

# LEIGH LEDARE

THE CONFECTIONER'S CONFECTIONER

16 APRIL – 5 JUNE 2010

Private view: Thursday 15 April 6–8pm

Gallery open: Monday to Friday 10am–6pm, Saturday 11am–6pm



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Pilar Corrias Gallery is delighted to present *The Confectioner's Confectioner*, an exhibition of new work by Leigh Ledare.

Leigh Ledare is an artist working with photography, archives, video and text. Ledare's first solo show at the gallery centres around a unique body of work which forms an archive of the artist's relationship with his mother whilst creating a discursive site. As such the exhibition traces the negotiation of their respective relationships to agency, representation, self-presentation, and authorship, alongside issues proposed by the enactment of the contents of this project in the context of the real world.

At the age of fifty, already having begun to cultivate a highly sexualised persona, Ledare's mother, Tina Peterson, a former professional ballerina, approached her son to document her for posterity. Occupying the main gallery, the resulting photographs exist neither as a diaristic work, nor simply as portraits of a highly sexualised persona, but as an investigation of the nature of our formation as subjects and its relation to broader shifting cultural forces. Shown alongside texts and archived ephemera, Ledare's portraits of his mother reveal subversive responses, instances of sexuality and vulnerability tactically deployed to multiple economic, personal and psychological ends. Ledare proposes that his mother's complex subjectivity stems not from a failure to perform a multitude of various roles, but from a simultaneous occupation of an abundance of imagined modes, rooted in the performative, that cannot be reconciled.

In the lower gallery, the continuous shifts between the performative and the real, and the public and the private are played out in three video works screened in London for the very first time. Shown together in close succession, *Shoulder*, *The Model* and *The Gift* (all 2008) explore the agency carried as artist/muse, son/mother/, archivist/performer. The latter work *The Gift* was created from existing video footage originally intended for a soft-core commercial fetish video shot by Ledare's mother and two family friends. The tapes were sent unsolicited to the artist on condition that he create something with the otherwise discarded material. Ledare responded by editing out all aspects of the filmmaker's original intention, making visible the real armature for the filmmaker's missing narrative.

The various registers of authorship related to the roles of model and photographer are further explored in the Personal Commissions series of 2008 in which the artist answered personal ads placed by women whose desires echoed those of his mother's, and paid them to photograph him in their homes, in a scenario of their choice. Complicating this body of work are a number of photographs from a series entitled *Collector's Commissions* in which a selection of collectors were invited to photograph Ledare within the context of their own art collection. These works bring the nature of the solicitation in these situations to the fore, exposing the differences in both the creation of value and the extraction of surplus value from each situation.

*The Confectioner's Confectioner* serves as an investigation of how we are formed as subjects, not merely at the level of our own identities but also at the level of our desires, aspirations and needs – drives which often carry conflicting material, psychological and ethical demands.

Born in Seattle, Washington in 1976, Leigh Ledare received his MFA from Columbia University in 2008. A major solo exhibition of the artist's work, *Pretend You're Actually Alive*, was held at Les Rencontres de Arles, Arles, France in 2009. Ledare has also exhibited at the Swiss Insitute New York (2009); Deutsche Guggenheim, Berlin (2008); International Center of Photography, New York (2008); and Prague Biennale (2009). Leigh Ledare lives and works in New York City and Los Angeles. He is currently Visiting Professor of Photography and Media at California Institute for the Arts.

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