

ARTFORUM

Jadranka Kosorcic JACK HANLEY GALLERY

136 Watts Street
June 9–June 30

View of “Blind Date: New York,” 2011.

One month before her US solo debut, Croatian artist Jadranka Kosorcic sent an e-mail announcement looking for individuals to pose for a portrait. “Artist is looking for people m/f willing to pose for a portrait. Time spent 1-3 hours,” it read. It did not mention that her chief objective was to have a conversation with each sitter as she drew them; nor did it reveal that any conversations would be recorded. And the ad certainly did not imply that Kosorcic’s portrait would be less a reflection of the individual than of the dialogue that would occur between artist and sitter.

The twenty-three images in this exhibition, each of which features the sitter’s head and shoulders, look disconcertingly similar. The lips are all lightly sealed, the eyes fixed vacantly ahead; a melancholic haze seems to drift through each of the spare, charcoal line drawings. The portraits collapse features of the artist and subject into single image, a tactic that unpacks not only the genre of portraiture—the artist is always as much a part of any portrait as the sitter is—but the nature of perception: How much of our own identity composes the way we see and understand the identities of those around us? As we spy Kosorcic’s strong jawline and wide-set eyes within the countenance of each sitter’s portrait, her answer seems to be, very much so.

Further accentuating this idea are the conversations themselves, which play over a speaker and disclose myriad personal details that are omitted from the eerily homogeneous portraits. As the recordings waft softly through the gallery, identity is emphasized as always incomplete, ebbing and flowing with each person we engage with. We are completed, if only for a second, by an interaction, a conversation, a shared moment in time.

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