

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AMALIA ULMAN

Privilege

Opening June 28, 2018, 6–8pm

On view June 29 & 30, 2018

James Fuentes is pleased to announce a presentation of selected video works from Amalia Ulman's 2015–16 durational performance, *Privilege*.



Amalia Ulman has long been interested in the languages and aesthetics that propagate in online spaces, and beyond. Ulman's work includes performance, installation, sculpture, poetry, sound, photography, video, and cartoons. In 2014, over the course of four months, Ulman performed *Excellences & Perfections*. Taking place on Instagram, she played the part of aspirational it-girl and Influencer, posting daily images and videos. The work was pre-scripted, and Ulman gained thousands of followers who believed in her diary-like progress in pole dancing classes, clean eating, through breast augmentation, and so on. Following this, *Privilege* is Ulman's second and final scripted performance using Instagram, beginning in late 2015 and running for over a year until shortly after the 2016 US presidential election.

For *Privilege*, Ulman again challenges her audience's ability (and desire) to believe and consume. The work takes place at Suite 1717, 811 Wilshire Blvd, an office building in Downtown Los Angeles where Ulman enacts a theatrical, even clown-like version of her "real life" self. The resulting plot—in her words, "taking the shape of a musical -or a horror movie"—dramatizes office culture and corporate dominance within the nocturnal environment of her high-rise office/studio. On July 29th and 30th James Fuentes presents a three-channel installation of over 100 videos from *Privilege*. From this trio, star players in the performance emerge: Bob the sidekick pigeon, brand endorsements, and Ulman herself.

Pushing the bounds and means of performance, Ulman has repeatedly made use of the diaristic form as a particularly classed and gendered space. On Instagram, and elsewhere, this daily recording involves its own language, narrative, and duration natural to the context; guidelines for Ulman in crafting her identities, as they are for any aspirational user. This ties to Ulman's particular use of available forms and stock imagery—those repeating details that, devoid of charm, might not quite register, carrying a kind of sub-status. The pigeon is such a figure, an animal with no charisma. As is the corporate office and its paper clips, calendars,

ceiling tiles, elevators, and that everlasting refrain, “what a looooong day...” Ulman pays attention to these invisible aesthetics, for in being unnoticeable, or “normal” (in not registering as “exotic,” or “ethnic,” or “feminine”) they too compose a dominant image of power and legitimacy—and they too are mutable.

During her time at 811 Wilshire with Bob, Ulman occasionally featured the products and logos of brands like Prada, Miu Miu, Chanel, Shiseido, Amazon Prime, Gucci, and Commes des Garçons. Confusing the function of these labels within Ulman’s performance, some of these objects were detailed knockoffs in fictive ads, while others were real features paid for by the brand. Along the same vein, the performance of *Privilege* includes Ulman’s participation in press shoots, such as those with *L’Officiel*, *i-D*, *Flaunt*, and The New York Times’ *T magazine*. Beyond digital means, the performance took form as installations, drawings, and sculptures, presented in solo exhibitions including *Labour Dance* at Arcadia Missa, London, *Reputation* at New Galerie, Paris, *Dignity* at James Fuentes, *Intolerance* at BARRO, Buenos Aires, *Monday Cartoons* at Deborah Schamoni, Munich, and others. *Privilege* also includes Ulman’s performative university lecture and Powerpoint presentation, *AGENDA*, and the live performance, *New World 1717* at Rockbund Art Museum, Shanghai, as well as the publication on Bob, *BOB a job is a job is a job* (2017, Jean Boîte Editions). All of these parts were made in character, further disturbing the notions of the real or authentic so thoroughly inherent to, and maintained by, the Art World. Altogether, Ulman’s *Privilege* truly presses at the very forms and fictions of daily identity, of self-making.

Most recently, Ulman presented *Privilege*, her first institutional solo exhibition in China at KWM Art Center, Beijing. Ulman’s work has been presented in numerous major group exhibitions, including *I Was Raised on the Internet*, currently on view at the MCA, Chicago; *Art in the Age of the Internet, 1989 to Today*, ICA, Boston; *Take Me (I’m Yours)*, Jewish Museum, New York; *Genre-Nonconforming*, de Young, San Francisco; and the 9th Berlin Biennale. The publication, *Excellences & Perfections* was recently released by Rizzoli, with a book on *Privilege* forthcoming. Besides those exhibitions already listed, Ulman has exhibited at Jewish Museum, New York; Swiss Institute, New York; International Center for Photography, New York; Utah Museum of Contemporary Art; Tate Modern, London; Whitechapel Gallery, London; M WOODS, Beijing; Riga Photography Biennial; Gertrude Contemporary, Melbourne; Galerie Sympa, Figeac; Salzburger Kunstverein, Salzburg; and LUMA Fo

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