

KATE WERBLE GALLERY

83 VANDAM STREET NEW YORK, NY 10013

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"NAKED AND FAMOUS" AT JESSICA FREDERICKS

KEN JOHNSON

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Jessica Fredericks
504 West 22d Street, Chelsea
Through Feb. 27

This excellently titled show presents five smart young artists who inquire into photography as a tool of self-construction.

Christopher Chiappa and Susan Choi each play off popular media conventions in the creation of ironic self-portraits. Mr. Chiappa presents seven mock-heroic views of himself with his mouth stuffed full of firecrackers, a self-consciously ridiculous emulation of a picture in the Guinness Book of World Records. Ms. Choi, who is evidently blessed with an extraordinarily beautiful body, pictures herself mostly nude in images that would be indistinguishable under other circumstances from soft-core pornography.

Blurring the boundaries between the public and the private, Malerie Marder and Amy Steiner both produce cinematic, unsettlingly intimate photographs. Ms. Marder depicts herself and her boyfriend unclothed, artificially posed in moments of sexually explicit action. In one of Ms. Steiner's Eric Fischl-esque images, a woman sits nude in an armchair on a lawn near a street where cars are passing by; she gazes out at the viewer with enigmatic candor.

Eve Fowler's deliberately untitled and therefore curiously opaque, commercial-style portraits depict young female athletes who have competed highly successfully in organized boys' sports. One, dressed in her football uniform, is a nationally rated kicker as well as her high school's homecoming queen. You wouldn't know that just by looking at the picture, however, which proves, as do the show's other works, that photographs obscure and deceive as much as they reveal.

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