

KATE WERBLE GALLERY

83 VANDAM STREET NEW YORK, NY 10013



JULY 28, 2016 – MICHELE BENGUALID

Exhibition Review: Sexting at Kate Werble Gallery

“Sexting” (v): the act of text messaging someone in the hopes of having a sexual encounter with them later; initially casual, transitioning into highly suggestive and even sexually explicit (Urban Dictionary)

Wake up. Check Instagram. Send a Snapchat. Answer your iMessages. Sound familiar?



Image courtesy of the artist and Kate Werble Gallery, New York, NY
Photography credit: Elisabeth Bernstein

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We are living vicariously through our devices, as if inside a virtual reality. “The Cyborg Theory,” refers to the fusion of the human and the machine, and it is in plain sight. Selfie sticks have become an extension of our arms, enabling us to reach further and higher to capture ourselves in ways that was previously more difficult, or, in ways that we physically were unable to do.

We are compromising ourselves to “do it for the Insta” and to evolve because of technology, as opposed to technology helping us live an organic life. As a result, our lives and bodies are fragmented to fit the format of our digital media.

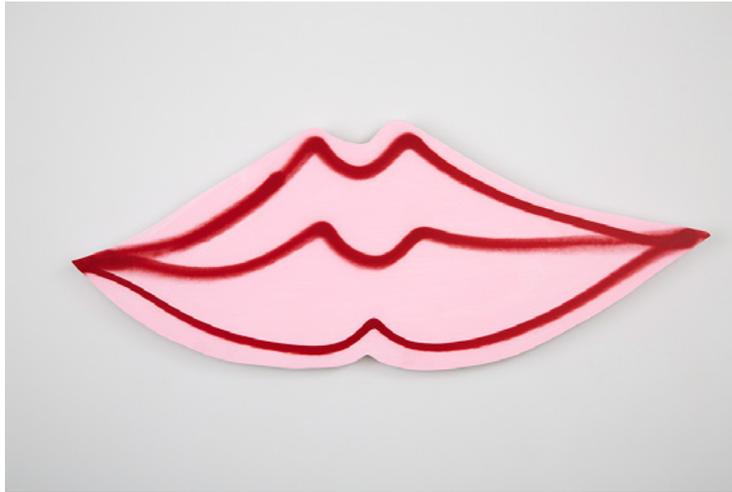


Sarah Wright, both ways, 2016. Image courtesy of the artist and Kate Werble Gallery

The question remains, is the future of communication and intimacy evolving to isolation within, and because of, the digital sphere? Is it even possible to separate oneself from one's online persona?

The current group show “Sexting” at Kate Werble Gallery tries to answer this question. 15 artists explore the sexual self in a digital age and the desensitization and depersonalization of sex, all while pointing to the subtle intimacy and sensuality that a virtual network affords.

Multimedia fills the gallery. Photographs of two men in bed with legs revealed, a painted arm extending from the angle of a selfie taker, a sculpture of a hefty man's bottom, spray painted lips; the array of secluded body parts reminds us that a virtual intimacy and connection is incomplete.



Sadie Laska, Lips, 2016. Image courtesy of the Artist and Kate Werble Gallery

Sarah Wright, a Scotland based artist, makes her US debut with three works included in the show. Her two collages of women’s “essentials” are idealized images of the parts of the human figure – or things that compose our appearance – perhaps giving us the friendly reminder that when you “sext”, you are pixelating yourself to a representation on someone else’s screen.

The video pieces of “Sexting” are strikingly interesting in the way they use mundane objects in place of overtly sexual imagery. “Spurting Hose” by Burt Barr is a work that watches a stream of water continuously pour out of a hose. Are these our sexual fantasies? A perpetual orgasam? Hurtful tears?

“Sexting” is refreshing in that the artwork is provocative in an inspiring way, quietly creeping into your digital life. Will you be more than just a photo? You decide.

Header image: Matt Keegan, 3-in-1, 2013. Image courtesy of the artist and Kate Werble Gallery