
MARIANNA SIMNETT

Through Jan. 22. Seventeen, 214 Bowery, Manhattan; 917-873 4115, seventeengallery.com.

In the early 1970s, a strain of Endurance art appeared in which artists did things like cut themselves or had themselves shot at with a .22-caliber rifle. These performances were difficult to watch — and that was the point.

In “Lies” at Seventeen on the Lower East Side, Marianna Simnett offers two works that follow in this tradition. “Faint With Light” (2016) is a sound-and-light installation for which Ms. Simnett hyperventilated until she lost consciousness, multiple times. Horizontal rows of LED lights installed in a dark room rise with a soundtrack of her breathing and go dark when she passes out.

“The Needle and the Larynx” (2016) is a 15-minute video in which a doctor injects Botox into Ms. Simnett’s larynx, which has the effect of lowering the pitch of her voice. Visuals of the procedure are accompanied by Ms. Simnett’s telling a made-up fairy tale about a girl threatening a surgeon to make her voice lower or, if he refuses, she will cause the temperature to rise until mosquitoes feast on his blood. The denouement has Ms. Simnett speaking in a creepy, low voice.

In their bodily hardships, Ms. Simnett’s works call to mind waterboarding at Guantánamo Bay and Eric Garner’s last words, “I can’t breathe,” before dying at the hands of the police in 2014. But Ms. Simnett chose the hardships in these works rather than being subjected to them against her will. And herein lies the complexity of both Endurance art and fairy tales: They remind us of what it means to inhabit a body, of the violence we inflict on others and, paradoxically, our capacity for empathy.

MARTHA SCHWENDENER