

Household Portrait

Nora Rosenthal

January 23 to March 21, 2026

Care as a driver of creation traverses many contemporary art practices. It's within this tradition that we can analyse Nora Rosenthal's recent work. The artist has created a series of works that document the process of the end of her mother's life. This includes the documentary *Nine Easy Dances* (2023), which follows the daily life of the trio formed by Rosenthal, her father, and her mother in a caregiving context. Two years later, Rosenthal published *Words of the Angel*, an artist book composed of texts, Polaroids, and drawings bearing witness to the last six months of her mother's life.

Rosenthal continues this exploration in the video work *Household Portrait* (2025) presented in OBORO's Second Gallery, which allows it to retain a level of intimacy in terms of its reception. More experimental in style than the documentary, the work is projected in the corner of the room so as to surround visitors with successive images.

Rosenthal presents her childhood home as a family portrait. This important place has taken on the imprint of the people who live there and who have left their traces. The house becomes the main character of the work, reminding us that this emblematic place was able to provide a peaceful environment for the artist's mother at the end of her life. *Household Portrait* begins with a rapid presentation of each room's floor plan onto which real images of the space are superposed. Through these sequences, we feel the void left behind by the person who has died, as well as the anguish that makes us dwell on the recollections we hold onto, those that remain firmly fixed in our memory and those that disappear with time.

Furthermore, the use of images captured by surveillance cameras creates a certain distance from subject. In this case, the house itself seems to get lost in its many representations just like the artist as she occupies different rooms: we see her in the shower, or wandering the dark hallways of the house, her body wracked by jerking motions, evoking a presence which is all the more abstract for having been captured by a night-vision camera. It is not possible to see all the successive series of images at once. Viewers must choose where to look, on what element to focus, when to shift their gaze elsewhere, and when to return. This fragmented way of presenting the history of the family home emphasizes her mother's absence and shows that some things escape us when we are in mourning. After death, the house is still there, the rooms haven't changed,

her mother's bedroom still seems to contain her presence in the cats sleeping on the bed. As viewers, we must follow the artist's voice and the story she is telling us: that of feeling an immense emptiness.

The exhibition at OBORO makes the experience of mourning tangible. Nora Rosenthal invites us into her family bubble with great generosity. Her parents' involvement in the creation of the works is essential. The fact that they are artists themselves certainly contributed to making the processes of mourning and creating in parallel more natural. The connection between these two aspects of *Household Portrait*, felt through the surveillance images, makes it possible to retain a memory of the environment in which the artist's family has evolved over time. The cats walking between the rooms, the piles of objects, the paintings and photographs on the walls, the books spread all over the place. This house is alive. It retains the imprint of a life; it is a memory for those who remain behind.

— Manon Tourigny
Translated by Oana Avasilichioaei



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