

# METRO PICTURES

Linnert, Nicholas. "Louise Lawler at Metro Pictures," *Artforum.com* (July 15, 2014).

## ARTFORUM



Image courtesy of Metro Pictures.

Louise Lawler's exhibition "NO DRONES" traces the forms of some of her most cited and contested photographs, exchanging color and shadow for reedy, suggestive black lines that interrogate an image's construction and potential for reading. As Lawler's prior works have acquired a comfortable aura of notoriety and value within the presentational and commercial apparatus they critique, the artist pivots back onto these referents, reconstructing them as phantom pictures.

*Hand On Her Back (traced)*, 1997/1998/2013, an inkjet print on vinyl adhered to a wall, directly confronts viewers passing through one of the gallery's aluminum-lined thresholds. It delineates Lawler's photograph of a cast sculpture depicting Aphrodite on casters at the New York Academy of Fine Arts. The print's spare, languid marks elegantly toy with viewer desire, as if to reference what remains of the original photograph's subtle critique after it collected critical acclaim and commercial appeal. This image also returns in a number of smaller, framed prints on which the artist has colored in some outlines with gouache. Covering the entirety of another wall, *Pollock and Tureen (traced)*, 1984/2013, traces one of the artist's most celebrated images—a domestic scene in which a floral tureen foregrounds the Jackson Pollock drip painting behind it—with baroque grandeur. Here the massive, imposing scale of installation approximates the 1984 work's considerable position within art history and elevated exchange value. Marking its reappearance largely through absence, the vinyl image's spectral, monochrome quality strikes a seductive visual paradox worthy of interpretation.

In representing some of her most recognizable works, Lawler makes space for more to be seen. While today's effluence of images renders pictures increasingly disposable, here the artist subversively continues extending the life span of her photographic work to reengage critical analysis. Living past their previous incarnations, the tracings are indeed like ghosts in the gallery: haunting, seductive, mercurial, evasive.