

CRAVE

“Postmodern Mysteries”—or Not?

French artist Sophie Delaporte cavorts and delights with a provocative series of absurd photographs.

by Miss Rosen

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Artwork: *Blind Man's Bluff*.

Liberated from the confines of objective reality and absolute truth, postmodernism is truly a twentieth century mindset. With a passion for moral relativism, self-referentiality and subjectivity, postmodernism has become a highly popular perspective shared by people from all walks of life. It's inherently nihilistic, and rightly so, preferring to focus on the fragment rather than the whole. In changing perspective, we lose touch with the known, entering into a world of illusions where all things are true regardless of fact. Postmodernism is the matrix. Might not be any coming back.

Enter French artist **Sophie Delaporte** (b. 1971), who has been working in fashion since the early 1990s when the artists began her formative and longstanding collaboration with *i-D* magazine. Delaporte loves to play, to engage in the fantastical freedom that the photograph provides. Stories are evoked through the depth of color, staging, gestures, and other suggestive cues. With a theatrical eye and a mind for fun, Delaporte's embrace of the postmodern has allowed her to create a fabulist's world that keeps things ambiguous to the point that meaning becomes absurd. She embraces this spirit in a new series of work *Postmodern Mysteries*, now on view at Sous Les Etoiles Gallery, New York, through June 11, 2016.

Postmodern Mysteries is delightfully engaging, provoking wonder and curiosity, as well as charming a smile across the lips. Delaporte brilliantly engages us with red herrings and loose threads, wild goose chases and rabbit holes. With a tongue firmly planted in chic, Delaporte's work is sumptuous, subversive, and enigmatic, beckoning us to wonder, *Porque?*

But there is no "Why?" because that's the joke. Postmodernism says anything is possible, including answers without questions.



Disorder after Vermeer

As noted photography critic Vicki Goldberg writes, "Sophie Delaporte's photographs for Astier de Villatte are as full of mystery as a collection of Simenon stories, as charged with ambiguity as a painting by Dali, and as partial to whimsy as a song by Noel Coward. The mysteries are decidedly post-modern; consisting of inexplicable actions, they involve no crime and have no solution other than anyone's guess. The ambiguity is immutable, six centimeters of uncertainty evidently being preferable to a meter of clarity. The whimsy is one facet of an off-beat sense of humor that manages to combine melancholy, portents, and absurdity; cherishes fantasy; and relishes the odd and the almost ridiculous."

Indeed, in Delaporte's world we come to understand the surreality of subjectivity, and the way in which it centers us like the earth in the age of Copernicus. By embracing postmodernism and all its mystery, Delaporte embraces the beauty of the absurd in all its glorious infiniteness,

All photos: @Sophie Delaporte, Courtesy Sous Les Etoiles Gallery.