

# ARTATTACK

Where Art Lives

## ANITA WITEK DECONSTRUCTS PHOTOGRAPHY AT L'ÉTRANGÈRE

In case it's not already completely obvious, I love photography. Perhaps it's my background in film, or the fact that the first time I can remember longing for love was when I set eyes on **Robert Doisneau's** photograph 'Le Baiser de l'hôtel de ville.' but whatever the reason, the medium has always been one I connect with.

And so last evening, I followed my passion for photo all the way to Shoreditch for the private view of Austrian artist, **Anita Witek's**, first UK solo show, '*How to ~~work~~ live better*' at L'étrangère gallery. Anita's work in this exhibition, which combines montage, photography and installation, explores the manipulative nature of the photographic medium. By cutting and combining diverse photographic elements from printed sources that include magazines, newspapers, posters and books, Anita creates something wholly invented and completely new. So while the piece we are looking at it may very well appear to be, for example, a contemporary interior, it is actually just a fictional scene produced by a layering of utterly non-related material.



Anita Witek at l'étrangère

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Similar to flipping through page upon page of photo-shopped models and celebrities, these photomontages lure us into an artificial reality, reminding us of the innately false nature of photography itself.

As I admire the brilliantly constructed images, I cannot help but think of January 1st of this year, when I sat, phone in hand, slaving away at a disturbingly unflattering New Year's Eve photo, app after app, filter after filter, until my three girlfriends and I looked flawless. With the tap of a few buttons, we had been transformed from ugly ducklings to swans, and by posting the image online, we knowingly put forth this engineered reality.

Is this also part of what Anita is trying to say? That our obsession with perfection has led us to feel a desperate need to fake it?

With her mastery of de-contextualising and re-contextualising imagery, Anita not only takes us on a breathtaking albeit imagined visual journey, but brings us crashing back down to Earth with the startling, though much needed reminder, that none of it is real.

I finally realise the reason I love this medium is because it is the most well crafted illusion.

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Best of... 80006, Anita Witek, C-print on aluminium, 2012

– India Irving

Anita Witek '*How to ~~work~~ live better*' is on view at l'étrangère until 2nd May 2015; 44a Charlotte Road, London EC2A 3PD; Open Wednesday-Saturday 11AM-6PM, or by appointment; Admission: FREE