

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## WHEN WE TALK ABOUT LOVE

A solo exhibition by Déborah Farnault

Opening Reception

Thursday, April 7, 2011 from 6PM through 9PM

April 1, 2011 – April 30, 2011

Littlefield NYC Gallery

622 Degraw Street, between 3rd Ave & 4th Ave

in Gowanus, Brooklyn, NYC

D/N/R trains to Union St

F/G trains to Carroll St

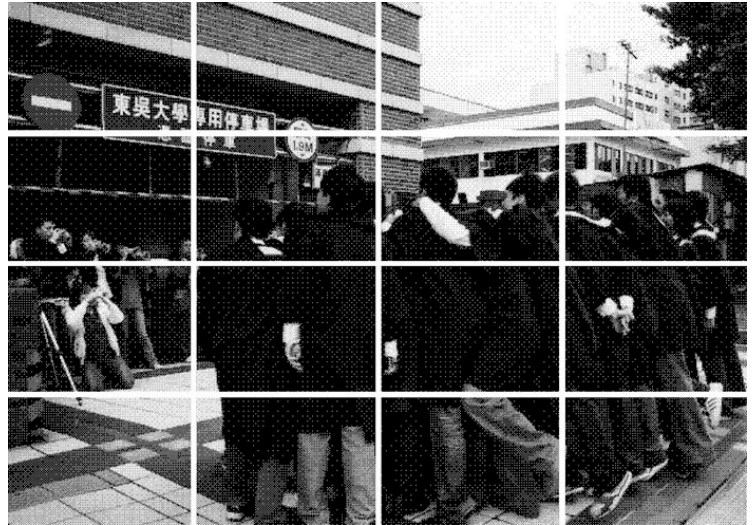
2/3/4/5 to Pacific St-Atlantic

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When We Talk About Love, 2011 | Silkscreen prints installation, 8-1/2 x 6 feet

### WHAT DID YOU JUST SEE?

The “innocent” act of taking photographs leads the protagonist in Antonioni's film to discover a crime. A random photograph of a couple kissing in a local park reveals a dead body in the bushes. The protagonist crops and enlarges the photograph, then returns to the crime scene to see if the image accidentally recorded by his camera was true.

*Blowup* is a story about the perception of reality, about the significance of the visual image and about collective notions of the process of photographing. For Antonioni, the act of taking a picture is connected with chance, lust, peeping, violence (the camera gives power), and even a peculiar sort of “blindness” –as the camera in *Blowup* becomes more than merely a tool in the hands of a photographer. How limited is our perception? How far do our fantasies as to what we see go? We build our own subjective stories around images. Does it ever happen that memories –loaned and transformed, grow to be part of collective experience?

For Déborah Farnault, photography is a semiotic “landscape” that can be changed by artistic intervention or by complex relations happening within the image. The photographs come from very different sources. Some of them show real-life situations snapped by the artist, others have been found in the family archive or on the Internet. Some are thoroughly edited. The artist deletes fragments of images, like in the piece *What Bothers Me* (2010), or crops and blows it up several times, attempting, like Antonioni's protagonist, to reach the deeper layers of the image. The pictures undergo various processes and disintegrate into pixels, becoming new abstract structures in their own right, like in the works *When We Talk About Love* (2011), or *Daddy Loves Me* (2011). The way and distance of watching a photograph may be crucial to its meaning. The artist tests the limits of perception. She juxtaposes private stories with anonymous memories and collective experience. She highlights the relations present in public space and its aesthetic value, for instance, in the cycle *Polling Station, FI 10.08 #2* (2009), *Nasa Space Center, FI 10.08 #1*, (2009), or “*This Is Not A Time For Dreaming*” (2010).

Things have changed since 1966, when Antonioni made *Blowup*. It is only in the darkroom that his protagonist sees the dead body in the photographic film... Offering unlimited possibilities of recording images in any circumstances, contemporary technologies have, in a sense, “degraded” the importance of the image. Everyone can be a photographer nowadays. The moment of taking a photo is more mechanical than ever, and the photographer's decision utterly spontaneous. The photograph appears on the screen as soon as it is taken. The “alchemical” nature of photography is gone. Images become part of collective memory too easily these days. Déborah Farnault draws upon her individual experience on the one hand and, on the other, she is concerned with the image as the sign and the recording of collective experience. The artist poses the question about how we see photography in the days of excess and uncontrolled flow of images. Is it still right to talk about collective memory? After all, visual icons of the 20th century have turned to empty signs of mass culture.

Joanna Zielinska, 2011

www.joankazielska.wordpress.com

Born and raised in Paris, Déborah Farnault studied the Fine Arts in France and Finland. In 2008, she obtained her M.F.A. with honors and majored in Photography. Since then, she was awarded four residencies in France, China, and the USA, and was recently invited to participate in a symposium about the convergence of contemporary art and architecture practices in 2011, in New Delhi. Her work has been purchased by public collections in France, and is listed in a French artist directory for a 2009 young creation prize. She also pursued her M.A. course in International Cultural Politics and Sociology of Art at the Institute of Political Studies in France, and graduated with honors in 2009. She has exhibited her work in France, Sweden, and the USA. *When We Talk About Love*, presented at Littlefield NYC Gallery, is her first solo exhibition in the USA. Déborah currently lives and works in New York.