

Time Out

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Art



Malerie Marder

Interim Art East End

Reclaiming the female nude has been Malerie Marder's goal for several years. She positions her family and friends in artificial surroundings and, guiding their expressions like a film director, makes unconventionally sexual images that seem wrenched from a film, or from life. A familiar strategy, but it's not so easy to make you care about the individuals and animate their worries, as Marder does in this show's predominantly monochrome, *noir*-ish dramas. Gazing to camera, a nude woman reclines on a chair in a sleazy, wood-panelled room. Her expression conveys disappointment – either with the last ten minutes or the last ten years – and her air of mordant *ennui* is emphasised by the switched-off, old-fashioned television set beside her. One imag-

ines a sexual partner out of shot, or already out the door.

Next, we see the glistening torso of a woman who sits on a hearth, accompanied by fire tongs and a small saucepan – accoutrements uncommon enough to be noticed, but not weird enough to be obvious narrative keys. Marder, it seems, wants to give us the pleasures of belief and suspicion. One calculatedly awkward image shows a frumpy woman posing, legs crossed protectively, on a chair below a landscape painting. Achieving verisimilitude almost too well, its ugly lighting and mood of debasement let you imagine a wrinkled print of it falling out of some lover's wallet. Conversely, a couple of these images are gorgeous enough – perfectly scaled and framed, tenderly attentive to skin texture and pose – to have dropped from Edward Weston's photograph album. *Martin Herbert*