

EDWYNN HOUK GALLERY

PRESS RELEASE



VALÉRIE BELIN

All Star

19 January - 4 March, 2017

Edwynn Houk Gallery is pleased to announce an exhibition of Valérie Belin's newest series, *All Star*. The exhibition of eleven large-scale color photographs will be on view 19 January- 4 March, 2017.

For this series, Belin utilizes the fantastical world of vintage comic books as the inspiration for multilayered portraits that are both visually and psychologically complex. To create the works, Belin first styles and photographs her models in dramatic lighting reminiscent of film noir. Then, selecting from an extensive collection of vintage comics, she overlays the image with the chosen comic cover before further abstracting the pictorial surface with her own graphic patterns. Bursting in from the background, the worlds of the comics interweave with the texture of the portraits to create a sophisticated composition in which variations of movement, line, depth of field and scale are all combined within one surface.

The series continues Belin's investigations of the ideas of surface, beauty, artifice, and disorder that have become consistent themes in her practice; however, in this new body of work she takes her considerations further to explore the disarray of not only the physical but also a mental world that is chaotic, saturated, and obsessive.

Borrowing from the tradition of pop artists such as Roy Lichtenstein, Belin utilizes graphic and exuberant comics as a source for greater psychological exploration. Ranging from the empowered story of *Super Girl* to the dramatic passion seen in the image *Confessions of the Lovelorn*, each comic tells a different story and supplies an alternate narrative for the woman pictured. Belin imagines these women in a reality apart from, yet connected to, the fantastical realm of the comics, and she likens the spiraling composition of imagery to the flurry of ideas and imaginings within the women's minds. Through her combination of the darker film noir depiction of the model with the glowing idealism of the comics, Belin constructs a new genre where the distinctions between polar ideals such as good and evil, right and wrong, and joy and despair become more elaborate and ambiguous.

In coordination with the show, the artist will participate in a conversation with Quentin Bajac, Chief Curator of Photography at MoMA, at the Albertine bookstore on 28 February at 7pm. The event is free and open to the public.

Valérie Belin (b 1964, Boulogne-Billancourt, France) has exhibited extensively both domestically and abroad, and in 2015 the artist was awarded the coveted sixth annual Prix Pictet for her work exploring the theme of *Disorder*. The award followed Belin's major retrospective exhibition *Les images intranquilles (Unquiet Images)* presented by Centre Pompidou, Paris from June- September 2015. Additional major exhibitions include the 2008 solo show which travelled to Huis Marseilles, Museum of Photography, Amsterdam; the Maison Européenne de la Photographie, Paris; and the Musée de l'Elysée, Lausanne. In 2009, the Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, MA presented *Made-up*, the artist's first solo museum show in the United States. Valérie Belin's work has been featured in extensive group exhibitions worldwide, including presentations at the Mori Art Museum, Tokyo; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; and the Seattle Art Museum, Washington. Her work is included in numerous private and public collections, including the Musée d'art Moderne de la ville de Paris, Kunsthaus Zürich, Los Angeles County Museum, Museum of Modern Art, New York, and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. Belin lives and works in Paris.