

The Louise Bourgeois hologram show at Cheim & Read Gallery Review by Jody Burns Jan. 6, 2017

There are a set of eight reflection pieces, each about 11"x14" - five are vertical, three horizontal. The room has low illumination though it is not dark. The works are a luscious lustrous red, as though laser illuminated. They appear to be lit by red LEDs in framing projectors from above at a distance of maybe 7-9 feet. They can be as much as a foot or more deep and some have elements that project out about a half foot or so. They play with contrasting textures of velvet, metal, glass (both reflective and transmissive with light and imagery reflections), doll house and boudoir elements (some miniature and some lifesize), and playful sculptural elements. They are unique little surreal figurative worlds that draw the viewer in and seduce with "objets" arranged to show off and play with many iconic holographic and dimensional leit motifs that compel the viewer to move around and up and down and in and back to appreciate the aesthetic and skill of the artist and her collaborator in playing with the unique space provided by holography. There are no placards to explain and they are certainly unnecessary and would only distract from the mood created by this unique and superb exhibition. The eight pieces are being sold as a set.

As a holographer, I could not resist analyzing the pieces from a technical point of view. I estimate the H1s would have had to be at least 18x18", maybe up to 24x24", in order to have such an excellent field of view in these very sharp, though soft feeling, image plane reflection pieces. I'm assuming that they were recorded with a red laser and collimated, though maybe not, if the diverging reference beam were long enough à la John Perry. The space within the pieces has been almost perfectly used except for one piece that uses three masters very well to create a classic side to side animated effect that is a visual joke by the artist but brings home to me how clunky that effect has usually been when used by various holographers through the years. Object beam illumination in the H1s of the scene elements makes full use of both structured backlighting and multiple front lighting so some aspects are highlighted while the full volume of the scenic space is enriched with light. I assume that these are at least Slavich plates, maybe Gentet. The smoothness, clarity, cleanness, and consistency of the pieces show great darkroom technique and processing, evidenced by a complete lack of sense of the surface of the pieces. Although framed, they seem to float on the wall as images with no sense of surrounding frame or light above. There is a void on the wall until one comes to the edge of the image and the volume pops cleanly into view on all sides drawing you in. This is indeed a testament to the thoroughly thought out presentation in all its aspects. I was the only one looking up to see the lights. ALL of the viewers were consumed by the pieces and I doubt that any of them, at least while I was there, even gave a thought to the idea that there was a light for each piece.

It is truly sad that Louise Bourgeois is no longer with us to see and appreciate this exquisite exhibition of her work in holography. The bar has been set very high. Matthew Schreiber has done a great service to her and holography in this transcendent collaborative work.

<http://www.cheimread.com/exhibitions/louise-bourgeois-holograms>
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louise_Bourgeois