

Noah Becker, "Ruben Natal-San Miguel 'Women R Beautiful' at Postmasters Gallery," Whitehot Magazine, March, 2020



Noah Becker's



of contemporary art

Ruben Natal-San Miguel "Women R Beautiful" at Postmasters Gallery



RUBEN NATAL-SAN MIGUEL, *The End of Day is a Drag (Halal Food)*, 2019, dye sublimation on aluminum, 24 x 30 inches, 61 x 76 cm, edition of 3, image courtesy of Postmasters, New York, NY and the artist.

By **NOAH BECKER** March, 2020

The first thing one notices when looking at photos by Ruben Natal-San Miguel, is his mastery of color, light and composition - the three most important aspects of picture making. But Mr. Natal-San Miguel understands how contrast (which is also extremely important), resonates with human emotions shown through his precise selection of New York City personalities.

Postmasters Gallery in New York City, opened just for me - a private view of the gallery during the current international COVID-19 outbreak and crisis. I feel that it was very brave of Magda Sawon to open her gallery at this time - even for a visit from one person. I walked across the Brooklyn Bridge that day and felt how things were different, even as I walked uptown on an empty Broadway later on - things were really different. But we practiced social distancing during the gallery visit, while I studied the enigmatic photographs of Mr. Natal-San Miguel.



RUBEN NATAL-SAN MIGUEL, I'll Take Manhattan (Wigstock), 2018, dye sublimation on aluminum, 16 x 16 inches, 40.5 x 40.5 cm, edition of 3

I've been a friend and admirer of Mr. San-Miguel and his work for a number of years now. Mr. San-Miguel is a larger than life personality and it comes through in his photos. Magda Sawon had much to say about his work when I was in the gallery:

"Ruben takes this very different approach towards what a description or a definition of the woman can be now," Sawon said, "and that stretches beyond birth-given gender." She continued: "It stretches beyond race, age, sexuality, class, and religion. All of these aspects are in those 50 photographs, so it is a much more current, much more inclusive representing the way the world and the women are now. He has this essential skill of just capturing a personality and capturing the moment and capturing the circumstance, that each of these photographs tells you something beyond just pure depiction."

Sawon continued, "The iconography of every image, you look and you read that at the same time. It has this very powerful presence of these women dominating each and every picture. Sometimes, it's a headshot and sometimes it's a group of female police officers ready for a parade. Sometimes it's twins; sometimes it's three Muslim women; Sometimes it's an old white lady with a special haircut - Sometimes it's a transgender person. Sometimes you see the face reflected in the mirror, and you see the back from the character. There are so many layers - two women as personalities or personas or characters are never the same." **WM**