

APRIL 2014

**Leigh Ledare**

**MITCHELL-INNES & NASH | CHELSEA**  
**534 West 26th Street**  
**March 21–April 26**

“Things I want—not to do mother again. Things she wants—to do mother again . . .” These words are scrawled underneath a black-and-white photograph of a mostly nude woman seated spread-eagled in elegant surroundings with her face redacted by a black bar, part of Leigh Ledare’s multiplex series “An Invitation,” 2012. The photograph is backed by an enlarged reproduction of the front page of the day’s *New York Times*, which, coupled with the woman’s blacked-out face and suggestive stance, charges the work with a preternatural mixture of standardized and subjective temporalities, public and private boundaries, anonymous and familial modes of representation—all trademarks of Ledare’s practice. The “mother” to whom the artist refers in scribbling script is his own; his earlier body of work “Pretend You’re Actually Alive,” 2000–2008, depicts her in a variety of erotic scenarios. In contrast, the woman in “An Invitation” was a stranger who solicited the artist to take these photos for her husband (a contract on display stipulates that the couple and Ledare each receive one set). There is no more mother here, but in Ledare’s debut show at Mitchell-Innes & Nash, the artist’s fraught relations with female subjects are visible everywhere.



**Leigh Ledare, *An Invitation: Friday, July 22, 2011, 2012*,**  
 photolithograph on archival newsprint, silkscreen  
 and pencil, 91 1/4 by 47 3/4".

The second series on view, “Double Bind,” 2010/2012, consists of two sets of photographs of the same woman—Meghan Ledare-Fedderly—taken by Ledare (Ledare-Fedderly is the artist’s ex-wife) and Adam Fedderly (Ledare-Fedderly’s current husband) in the same remote location several months apart. In a brief, text Ledare describes the series as a “comparative structure” that then overlays with advertisements and erotica collected by the artist. Three vitrines in the center of the gallery show Ledare’s and Fedderly’s photos, and the collected print ephemera. Among the highly idiosyncratic archive one document is particularly elucidating: a *Life* review of Simone de Beauvoir’s *The Coming of Age*, 1970, the feminist chieftain’s tome on society’s discordant relationship to the elderly and aging. While the female muse obviously continues to be Ledare’s sustenance, the passage of time as it is refracted through both the camera lens and webs of human relations appear to be the force driving his work.

— Chelsea Haines