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Julika Rudelius

May 23rd, 2007

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Julika Rudelius

Swiss Institute | 38 St Marks Pl

May 23, 2007 - July 14, 2007

By Miguel Amado ☒



Forever, 2006, still from a two-channel color video with sound, 16 minutes 40 seconds.

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Free and open to the public

Before entering the dark room in which Julika Rudelius presents *Forever*, 2006, her latest video, one notices a group of photographs portraying five beautiful, mature women. Later, one recognizes four of these ladies as the subjects of the artist's two-screen projection. In various yet uncannily similar settings—among the luxurious grounds of various Hamptons estates—the women express in a confessional manner their thoughts on such universal topics as beauty, aging, and privilege. Lounging on poolside chairs or wandering through gardens, they respond to an absent interviewer's prompts, narrating their hopes and anxieties as if analyzing their own emotional condition while ostensibly posing for the camera. Revealing the creative apparatus challenges the truthfulness of these seemingly personal accounts, leading the viewer to wonder whether the stories are factual or fictional and whether these figures exist or whether they are hybrids composed, psychologically, by actresses in consultation with the artist. This fabrication of the real is one of Rudelius's preoccupations, as exemplified by *Economic Primacy*, 2005, in which five successful men meditate on the omnipotence of money. However, it hits a more disquieting note in *Forever*, as the characters, though realistic, offer opinions that sound patently contradictory. For example, one woman, possessing unnaturally smooth skin for someone her age, recounts a conversation with her son in which she declared she would never undergo grotesque plastic surgery; here the assertion seems to belie the visual evidence. This exhibition, Rudelius's first solo outing in New York, thus furthers her quest to draw together the intimate dimension of individual lives with a politically engaged sensibility.