

KATY GRANNAN
Mystic Lake
September 9th – November 4th, 2005

Fifty One Fine Art Photography is pleased to present the exhibition of new work by Katy Grannan. Like the previous series, Mystic Lake features portraits of ordinary people exposing themselves, physically and psychologically, in public settings. All of the subjects were unknown to Grannan and some are respondents to ads the artist placed in local newspapers. Grannan empowers them to suggest poses, locations, and states of undress. Each project explores the desire to be immortalized in a still image and Grannan does this in a rich and complex way, she photographs a wide variety of portrait sitters with frankness, while also maintaining their mystery.

Grannan continues portrait photography in a highly personal style. Her portraits swing from referencing Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres or Edouard Manet to mimicking pin-ups or fashion photographs. Her subjects are not aristocrats or stars, but rather unknown middleclass Americans who call her to transform them, if only for a day. This fusion gives them an awkward familiarity. They ultimately fail, however, to be either a traditional portrait commission or an image for the glossies.

The works of the new color series entitled "Mystic River" are large-scale c-prints and were all made outdoors. In the final images public space is transformed into private theatre. In this body of work, the illusion is no longer one of being a glamorous airbrushed model, but rather the fantasy becomes the act of being photographed. Grannan has snapped the picture before they got comfortable, and long before they developed any confidence in their first-time performance as models.

Grannan's process is quick; each portrait is taken within the short span of three hours. She gives her subjects little instruction. The photographs are deliberate yet not highly staged. Previously the black and white series entitled "Morning Call" consisted of small scale portraits made in the private homes of her sitters. Grannan began this series around Allentown, PA and photographs the inhabitants and interiors of an area documented by Walker Evans in the 1930s and 40s. She also uses a documentary style in a subjective description of the complex psychological landscape of her sitters and the dynamic between the artist and her subject.

The power of these images lies in the uneasy relationship between a romantic notion of art's ability to transcend the everyday and the awkward reality that we are all exactly who we are no matter when, where, or how we are represented.

Katy Grannan received her BFA from the University of Pennsylvania and her MFA from Yale University. The artist has exhibited at the Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao, The Palm Beach Institute of Contemporary Art, The Los Angeles County Museum of Art, CA, The Orange County Museum of Art, LA, CA, and The International Center of Photography, NY, among others. Her work is in the collections of The Metropolitan Museum of Art,

NY, the Whitney Museum, NY, The Guggenheim Museum, NY and the National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington D.C., and has been featured in ArtForum, Frieze, Flash Art, and The New York Times Magazine, among others.

Her monograph "Model American " is being published by Aperture and will be released early September.