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Exhibition Review: Mirror, Mirror

REVIEWS

By Emma Coyle



©Ryan McGinley, *Quinton*, 2018 c-print 40 x 27 inches, 102 x 69 cm Edition of 3

With grace and empathy, Ryan McGinley's *Mirror, Mirror* merges the interiority of private spaces with the interiority of the self. One's internal life is rarely penetrated as it is tied up in their presentation and the construction of their identity. This exhibition, which took three years to create, manages to maintain that privacy while allowing a glimpse into it. *Mirror, Mirror* is McGinley's most recent solo exhibition at Team (gallery, inc.) which runs from June 29th to September 29th.



©Ryan McGinley, Elena & Alexander, 2018 c-print 27 x 40 inches, 69 x 102 cm Edition of 3

This project was collaborative, though directed through a series of prompts given to each person included in the series. McGinley relied on his subjects to take their own self portraits with the materials he provided, but ultimately he selected the image that would represent each individual, all of whom he knew personally. His subjects stand nude in front of mirrors in a variety of poses, predominately in soft, warm lighting, revealing themselves in ways beyond the physical. Each person chose the ways that they would photograph themselves. But with McGinley inserting himself in the process, by selecting the images, there is a sense that the viewer is still seeing a point of view filtered by outside expectations. It is unavoidable that there are layers of interpretation separating the audience from each person's inner self.

The subjects range in age from 19 to 87, some with legs spread open which doesn't seem like vulnerability so much as a sense that they are embracing being seen. Others have their bodies contorted, hiding features or keeping parts of their body out of the frame. The viewer is left wondering if those choices say something more about the subject than intended. Its hard not to compare the photographs to cubism or think of them as a meditation on selfie culture, but they are something other and while inviting, maintain a sense of wildness, or the unexpected.



©Ryan McGinley, Hunter, 2018 c-print 27 x 40 inches, 69 x 102 cm Edition of 3



©Ryan McGinley, John, 2018 c-print 27 x 40 inches, 69 x 102 cm Edition of 3

Each image hangs on the walls of the gallery in simple wood frames that are minimal enough that it feels like the viewer is looking directly through a window into the subjects apartments. As much as the project is about the subjects constructed identity, it is about how they live. Their personal homes and spaces say just as much about who they are, a glimpse into the person they are beyond their bodies. The rooms are reflected in the 20 mirrors that McGinley provided each of them, occasionally it becomes a fun house where a singular corner is reflected a dozen times. The repetition of the visuals does not get old but instead allows a chance to meditate and become engrossed in details that emulate motifs in each image.

In *Mirror, Mirror* McGinley mediates between subject and viewer, subject and their presentation, and subject and their space. It is a precarious place to create work, but McGinley excels at it. This is his ninth solo exhibit at Team (gallery, inc.). His work has been presented at locations including The Guggenheim Museum, the Fondazione Prada, the Detroit Institute of the Arts, the Daelim Museum, *Skulptur Odense 17* and The Whitney Museum of American Art.



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