

BINARY IS A FALSE IDOL
SETAREH SHAHBAZI

20 April – 24 May 2016

Gypsum is thrilled to *Binary is a False Idol*, the second solo show at the gallery by Berlin-based artist Setareh Shahbazi.

The grey and white grid is the Photoshop background standing for transparencies. It is invisible when images are printed. As a chain of pixels, it is composed of the smallest unit of a digital image and represents the binary system: 0 or 1, true or false, grey or white, east or west, male or female, good or bad. In between there are stories. The stories have layers and colors.

The images Shahbazi uses in her work are as complex as the haunting stories they carry. Most of the time, they are worn and scratched by life.

Her new works deconstruct photographs by cutting, peeling, bending and un-layering them in Photoshop until she hits the core of the medium, the background layer, thus setting free an invisible pattern. Through a formal reflection on the medium, the photographic subject breaks off from presentation towards more abstracted twins and duplicates, dot.tiff dot.jpg dot.pdf., without losing the ghostly trace of its origin.

A conversation in an Florentine café, a snapshot of a romantic painting called "The Pouty Model" taken from a book about the difficult path of female painters in the beginning of the 20th century, the entrance of a building in Beirut, a piece of candy on a kitchen table, a screenshot of the Godard movie "La Chinoise", a studio photograph of an unknown girl and, last but not least, Sylvester the cat, appear within the layers of this new body of work, blending into narratives as divided as the artist's laptop.

Setareh Shahbazi was born in Tehran in 1978 and moved to Germany in 1985. She studied Scenography and Media Arts at the State Academy for Art and Design, Karlsruhe. During her travels within the past 12 years, Shahbazi has been compiling notes and observations in the form of found photographs and snapshots. In trying to make sense of their broken narratives, their impossible translations into different contexts, temporalities and languages, she is constantly shifting perspectives to allow these observations to come together in a fictional afterlife.