



Tracey Emin, *Reversible*, 2012, gouache on paper, 40 x 54".

In simultaneous shows at the Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires, White Cube São Paulo, and at Galleria Lorcan O'Neill in Rome, London-based artist Tracey Emin is exploring new territory, and she hasn't been back home in over a month. One year from now, she will have her first US solo museum exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art, North Miami. Emin spoke with artforum.com in Miami during Art Basel, just after the opening of her solo exhibition at White Cube São Paulo, which inaugurated the space and closes February 23, 2013. Sitting poolside at the Soho Beach House, as bare models and celebrities strutted by, Emin related her thoughts about rising to the surface of things.

IT SOUNDS SIMPLE, but when I was young, I used to draw myself in the mirror. There was an immediate intimacy, a closeness that was visually touching when drawing from the reflection. Other times, I would just draw myself from my mind. But I've gone from being a girl to an old woman really fast. The middleman never existed for me. When you have children, you can identify your life in stages by viewing them outside of you. I never had that. In these new drawings, there's this space. Photographs are first taken of me, then I draw what's in them. When I'm being photographed, I try to feel how I want the drawing to look. I kept seeing myself in chairs, but from a long way above or on furniture or alone at a table. So they're from the outside. I'm looking back at myself. I'm outside, looking back in.

Have you ever had a dream where the dream takes place in the room that you're actually in? Last night, I dreamt that I was sitting at a table opposite my mum and someone else, though I didn't know who that person was. They didn't really have a face. My mum looked the same but a lot younger and she was telling me how great this new friend was. They had even gone and had fillers and Botox together. My mum is eighty-five, so it's quite strange for anyone of that age to have had these things done. But she looked quite good. And then the phone rang in real life and it was her.

Men don't look at me anymore. They don't look at me sexually. My body is like a barrel and it's on two spindly things. On top of the barrel is a kind of mop. And I really hate my breasts. It would be so easy for me to be with women. Women find me really attractive. And of course I find some of them attractive, but in the end I want a really hard fuck. I'm looking to get what I want. I might meet a woman some day and fall in love and it works. But I doubt it, because after a certain amount of time I'll probably start staring at men's crotches. It would have been different if I was married or had a partner to grow old with. But if you don't, and you've been alone for a long time, the only person looking at you is yourself in that mirror.

In the Bering Sea, there are waves that are a hundred feet high but come from nowhere. They come up like a giant tongue. Boats and ships simply go missing. Where I grew up, we have gale force eight winds, just below hurricane. Margate is one of the windiest places in the world. When we were in school, I would ride the bus and would have to hold on to the stop while I waited. You would be blown away. We also have twenty- to thirty-foot waves. Not like those long waves that have all of that power, but a wave that was lifted up in the wind.

I don't want to see what's below that water. I have a boat too but I'm still not keen to know what's underneath. Knowing my work, you'd think that's all I'd be interested in: Tracey's myopic point of view. But it's not. I want to be on the surface now. I think it has to do with getting old and looking the way that I do, trying to understand and accept time. Whereas before I would have gone up and down and swam for a kilometer, now I don't swim much either. It's like every time I go for a deep plunge, I just end up drowning. If I were to keep drawing myself from my mind, I would still be drawing this spindly little figure with her legs wide open. Life isn't like that anymore. It really isn't. No one had sex on *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, and the last time I had sex the person came so quickly. The thing about being fifty is that I'm no longer biological. The surface really becomes what's around me. And that isn't vanity; it's sensitivity.