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Ren Hang at MAMA Gallery
July 17 2016

Currently on view at MAMA gallery in Los Angeles, photographer Ren Hang's most recent exhibition *What We Do is Secret* is as succinctly rebellious as the track off The Germ's 1979 album from which the exhibition takes its name.

Though not a publicly political figure, Hang's decidedly provocative images are a bold statement in the highly censored climate of his native China. Born in Changchun in 1987, Hang is all too familiar with the ramifications of his work; he has been arrested multiple times for violating obscenity laws.

His saturated snapshots often feature models sporting nothing more than crimson lips and stoic glares, but it's the surreal compositions he captures that capture the eye. Working with his models as if they were materials in a sculpture, Hang stacks and intertwines bodies into nearly unrecognizable forms. Famously unplanned, his images retain an improvisational feel despite their highly considered poses. It's a view of the human figure that is neither sexualized nor fully divorced from the baser human impulses, as a whole they provide a near complete image of his surreal view of human experience.

His simple technique has decidedly bold ramifications. Almost exclusively making use of friends as models and shooting with a simple point and shoot camera designed for vacation snapshots, he manages to create work that is transcendent. His vision of modern youth is not unlike that of contemporaries like Ryan McGinley, in all its lush and playful beauty.

Extended through the 30th of July, *What We Do is Secret* is on view at the MAMA Gallery in Los Angeles.