

Me, Myself, and I

By Louis Jacobson

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Few things are more pretentious than artists' self-portraits. So what could be more pretentious than three walls of a small room plastered floor to ceiling with them? To be fair, many of the two-dozen photographic works in the Curator's Office's appropriately titled exhibit "Me, Myself, and I" are provocative. Marina Abramovic's photograph (pictured) shows only a fresh pentagram carved in her stomach, oozing blood; Rineke Dijkstra photographed herself in a grim communal shower, a vibe that contrasts sharply with the airiness of her better-known (and later) seaside portraits; and Sam Taylor-Wood offers Self-Portrait as a Tree—a lovely landscape in late-afternoon sun that qualifies as a self-portrait because "that single image summed up everything I was feeling" on the day she took it. The otherwise impressive Nikki Lee is represented by an almost laughably salacious image in which she poses as an exotic dancer—Lee and a colleague tongue-kiss while topless—and another in which she tries to blend into the 'hood with a patriotic T-shirt that looks far more Nashville than Bed-Stuy. Perhaps the most impressive offerings come from Vibeke Tandberg, who uses digital techniques to twin herself in surprisingly convincing posed settings, and Kathryn Cornelius, whose four-still distillation from her video *Resolve* features a woman vacuuming sand on a beach. The latter offers a bracing mix of pastel colors, measured visual rhythms, and Sisyphean absurdity, lacking only the video's intriguing audio track—a song played as the Titanic (the ship) sank. The show is on view from noon to 6 p.m. Wednesdays through Saturdays (closed Nov. 26–Dec. 3) through Saturday, Dec. 17, at the Curator's Office, 1515 14th St. NW, Suite 201. Free. (202) 387-1008. (Louis Jacobson)