

Semiotics of the {Postfeminist} Kitchen (after Martha Rosler)

performance (created for “Sounds Like IV” a co-production of AKA Artist Run, PAVED Arts, and Holophon.) Performance documentation created with the assistance of Tarin Hughes, Adam Logan, Reilly Forbes, and Inger Bonli, July 25th, 2014

Almost 40 years after Martha Rosler’s seminal and morose *Semiotics of the Kitchen* (1975), in which kitchen implements are subverted through an alphabetized sequence of physical gestures, *Semiotics of the {Postfeminist} Kitchen* explores how our view of woman—high heels still firmly planted in the kitchen—has evolved. In Rosler’s version there is an implied violence, in her own words, “rage and frustration”, that crescendos through her deadpan yet spirited delivery. In the *{Postfeminist} Kitchen*, there is an air of desperation—but one tinged with sad resignation. Taking its cue from *Desperate Housewives*, *The Real Housewives* reality TV syndicate, and the popularity of celebrity chefs such as Rachel Ray, the performance is a parody of “hometown domesticity” where the boundaries of kitchen, bedroom and bathroom have become blurred. Overt sexuality is played out amidst a plethora of electric and digital devices that produce a cumulative, deafening cry of their own. This renders the work as much sound installation as performance. An ‘instant’ or ready-made, apathetic yet chaotic, heavily mediated (and medicated), problematic and entropic contemporary reality is evoked. However, through the absurdity and the comi-tragic actions of the heroine, the viewer is also allowed a glimpse behind the masquerade onto an unmasked and hopeful humanness.