in the role of a Housewife.

Schmidt gives a visual interpretation of Virginia Woolf's idea of 'a room of one's own'. She follows Highway 27 on Long Island, from Patchogue to Easthampton, recreating her interiors from cheap motel rooms to upscale Hampton's mansions as imaginary rooms of her own. The sense of quiet meditation reminds one of Vermeer's interiors and the melancholy and empty spaces of Edward Hopper. There is always an element of an escapist and sometimes ironic fantasy looming in these women's heads. At the end of these imaginary stories there is always a car close by, that one could hop in and drive away.

Schmidt's process relates often to the process of layering thin transparent paper, that is subsequently painted and drawn upon. Paper offers an intuitive process, which allows for overlapping and organic coming together of spaces. Geometric forms such as circles, triangles and square play a role in her work, such as the use of typologies as an artistic tool. The use of a multifold of blues go back to Schmidt's growing up on a Greek island called Samos. In her series *Topography of Quiet*, Schmidt creates a personal iconography through her paintings and photographs, drawing influences from travels as far as Egypt and Burma to observing details close to home: a coffee stain becomes a topography. Schmidt draws influences from a 'floating world', by Japanese wood cut prints that don't prescribe to any particular perspective. Her large scale drawings and paintings can be seen as mind maps that are made up of juxtaposed pieces of cultural influences.

In her latest series art and exhibition project *Typology of Women*, Bastienne Schmidt shows a series of hand painted cut-outs that represent silhouettes of different types of women. The term "typology" has been consciously chosen, as it refers to the study or the systematic classification of types that share certain characteristics. The comparison of forms and the study thereof is based on well-known artistic working principles. Bastienne Schmidt's silhouettes in luminous orange also show a feminist and ironic twist to the reading of Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*. The multi media artist refers to the outline drawings of ancient Greek ceramics, as well as to Japanese woodcuts, to fairytales and American pop culture. The art critic Mimi Thompson wrote an introductory essay entitled 'The Subversive Silhouette', which is accompanied by the second chapter of Virginia Woolf's 'A Room of one's Own'.