



THE HOLE
312 Bowery
New York, NY 10012
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GIVERNY

By E.V. Day and Kembra Pfahler

March 30th – April 24th, 2012

OPENING Friday, March 30th, 7-9PM

The Hole is proud to announce the exhibition “Giverny,” a collaboration between E.V. Day and Kembra Pfahler opening March 30th. The artists created photographic works in the famous French gardens built and immortalized in paint by Claude Monet, and will be exhibiting them for the first time here on the Bowery.

Playboy.com has generously funded this massive exhibition, for the duration of which the Hole will be transformed into a living, breathing garden—with a lily-padded pond traversed by Monet’s signature green Japanese arched bridge, and scattered with the indigenous plants he is famous for painting. The walls of the exhibition will be printed with the almost claustrophobically green willow trees that surround this historic French site, and your first step into the gallery will be onto grass.

In 2010, E.V. Day was awarded the Munn Artists Residency by the Versailles Foundation, to live on Monet’s famous estate in Giverny, and to be inspired by the gardens. She invited artist Kembra Pfahler to come to Giverny in August—the most fecund, riotous month for the garden—to achieve a collaborative project that blends Kembra’s signature performance attire with the lush verdure of the natural setting and E.V.’s signature refracted photography.

Kembra’s attire, or rather the body-painted and bewigged look that is more sculpture than costuming, presents an interesting alien injection into the almost Disneyland-esque, iconic landscape of Giverny. Her anti-naturalist image is in many ways at odds with the natural growths and overflows. But oddly, as we see in their artworks, this is not so aberrant as one might think: the gardens themselves are in many ways a controlled and sculpted landscape, an illusion of chaos, as Monet coordinated the colors of the plants, and had the gardeners clean soot from passing trains off the lily pads every day. The gardens are a national treasure, a historic landmark frozen in time since Monet lived in a small cottage there and meticulously created a huge, living still life to paint from. Paradoxically, every splash of shrubbery is “just so”, each tulip in place, and it is not too far fetched to imagine a gardener spotting a bug cross the path and putting the bug back into its proper place.

E.V.’s vision of Giverny sees through the bamboo and willow tendrils to the spectacle behind this art historical monument. She followed the gardeners during their daily duties, which included containing any plants that had begun to outstrip their proper place, replacing the exact species and location of the 100,000+ annuals that die yearly, and beheading flowers. In her career she has explored many themes related to female sexuality and female pleasure, and the poignant metaphor of the pruned and propped-up Mother Nature with the sexual yet terrible figure of Kembra naked is a rich juxtaposition that does not resolve into any fixed viewpoint.

Science and sex are present in this exhibition, as E.V. digitally fictionalizes and manipulates her space. Mimicking the inverted world of the pond's surface reflections, she bifurcates, splays and refracts her images. Shooting in both the Clos Normand and the Japanese water garden, these artworks complexify the position of objectifier and objectified and explore voyeurism and power. In the same way that Kembra mixes sex and power, beauty and horror, the works hint at the possibility of a bizarre and titillating new sexuality. Perhaps like a water lily itself: solitary, bisexual and radial.

Kembra's look was originally inspired by Playboy's Femlin, the sexy sketched figure created by LeRoy Neiman that wears thigh-high black boots, black gloves, and nothing else. Kembra recently collaborated with Playboy during Art Basel Miami Beach at Dream South Beach to present "Femlins", a one-night exhibition and performance where she recreated the playful scale shifts of the Femlin drawings in real life.

Kembra Pfahler is an artist and rock musician, best known as the painted lead singer of The Voluptuous Horror of Karen Black, a theatrical death rock band she co-founded in 1990. The band uses music, drawings and films to spread a vision of radical feminism in a beautiful, anti-natural, fearless and happy way to dispel the antiquated notion that there is a hierarchy of artistic mediums. In her art and music, Pfahler follows the philosophy of "availabism"—making the best use of what's available. This is apparent in the low-tech props and homemade costumes the Girls of Karen Black don on stage and which fill Pfahler's exhibition installations. Kembra has been featured in the 2008 Whitney Biennial; The Palais Des Beaux Arts, Brussels; the MACRO Museum in Rome; and the Garage Center for Contemporary Art in Moscow. She has presented solo shows at Contemporary Fine Arts and Deitch Projects, and has appeared in numerous publications from Rolling Stone to the New Yorker.

E. V. Day (born 1967, New York) is a New York-based installation artist and sculptor. Day's work explores themes of feminism and sexuality, while employing various suspension techniques reflecting upon popular culture. Day received her MFA in Sculpture from Yale University in 1995, and began her "Exploding Couture" series in 1999, the first installment of which, "Bombshell," was included in the 2000 Whitney Biennial and is now in the museum's permanent collection. For "G-Force," her 2001 solo exhibition at the Whitney Museum at Altria, Day suspended hundreds of resin-coated pairs of thongs from the ceiling in fighter-jet formations. In 2004, the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art at Cornell University mounted a ten-year survey of her work. More recently, Day exhibited "Bride Fight", a site-specific installation of two bridal gowns in mid-explosion, in the lobby of The Lever House on Park Avenue in New York City. She also exhibited a solo show of her work with the flowers of Giverny with Carolina Nitsch last January entitled "Seducers".

For information on available works please email kathy@theholenyc.com

