

jessica craig-martin captures the glittering imperfection of high society parties

The NYC-based photographer shoots the world's most extravagant parties for some of its glossiest magazines. In her exhibition 'Public Relations,' she zooms in on the moments that don't make it into their pages.



Who hasn't felt like an outsider amongst well-heeled guests at an over-elaborate party? Jessica Craig-Martin captures this feeling with a mixture of curiosity, humor, and tragedy. The NYC-based photographer's high-society assignments for *The New Yorker* and *Vanity Fair* have granted her access to the world's most exclusive soirées, a knowledge of her subjects's obsession with clothes and social codes, and a keen interest in what happens when the artifice cracks open. Those tiny cracks amongst the sequins and toothy smiles are what she most enjoys capturing.



"I have always instinctually photographed the object of my desire with an unapologetically zoomed in crop," Craig-Martin says of the sometimes brutally close-up images that aren't printed in her clients' glossy magazines. "Perhaps this highlights a slightly surreal or isolated quality which I do feel when I am in these situations. I often automatically crop out eyes. They tell too much. I am not interested in the identity of individuals or in celebrities or in lampooning anyone. I see the guests as framed within a larger cultural phenomenon, in which I am also complicit as its documentarian. The on-camera flash declares my presence. I am part of the problem."

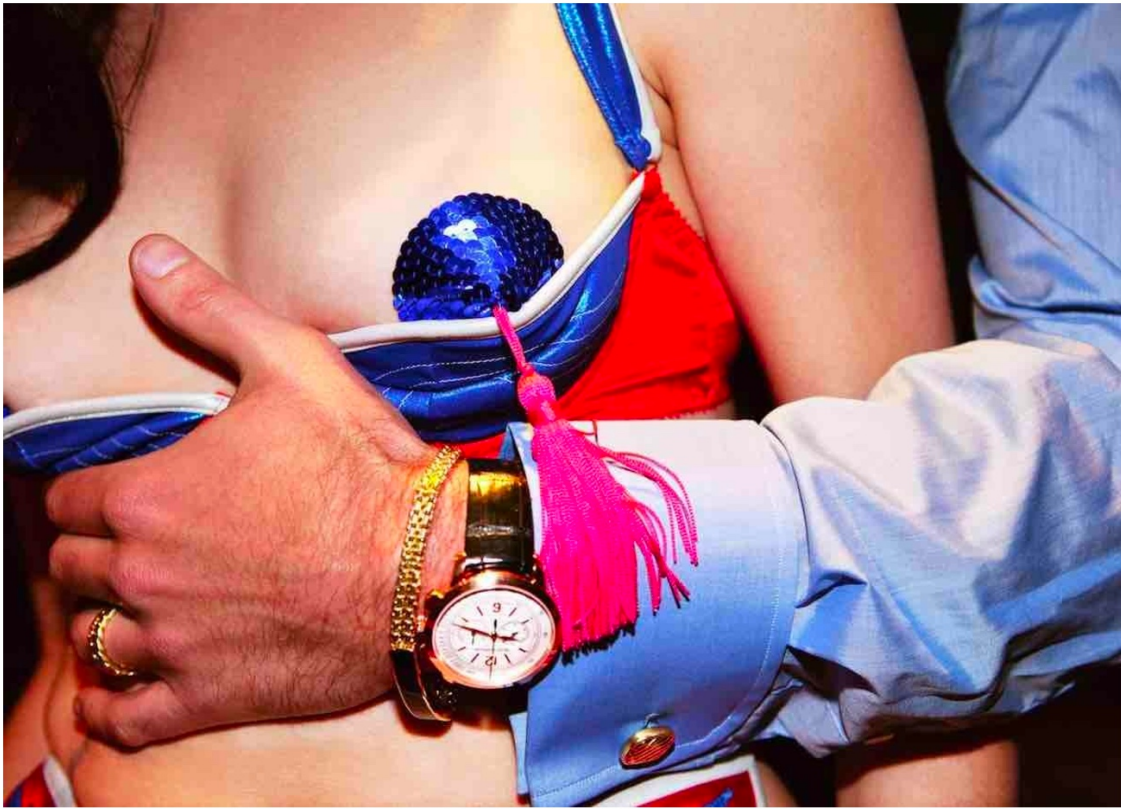


Craig-Martin's exhibition at [Natalie Karg](#) lets the viewer join her as a fly on the wall of these extravagant parties. Candid and tightly cropped snapshots reveal not only what the guests don't see, but what they probably don't want shown. Perfect of waves of platinum blonde hair fail to obscure a wrinkled eye, a busboy's chaotic pile of glittering cutlery contrasts with a table layout fit for a Rockefeller, and a heavily accessorized man's arm wrapped around a mystery woman's ribcage appears both invited and not. As Craig-Martin has said of these moments, "the photographs occur in the place between desire and disappointment."

"Public Relations" is on at New York's Natalie Karg gallery until April 16, 2017.









Credits

Text Hannah Ongley

Photographs courtesy Nathalie Karg Gallery and Jessica Craig-Martin