

At White Columns, Bouffant Hair Is a Vintage Ball-and-Chain

Blake Gopnik, Monday, March 23, 2015



THE DAILY PIC: This is one of many chilling images from "Margret: Chronicle of an Affair – May 1969 to December 1970," a gripping exhibition at White Columns in New York, where it was organized in collaboration with Galerie Susanne Zander / Delmes & Zander, Cologne. The show is built around the discovery, a few years back, of a briefcase full of mementoes gathered during the course of an 18-month affair between a German boss and his secretary. The whole archive—mostly photos of the woman and typed, almost clinical, records of the sex the couple they had—is a fine and cautionary reminder of the state of gender relations at the time: the overall impression is of a man who feels that he owns the woman he is sleeping with, because he has taken control of her body. (He even gets ahold of, and catalogues, the empty packaging from her birth-control pills.) Somehow, the ultimate symbol of the man's control is the absurd bouffant hairdo that the woman wears in almost all of the photos, regardless of how little else she has on. It feels to me like a giant handicap that her culture has foisted on her— a notably stylish ball-and-chain. (Photo courtesy White Columns, New York)