

# ARTFORUM

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## Sam Samore

D'AMELIO TERRAS

525 West 22<sup>nd</sup> Street, Ground Floor

January 8 – February 19, 2011



Sam Samore, *The Dark Suspicion #1*, 2011,  
color photograph, 34 x 60'

Sam Samore's most recent photographs immediately invoke a long legacy of appropriative practices, namely those established by artists such as Cindy Sherman and Victor Burgin. Samore's previous work is characterized by open-ended and evocative narrative compositions that are reminiscent of film stills. The present exhibition offers a subtle yet marked shift beyond this precedent. While these photographs still show female figures in vague surroundings, the artist uses formal manipulation—including color adjustment, exaggerated contrast, and unexpected focal points—to enhance and further develop their unsettling content.

*The Dark Suspicion #1* (all works 2011), for instance, shows a young woman whose vacant stare and decorated femininity (heavy makeup, etc.) make her resemble the subject of a fashion advertisement. The model is only visible, however, through a gap between two other figures, whose showy lipstick and starkly pale skin seem virtually identical to her own. Although it would be easiest to rationalize the two doppelgängers as mirror reflections of the female figure, such a reading is impossible, given their position in the photograph: between the woman and the viewer. This manipulation of space eschews predictable or concrete explanation and frustrates the viewer's impulse to impose purpose or narrative on figures whose functions might have otherwise seemed clear.

Similarly, in *The Dark Suspicion #4*, a woman wearing dramatic blue eye shadow is subject to the penetrating stare of a figure identical to her, but to whom she appears oblivious. Although the confrontation in the image seems to be internalized, the positioning of the woman's "other" again renders this implausible. Through the contrast between the straightforwardness of their artifice and the impossibility of explaining the situations they portray, Samore's photographs reveal a fragmented and constructed subject that invites interrogation of gender, popular culture, and identity.

- Britany Salsbury