

## Los Angeles Times

Around the Galleries  
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***Real Women and Real Lives***  
Holly Myers

The photographs in "Room," **Carrie Yury's** lovely second solo show at Sam Lee Gallery, are a thoughtful play on the classic magician's trick of sawing a female assistant in half.

Each piece is a diptych featuring a single female model, nude but for a pair of briefs, lying across her own bed. The gap between the two panels falls somewhere around the model's waist, appearing to sever the figure in two. In most cases, her lower half is tilted toward the viewer, while the upper half is turned away, creating a subtle but unsettling sense of elongation and distortion.

The severed or manipulated female figure is a trope that extends far beyond the magician's stage, of course, preoccupying visual artists from Pablo Picasso to Richard Prince, as well as countless feminist artists. (Nor is it limited to the level of iconography: Ciara Ennis' essay for the show's catalog points to the rather chilling example of the Black Dahlia.)

Yury's approach is critically informed but also tender. These are real women, she takes pains to emphasize, with real bodies and real lives. She revels in their details and idiosyncrasies: in curves, tattoos, scars, the patterns of underwear, painted toenails and all the objects that fill their bedrooms.

The manipulation, as a result, seems less to belittle or incapacitate than expand and explore, challenging the viewers' expectations of both the nude and portraiture.

**Sam Lee Gallery, 990 N. Hill Street, No. 190, Chinatown (323) 227-0275, through July 3. Closed Sundays through Tuesdays. [www.samleegallery.com](http://www.samleegallery.com)**