

04 Sep 2020

Sue Johnson: Hall of Portraits from the History of Machines

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

Reviewed by Saul Ostrow



Sue Johnson, "Visible Woman", 2019

Sue Johnson is a cultural historian, an archeologist of other dimensions. She has a sharp eye for the overlooked and the never-was. You can imagine her as the guest host for an episode for *The Twilight Zone* that takes place in a department store that caters to male fantasies. The women are not only compliant, they are smiling, labor-saving appliances.

"Hall of Portraits from The History of Machines" is an alternate pictorial history. Johnson's sources are mid-20th century magazines that she has scanned at high resolution. She maintains size relationships and left-right orientations in her prints, but each fragment of them has been digitally manipulated to create new images of past-tense fantasies.

These are, or would have been, the products of a time when men foolishly believed they ruled the world. The exhibition is not a showroom but a storeroom, housing the artifacts of our primitive, eroticized world of the masculine ideals that too many women still try to accommodate.

Exhibition	Sue Johnson: Hall of Portraits from the History of Machines
Start date	14 Aug 2020
End date	07 Feb 2021
Presenter	Virginia Museum of Fine Arts link
Venue	200 N. Arthur Ashe Boulevard, Richmond, VA, USA map
Image	Image by Sue Johnson
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