

Reviews: New York

Ariane Lopez-Huici

New York Studio School

Most of the subjects in Ariane Lopez-Huici's show of black-and-white photographs were beyond fat, even beyond obese—they were mainly gargantuan naked women with huge droopy breasts, mountainous bellies, and meaty, larded thighs. And yet they seemed quite happy with their proportions. As posed by the photographer, they made reference to all kinds of art-historical precedents—an Ingres harem, nudes by Titian and Rubens, Cézanne's bathers—without specific quotation.

The 2007 series "Triumph" and "Rebelles," in which four models are casually but carefully grouped, achieve a monumentality that is right up there with the reclining women on the Parthenon's pediment. The overall mood in these images is one of accepting the body for what it is. Some pho-



Ariane Lopez-Huici, from series "Rebelles," 2007, black-and-white photograph, 24" x 20".
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tographs, such as those of the model named Dahlia, project an infectious and sassy exuberance, while the quiet family groupings of Anne, Enrique, and their toddler daughter are filled with pride and contentment.

Although the women were certainly the scene-stealers in the show, Lopez-Huici's subtler side, which delights in ambiguity, was also in evidence. The cropped anatomies in *Les Amants*, Paris, 1995 plainly represent

two people having sex, but is the encounter tender or brutal? The same might be asked of the two black men in *Adama & Omar*, Dakar, 2003—are they locked in an intense embrace—or a struggle?

This show raised a lot of interesting questions and served as a reminder that conventional standards of beauty are no longer absolute and unnuanced. Artists like John Currin, Lisa Yuskavage, and Jenny Saville, along with Lopez-Huici, seem to be invested in rebelling against mainstream stereotypes. Look beyond fashion, advertising, and the movies, they seem to say, and you'll find beauty in all kinds of unlikely places.

—Ann Landi