

July 13 - Aug 03, 2013

Reception: Saturday, July 13, 8 -11 PM

Location: 3006 W 7th St #220 Los Angeles CA 90005

Open Hours: Wednesday - Saturday, 12 noon - 6 PM

Kristine Thompson: *still beneath the surface*



Commonwealth & Council presents an exhibition by Kristine Thompson that explores various manifestations of mourning, the limits of empathy, and the intersection of photographic and sculptural concerns. This new body of work draws upon the Victorian-era photographic and craft traditions of post-mortem imagery, "hidden mother" portraits, and mourning objects. By bringing references from different historical periods into a shared visual space, Thompson initiates a conversation between the past and the present and points to questions about mortality and the memorial properties we attach to particular objects and spaces as we cope with loss.

The exhibition features a site-specific installation in the front room of the gallery that houses a photograph titled *Post-Mortem Mom/Me*. In post-mortem imagery, photographers would occasionally paint open eyes on a deceased person's eyelids, or paint eyes on the photographic print itself. The artist responds to that gesture by placing photos of her deceased mother's eyes over hers in an attempt to transpose bodies and perspectives, and then positions the photo in the room in a way that emphasizes the ever-present nature of grief.

In "hidden mother" tintypes or carte de visites, women would often appear in the photographs made of their children, hidden beneath a decorative cloth in order to hold the children still. In Thompson's *Hidden Daughter Portrait*, these roles are disrupted. Rather than steadying a moving child, the artist holds the last photographic portrait she made of her mother, asking us to consider the performativity and vacillation of attention that happens in these types of images.

The remaining photo/sculptural work references the Victorian tradition of carrying a handkerchief with an embroidered black band as a sign of mourning. Instead of embroidering with thread, the artist sews a band onto an inherited handkerchief with strips of family photographs. Like the other works, it binds together objects that are materially and temporally mismatched out of a desire to maintain a tactile connection with people and experiences that have passed.