

## ARTFORUM

## Linda Fregni Nagler

MONICA DE CARDENAS

Via Francesco Vignani 4

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In Japanese, *shashin no shashin* translates to “photographing a photograph.” Linda Fregni Nagler, born in Stockholm and now living in Milan, has taken this concept into consideration for a series of works she recently developed. “*Shashin no Shashin*,” the exhibition’s title, provides a theoretical summary for the project, seen together here for the first time. Fregni Nagler has reconstructed a number of *mise-en-scènes*, whose significance may be difficult to discern. The artist has chosen to restage photographs of *Yokohama Shashin*, a Japanese tradition of portraiture from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, in which the subjects inhabit bizarre sets and stages, constructed by hand with extraordinary skill.

The image in the first room, *The Yokohama Photographer*, 2011, displays the intricacies of this practice: It is a photograph of a man sitting astride an enormous hen. The man wears a European-style white top hat and black tailcoat, and he sports a white toupee and a black umbrella. The second room contains five photos titled *Snow and Rain*, 2009–11, which depict five women in traditional Japanese dress, seeking shelter from the rain or snow. On closer examination, however, these images present certain anomalies through which the artist gleefully disorients viewers who might be unaware of the works’ perceptual parameters. In one of the photos the rain is represented through extremely subtle oblique cuts made in the photographic print, while in another work the artist has signified the trajectories of the falling raindrops through threads stretched in front of the set. Finally, a more careful look reveals that one of the photos in this series does not document a set constructed by Fregni Nagler, as the others do, but is rather a reprint of an original photo. The final room of this stirring parade of images features a shot that seems to be an authorial signature; the artist sits astride the very same gigantic hen photographed in the aforementioned work.

*Translated from Italian by Marguerite Shore.*

— Marco Tagliaferro



Linda Fregni Nagler, *Self Portrait as Yokohama Photographer*, 2011, black-and-white photograph, 5 1/2 x 7”.

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