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Chelsea 57thSt. SoHo TriBeCa

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Janieta Eyre
 October 9th to November 15th.
 Christineroose Gallery, 529 West 20th Street (212) 206-0927.



Janieta Eyre *Self-Portrait as Mrs. Charles Costello*, 1997. C-print, 39 x 29 inches. Courtesy Christineroose.

WOW. Just when you'd given up hope for the art world, as sometimes happens when one drags from one bad painting show to the next in Chelsea, and the paintings are big, bad re-workings of good artists like Jean Dubuffet and Philip Guston; just when that happens, you see a show that breathes hope into the soul. And Janieta Eyre, whose large photographs are not always one hundred percent serious but also not one hundred percent silly, has taken such great care with the technical aspect of the work that that aspect disappears, and the gallery has taken such great care to paint the walls the most shocking, provocative, passionate red that one might ever see upon a wall, that something for sure is bound to happen to the one who does go and pay attention to these double portraits. There is enough of the macabre in each photograph to keep the viewer from thinking that a picture of the artist sticking her finger up her nose is gratuitously humorous; she's in period costume with forks for buttons; she stands on a grid of linoleum tile in front of a landscape backdrop; in the background we see her again, pointing to a non-descript spot on the floor—behind her there's a target. (*Self-Portrait as Mrs. Charles Costello*, 1997.) The artist mixes so many metaphors and the fashions of so many eras and artists, that any number of readings might occur. Though visual clues may lead us in a particular direction, the artist herself, a 31-year old English woman who lives and works in Canada, endorses the viewer to invent her own reading. And one constant remains: the double portrait of the artist, who seems to press the issue of the identity of her self.