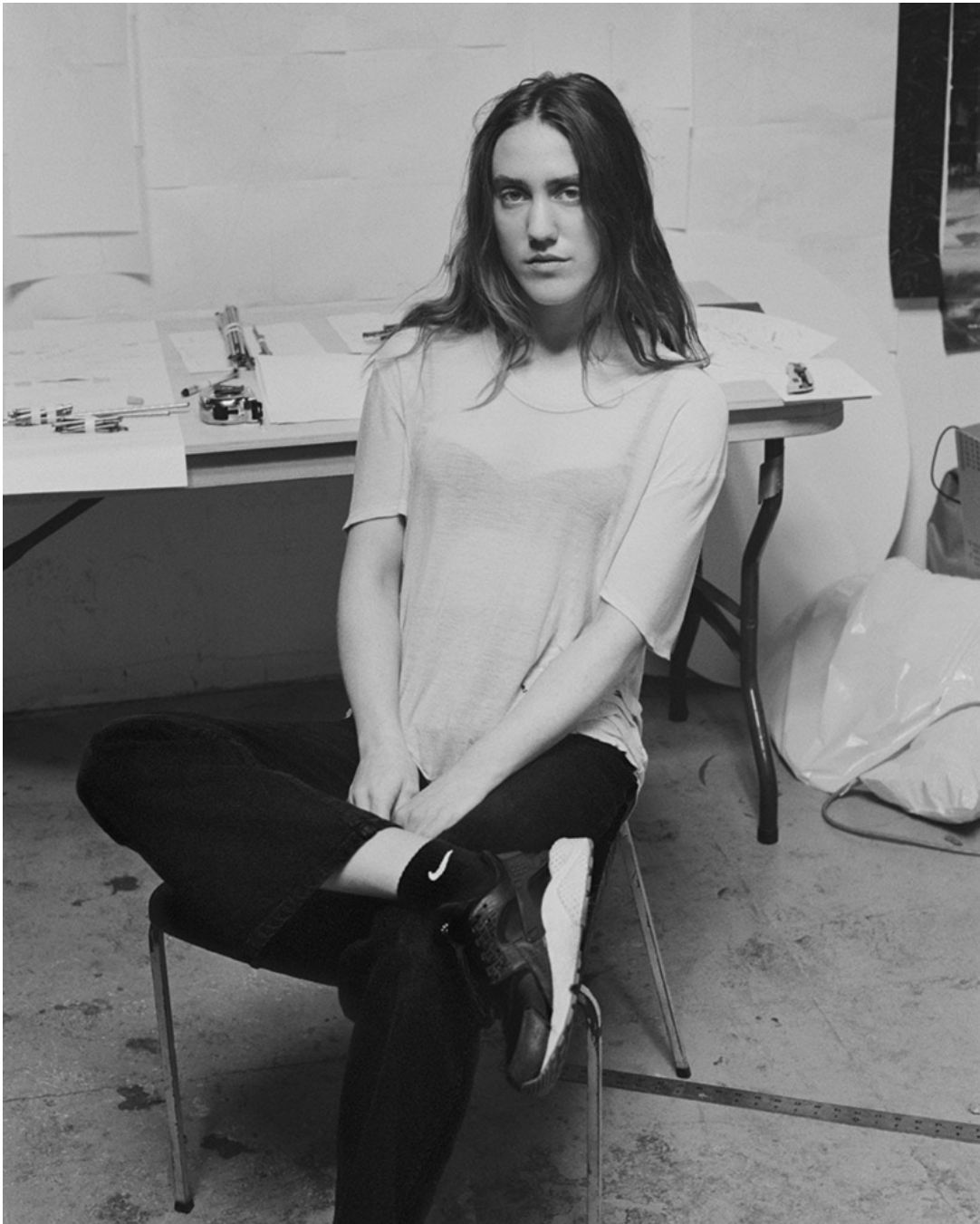


Interview

VALERIE KEANE BLURS THE LINES BETWEEN ART AND PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

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Valerie Keane grew up in a family of engineers who instilled in her an appreciation for the way things are made. “If you have an idea about how something should feel, you can construct it to put the viewer closer to that emotion,” says the 28-year-old artist. “There is meaning in how things are assembled.” In her own practice, the New York-based Cooper Union alumnus employs various industrial techniques— laser cutting and drilling—to create phantomlike acrylic sculptures that hang from the ceiling. Keane’s forms, which she puts together in her studio in Red Hook, Brooklyn, could be read as abstract figures; her intention is to augment reality rather than represent it. The mirrored surfaces of her cut acrylic sheets reflect their surroundings, further blurring the line between art and environment. “It’s important for me that things exist in an in-between state,” she says.

This January, Keane will open her first museum exhibition at Dallas Contemporary, where she plans to use dramatic lighting to break up the museum’s mammoth halls. Guided by the principles of set design, her intention is to disturb the viewers’ relationships to time and space—if only for an instant. Keane’s attraction to momentary immersions stems from the inspiration she finds in literature, opera, and film. “Good cinematographers are the real masters of space,” says the self-described sci-fi enthusiast. “If you can piece together disparate architectures through time, and make it believable, that is the ultimate domination of a viewer. I’m obsessed with built worlds where a set of circumstances can create a new reality.”