

ARTFORUM



Eileen Quinlan, *The Otter*, 2016, gelatin silver print, 25 x 20".

DÜSSELDORF

Eileen Quinlan

KUNSTVEREIN FÜR DIE RHEINLANDE
UND WESTFALEN

Grabbeplatz 4

May 18–August 11

Eileen Quinlan's photographic work, of which this exhibition selects from roughly a ten-year period, shows the artist's consistent return to material experimentation and clear investment in lens-based processes of imagemaking. Contrary to its title, though, "Wait For It" is impatient to start. Already hung outside the gallery space are twenty unframed black-and-white photographs of yoga mats. With their soft folds paying reference to Judy Chicago's vaginal abstractions

in *The Dinner Party*, 1974–79, the series "Christina," 2012, is also where the camera lens meets the texture of vinyl, emphasizing the haptic in Quinlan's work and serving as a reminder of how photography, through pure light and shade, lends itself to this particular merger.

On a far wall, the twelve framed mirrors of *Ghost Grid*, 2016, reflect the surrounding space back into a familiar modernist structure. Here, the grid is less the domineering art-historical presence it secured in the last century than an apparition of sorts, as suggested by its title. While voiding the pictorial image, this work reaffirms a spectral quality rife in Quinlan's practice—from the spiritual in daily exercise to the illusionism of staging—that can be traced back to early spirit photography and, more recently, to David Askevold and Mike Kelley's "The Poltergeist," 1974–79.

The mirror image appears elsewhere, too. Suggesting a move toward a biocentric consideration of the subject, portraits of the artist's twin sister (*Lady* and *Sister*, both 2013) are shown together with low-res images of a fox's head and a swimming otter (*The Fox* and *The Otter*, both 2016). If Quinlan's photographic work is recurrent, it shows not just an ongoing dedication to the medium, but also a consistent return to personal reflection and subjective concerns. Whether this is implied by a yoga mat or her own body pressed up against a shower cubicle (*Good Enough*, 2015), Quinlan repeatedly pushes forth surface contact.

— Saim Demircan