

Scott, Andrea. "Beverly Semmes", THE NEW YORKER, 21 February 2014.



The artist's drawings are a lighthearted riposte to a post-feminist culture in which pole dancing is considered an act of female empowerment. Semmes, who is best known for her sculptures in fabric and clay (examples of each are on view), inherited a stash of porn magazines from a neighbor a decade ago and started painting on the pages. Based on the evidence here, the game has some rules: eyes, hands, and feet can be seen, but that's about it. The coverup reads as both censorship and protection, especially in works where the redactions occur in short, swift, repetitive marks that suggest knitted stitches. The Dada collages of Hannah Hoch are an obvious precedent, but the works also recall the faked splotches of ectoplasm in early-twentieth-century spirit photography, as if Semmes were reuniting bodies and souls. Through March 15.

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