

Rita Nowak's most recent photographic compositions seduce with effortless elegance. These beautiful and timeless visual allegories are contemporary amalgamations of an abundance of art historical and cross-cultural references.

Peonies

Continuing her ongoing interest in the corporeal appropriation of art history through the tableaux vivant, Nowak's tangle of tulle skirts and fragmented, flexed limbs conjure the opulent bursts of peonies, roses and carnations that were a staple subject of Dutch Old Master still life paintings. As she gently insinuates the rich tradition of floral painting through the cool control of French artists from Fantin-Latour to the exuberant physicality of Van Gogh and Monet, she choreographs her figures into lithe, ambiguous poses.

As the figure is deconstructed, the work radiates a dynamic tension reminiscent of 60s/70s performance-based photography as well as suggesting the subversive fetishism of Hans Bellmer's dolls or the fecund, organic forms of Louise Bourgeois' sculptures. They remain suspended in the moment – in a permanent process of transformation.

Marcus Ritter 2018