

# ARTFORUM

## Laurie Simmons

SALON 94 | BOWERY

243 Bowery

March 7–April 28

If Laurie Simmons's early works from the late 1970s function as a microcosm of repressed societal woes, many depicting miniature figurines of apprehensively posed housewives, she has today a poignant commonality in Japanese cosplay. A subculture of "costume play" known as *Kigurumi*, the hobby brings together men and women who prefer to socialize while dressed as their favorite Anime characters. They are depicted here in thirteen photographs as physical apparitions of Simmons's previous dollhouse muses.

Simmons here equates "Dollers" with our own personal experiences with social media—in which the participant voluntarily forfeits aspects of reality in favor of a more attractive and fascinating persona. This relationship is best illustrated in three photographs titled *Selfies*, 2014, presented in the gallery's entrance space, each of which images a Doller in an eerily familiar pose—chin at a slight tilt and an extended length of an arm trailing the camera's descending perspectives. In a fourth photograph on the wall, *Orange Hair/Snow/Close Up*, 2014, a pair of enormous green eyes is mesmerizing and uncanny—synthetic of course, in archetypal Simmons design.

Within a second room, besieged by fetish latex, we at last see actual skin. In *How We See/Look I/Daria*, 2014, a well-known fashion model poses for a portrait with eyes closed and faux pupils painted upon her eyelids. Her makeup performs inverse to the Doller's plastic facade and is evocative of unrealistic expectations of beauty, especially in the realm of commercial fashion. Elsewhere in the gallery, Simmons arrives full circle with *Brunette/Red Dress/Standing Corner*, 2014: After nearly four decades of mining dollhouses for motif, this iteration of a doll appears no less a proxy than its depiction—adrift in a gray between identity and persona, seemingly more comfortable as a surrogate than an actual human being.



Laurie Simmons, *Blonde/Pink Dress/Green Room/Close-Up*, 2014, pigment print, 28 3/4 x 21 1/4".

— Gabriel H. Sanchez