

# SITUATIONS

Vogel, Wendy. "Critics' Picks - Whitney Hubbs", Artforum, online, February, 2020.

## ARTFORUM



Whitney Hubbs, *Animal, Hole, Selfie*, (detail) 2020, color contact prints on mirror, 36 x 60".

NEW YORK

### Whitney Hubbs

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127 Henry St

January 11–February 16, 2020

It wouldn't be a stretch to call Whitney Hubbs a photographer's photographer, invested as she is in the medium's history and technique. But her images possess a psychosexual tension—not to mention a preoccupation with staging—that aligns them with performance art. In the exhibition "Animal, Hole, Selfie," these subjects are captured in a trio of sumptuous black-and-white images: a picture of a horse shot from above, standing curiously still amid piles of its own manure; the evocatively dark opening of a cavern; and a nude self-portrait

the artist snaps in a mirror, a snake tattoo coiling around her arm as she crouches between two pieces of cardboard. Though they were taken at different times, Hubbs dates her photographs by the date of printing, 2020, uniting them all in the here and now.

Rounding out the exhibition is its namesake, *Animal, Hole, Selfie*, a collection of nearly one hundred color contact sheets taped over a mirror. Using a four-by-five camera, Hubbs performs dozens of semi-pornographic, fetishistic poses. In one image, she stares at the viewer, wearing a dental gag, while a pink gummy substance oozes over her chest. In others, she attaches a prosthetic breast between her own, or tucks neon-green "balls" in her tights, or plays with a phallic plank. There's a history of male artists degrading the female body, but there's also a parallel history of feminist artists reclaiming abjection on their own terms, from Adrian Piper's public "Catalysis" performances, 1970–73, and Hannah Wilke's "S.O.S. Starification Object Series" photographs, 1974–82, to the bondage-inspired videos of Austrian artist Maria Petschnig. Hubbs's show follows in this lineage. And we'll always see her hand on the shutter, indicating that she's in control.

— Wendy Vogel