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Tarrah Krajnak, *Self Portrait (Holding) with Woman at Hostal, 1979 Lima, Peru/ 2019 Los Angeles, 2019*, cyanotype, 8 x 10".

LOS ANGELES

Tarrah Krajnak

AS-IS.LA

1133 Venice Blvd

March 10–April 20

Tarrah Krajnak was born in Lima, Peru, in 1979. That same year, she was orphaned, adopted by a Czech American family, and brought to the United States. The artist knows virtually nothing about her Peruvian parents, who may have gone missing during the burgeoning Shining Path uprising. Krajnak's current exhibition, "1979: Contact Negatives," serves as both a studio and a portal into her ongoing exploration of the roots she lost amid political turbulence.

At the opening reception, she projected photos of Lima from a 1979 magazine on the walls and photographed herself interacting with the projections as though they were scenes she might actually inhabit. In one scene, Krajnak became part of a crowd; in another, she used a plinth to obscure her body behind a figure who stood facing the camera. The Peruvian environs alternately enveloped, tattooed, obscured, and denatured Krajnak's body, conveying her wistful desire to reconcile who she might have become with who she is now. By the time of my visit the following week, cyanotype contact prints from that performance had been hung from a clothesline; nearby, the original eight-by-ten-inch negatives lay eerily backlit over light boxes surrounded by photographic gear. Images such as *Self Portrait with Woman at Hostal, 1979 Lima, Peru/ 2019 Los Angeles, 2019*, are imbued with a phantasmal sense of self-discovery recalling that of Francesca Woodman's work.

Krajnak's employment of found images as surrogates for a personal archive creates an acute sense of unattainability around the more specific referents she seems to want to access. The artist may not be able to capture her genesis, but she has attempted to reclaim it by illuminating the dislocation and intrigue engendered by its absence.

— Annabel Osberg