

Leah Ollman, 'Art review: Leigh Ledare at the Box', LA Times, 5 April 2012



## Art review: Leigh Ledare at the Box



Complicated doesn't begin to describe the relationships that Leigh Ledare cultivates and documents in his work. The gamut runs from tender through troubling to taboo. In recent photographs, videos and an installation at the Box, the New York-based Ledare mines connections and disconnections between himself, his mother, his ex-wife and assorted strangers. The show is fascinating throughout for its twisted takes on intimacy, vulnerability and the shifting balance of control between individuals on either side of the lens.

Each of Ledare's works starts as a conceptual proposition: What if he answered "Women Seeking Men" ads and paid the women to stage a portrait of him in their own setting, according to their own naked desires? What if he re-presented fragmented footage of a soft-porn video his mother and her friends once made, leaving audible the directorial cues, heightening the artifice?

The show's physical and emotional centerpiece is "Double Bind," a 20-by-40-foot room built within the gallery. Photographs and collages hang on the walls and pictures, a marriage certificate, postcards and old magazines fill three standing cases.

The photographs record two short trips that Ledare's ex-wife made to a cabin in upstate New York -- one with him and one with her current husband, also a photographer. The collection of images and ephemera reads like an extended scrapbook -- piecemeal and discontinuous, an open-ended

meditation on how much the holder of the camera is in charge and yet how little, ultimately, he knows about what he shoots.

-- Leah Ollman

**The Box**, 805 Traction Ave., L.A., (213) 625-1747, through April 21. Closed Sundays through Tuesdays. [www.theboxla.com](http://www.theboxla.com)

*Image: A selection from Leigh Ledare's "Double Bind" (2010), gelatin silver prints and ephemera on board. Credit: Fredrik Nilsen / the Box.*