

Valérie Blass at Daniel Faria

BY *Bill Clarke* POSTED 07/15/15 9:30 AM

Toronto

Over the last ten years, Montreal-based artist Valérie Blass has produced a wonderfully sly, seductive, and sinister body of work. This exhibition, her first in Toronto since 2009, consisted of a new group of sculptures and a series of photographs, all made this year.

Blass's three-dimensional constructions, even at their most abstract, suggest human figures—in 2007, for example, she created a series of angular wooden structures covered in fake hair. In this show, however, references to the body were overt. While the disembodied arm and leg at the center of *Je suis une image* recall the work of Robert Gober, the addition of saucy pink panties and a curtain of fake blond hair puts it closer in sensibility to the surreal, feminized objects of Alina Szapocznikow and Louise Bourgeois. Other works surprised with their inventive use of materials. In the wall-mounted sculpture *La méprise*, a figure regards itself in a mirror; its lumpy oversize head is made of an upended ceramic cat covered in velvety black flocking.

Accompanying the sculptures was “Vices,” a trio of photographs picturing the artist’s hand wearing a sparkly opera glove and presenting flasks or drug paraphernalia. Blass cheekily titled this exhibition “My Life.” If her work is truly autobiographical, then we can assume that she is leading an enjoyably self-aware existence.



Valérie Blass, *Why not / Une touche* (detail), 2015, mixed media, 13½" x 7½" x 9".

COURTESY THE ARTIST AND DANIEL FARIA GALLERY, TORONTO

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