

ART IN REVIEW

'Inspired'

By KEN JOHNSON

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521 West 23rd Street

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Through Aug. 13



Courtesy of the artist and Steven Kasher Gallery, New York

Chase Koopersmith's "Hush Hush," 2010, based on a more famous picture, from "Inspired" at Steven Kasher Gallery.

Photographs often are inspired as much by other photographs as by what they picture. Organized by the art collector Beth Rudin DeWoody, "Inspired" makes this explicit. Each of the nearly 60 pictures on display at Steven Kasher is more or less directly modeled on a famous photograph. The better-known exemplars are not in the show, but thumbnails of them are on the checklist, and it is fascinating to compare the new with the old.

In many cases the source is obvious. [David Benjamin Sherry](#) recreated [Robert Mapplethorpe](#)'s pantless self-portrait in which he holds a whip as if it were a long tail. Mr. Sherry has tinted his photograph smoldering red, bringing out the satanic implications of the original.

Others are more subtle. Nonprofessionals might not realize that [LaToya Ruby Frazier](#)'s recent picture of a tall, elegant black woman in a black pantsuit smoking on a cobblestone street copies one of a white model from 1975 by [Helmut Newton](#), or that [Greg Friedler](#)'s 1998 portrait of a young woman named Pilar sitting at a table with bared breasts is based on one of a prostitute named Pilar from E. J. Bellocq's early 20th-century Storyville series.

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Courtesy of the artist and Steven Kasher Gallery, New York

Absent the checklist, you might not connect [Henny Garfunkel](#)'s 1989 publicity still of [Johnny Depp](#) in a hayloft for the movie "Cry-Baby" to George Hurrell's steamy 1941 portrait of [Jane Russell](#) in "The Outlaw" from 1941, but you may be unconsciously aware of an echo giving the later picture a certain uncanny resonance.

This exhibition is a good lesson in how photographs work in the modern, photographically saturated psyche. **KEN JOHNSON**

Henny Garfunkel's portrait of Johnny Depp for "Cry-Baby," 1989, based on George Hurrell's 1941 portrait of Jane Russell, from "Inspired" at Steven Kasher Gallery.

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