

K8 HARDY

To All the G#%\$! I've Loved Before

September 13 – October 11, 2009

K8 Hardy has been organizing performances (*Beautiful Radiating Energy*, 2004, *New Report* (with Wynne Greenwood), 2006, *Bare Life* (with Stefan Tcherepnin), 2008), circulating publications (*fashionfashion*, *LTTR*), and rethinking this gallery and its uses (*WOM_NHOUSE*, 2004) from the start. Reena Spaulings now presents *To All the G#%\$! I've Loved Before*, Hardy's first solo exhibition in New York.

A new series of photographic self-portraits displays the artist as a rampant multiplicity of identities, as an ongoing series of posed or proposed selves. Playing on the codes of both queer and hetero-normative cultures, Hardy tests and wastes them all as she feeds her pose machine with other looks and meanings. Sometimes using her sister Halie as a stand-in self, Hardy displaces subjectivity across a sequence of gay cruising clichés and camp possibilities, refusing to settle into any final or agreed upon condition. She sometimes adds layers of artifice in the darkroom, throwing a bra or a middle finger under the enlarger before exposing the print. These photograms both embellish and blank out her image.

In the center of the gallery, Hardy has installed a "stage". We are not sure if or how it will be used. A wooden "trough" has been stocked with an earlier (2008) series of self-portraits. The artist populates the exhibition with styled and altered mannequin heads, ideal viewers of the Hardy image.

Known for her activism within the new feminist, gay and transgender movements, Hardy brings a punk sensibility to these causes and contexts. In politics as in art, the enemies are self-righteousness, conformism, comfort, complacency and barren professionalism. Subjectivities want to explode, and Hardy is our model monster. The self-portrait is an opportunity for chaos, a chance at the self-destroying commodity. Hardy's work sometimes recalls Cindy Sherman's "film stills," but there is nothing still here, always trans...a feeling closer to Leigh Bowery. Susan Sontag, Judith Butler, bla bla bla

K8 Hardy hails from Texas. She studied at the Whitney Independent Study Program and in the Bard College M.F.A. program. She is co-editor (with Ginger Brooks Takahashi, Ulrike Müller and Emily Roysdon) of *LTTR*. Works in collaboration with Wynne Greenwood are currently on view at the Elizabeth Sackler Center for Feminist Art. She has also exhibited at the Tate Modern.

Gallery hours: Thursday through Sunday, noon to 6PM