

BROADWAY

ARTFORUM

“Several Years Have Passed”

Soloway

Soloway | 348 South 4th St.

March 25, 2018 - April 29, 2018

By Nicole Kaack



Abbey Williams, *Reply*, 2017, video, color, sound, 8 minutes 1 second.

This exhibition gathers five women who have taken time away from their artistic careers, be it to raise children or care for the “sick and dying,” as the show’s press release states. The word *practice* suggests a commitment to and constancy in an endeavor that disregards other responsibilities. However, the demands of life can eclipse those of the studio. Curator Jenny Nichols proposes that living fully—through happiness, tragedy, or daily drudgery—is just as essential to art as its actual making.

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In Annette Wehrhahn's painting *The Missing*, 2018, scattered strokes of boldly applied finger painting trace the outlines of meaty limbs in magenta and white, suspending them awkwardly against a beet-red ground, which was painted in collaboration with her ten-month-old twins. The artist's unstretched canvas becomes a lived space that accommodates a mother's life.

In a back room, three videos by Abbey Williams play simultaneously across angled screens. In *La Mulatta*, 2007, the artist's own breathing, nude torso is superimposed upon an image of *La Nègresse*, 1872, a bust in the Metropolitan Museum of Art's collection that depicts a slave woman sadistically bound by ropes. *Reply*, 2017, captures Williams at a patio bar dancing with a bunch of wasted white women lip-syncing to Nelly's "Hot In Herre." Racist YouTube responses to footage of the 2015 McKinney pool-party incident—where a young black woman, Dajerria Becton, was tackled by a police officer—fade in and out of the foreground. One of these commenters writes, "A bunch of out of control Nigglets. . . . Cops doing there [*sic*] job." Gallingly stupidity is certainly one way of stoking a smart artist's creative fire.