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Review Berlin photographer's first show in L.A. carries a strange potency



Carina Brandes' Untitled (CB198), 2016, black and white photograph on baryta paper, 13 inches by 19.5 inches. (Team (Bungalow))

By [Leah Ollman](#)

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In one of the engrossing photographs in Carina Brandes' show at the Venice gallery Team (Bungalow), a naked young woman straddles a tire in the rubble of a lot in the dark. Her bone-white back curves over the wheel, her hair streams forward in a wavy jumble, and her arms blur with the animal urgency of their paddling motion.

In another photo, more whimsical and wry, a woman stands behind a T-shirt pinned to a clothesline, positioned as though she is wearing it. She holds a paintbrush and a dish of paint in her forward looping arms, and like a mime, she pretends to be rendering the shirt's screenprinted graphic of palm trees and striped horizon. What have actually been painted are her own face and hair, made congruent with the wall behind her, which is slathered in rough, dark strokes.

Brandes, based in Berlin and making a memorable first L.A. appearance, works loosely in the lineage of Francesca Woodman and even Ana Mendieta, using herself and other young women as models. Individual identity isn't what matters in these raw sketches of improvisatory theater, all black and white, untitled, dating from 2014 and 2016. Faces are often hidden by hair or paint, and the actions performed, one step above primal, suggest conditions — yearning, mischief, concealment — more than practical functions.

Brandes opts for a shallow stage geared toward metaphor more than narrative, and though there is a cinematic quality to the images, their strange potency comes from being disjunctive, stills without a before or an after.



Carina Brandes' Untitled (CB 171) , 2014, black and white photograph on baryta paper, 23.25 inches by 18.5 inches. (Team (Bungalow))

Carina Brandes

Where: Team (Bungalow), 306 Windward Ave., Venice

When: Through Oct. 23; closed Monday and Tuesday

Information: (310) 339-1945, www.teamgal.com

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