

Soft Opening

Rosie Marks
22 November - 17 December 2018
Opens 23 November 7-9pm
Unit 7, Piccadilly Circus Underground Station

- > Standing outside a famous beach club in Magaluf. The bouncer didn't let me in, presumably because I was sweating and holding a camera. 'Reservations only' he said, as another group walked in.
- > On the seafront promenade in Magaluf. "Take a photo, take a photo!" they shout, although I'm already photographing them. They suggested something about taking a photo of a dick. I brushed it off and they walked away midway through the shot.
- > In a shopping centre. The daughter says she wants to get back into TV modelling. The mother doesn't say much.
- > I made her crawl along the floor, following the camera.
- > I was eyeing her up since the early evening outside a bar on the strip. A few hours later I buy a round of overpriced shots in injection syringes from her. She wouldn't give me a discount because she said it was her first night working at the bar, but then agreed to be photographed. As I started to take photos she gave a sales pitch to a group of boys nearby.
- > He was a teacher of Esoteric Arts and used dance as a way of healing people. He talked about how it was most effective to use imaginary exercise equipment rather than buying weights or a gym membership, so you don't set anything up or make an effort to get there.
- > I had a conversation with a boy at the same event. He claimed that I was lying about my credentials as a photographer. He said "You can't be a real photographer if you're HERE." Another asked if it was true that I was the girl taking pictures for free.
- > They arrived at my parents house on a Sunday afternoon. I told them to dress for a night out. It was 32 degrees outside and they sat in the living room while we set up some lights. I asked them to make up a dance routine to perform on camera. They came back with the best routine I've seen and were perfectly out of sync. Later on they told me they agreed to come because it was the "Summer of Yes."

Rosie Marks (b. 1993, London, UK) is fascinated by people. Noticing the unusual within the everyday, Marks searches for idiosyncratic insights into individuals' lives, making and breaking assumptions as she shoots people engrossed in their own experiences of the world. For this exhibition - the first solo presentation from the artist - Marks presents eighteen characters she met mostly alone around London and during trips to Magaluf, Argentina, LA, Brent Cross Shopping Centre, her old school prom, Amsterdam and Benidorm. For Marks, holiday destinations in particular afford people a sense of freedom unavailable elsewhere. At Soft Opening, Marks - who typically avoids conversation with her subjects, instead preferring to act as a behavioural observer - exhibits an unusually engaged set of portraits that present the few individuals that agreed to have their photograph taken. In this exhibition, Marks' subjects are lifted from their original contexts and placed side-by-side as cardboard cutouts, filling the gallery space with a crowd elevated to celebrity status by their life-size scale, positioned behind glass.

Besides her personal projects, Marks has photographed for fashion publications including Dazed, i-D Japan, PRINT, AnOther and has exhibited each iteration of the roving exhibition project "Drawing a Blank" in London and New York in 2016, 2017 and 2018 respectively. In January 2019 Marks will publish her first photo-book with Soft Opening, a selection of images from an impressive amassment of thousands of digital photographs of strangers. Marks lives and works in London, UK.

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