



left: Katy Grannan, *Dee*, Red Hook, NY, 2003, silver gelatin print, 20 x 16 inches. Courtesy Greenberg Van Doren, New York
right: Sarah Jones, *The Park*, 2002, C-print on aluminum, 60 x 60 inches. Collection Darrel and Marsha Anderson, Newport Beach. Courtesy Maureen Paley Interim Art, London

Exhibition Catalog:

Girls' Night Out is accompanied by a full-color catalog and includes essays by the exhibition curators Elizabeth Armstrong and Irene Hofmann as well as by Finnish art historian Taru Elfving and video and film scholar Bill Horrigan, curator of media arts at the Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, Ohio.

Curator & Artist Tour:
Saturday, September 17
1:00 pm

Exhibition Curator Elizabeth Armstrong will lead a tour of the exhibition with artists Dorit Cypis, Katy Grannan, and Kelly Nipper.

Curator Talk:
Friday, October 21
7:00 pm

Irene Hofmann: *Girl, Interrupted: A New Generation of Women Photographers and Video Artists*

Presented in conjunction with the 2005 MidWest Society for Photographic Education Regional Conference

Girls' Night Out was organized by the Orange County Museum of Art, Newport Beach, California. It is co-curated by Elizabeth Armstrong, Deputy Director of Programs & Chief Curator and Irene Hoffman, Curator of Contemporary Art, both from Orange County Museum of Art.

Girls' Night Out is presented by Neutrogena **Neutrogena**

Additional support has been provided by James B. Pick and Rosalyn M. Laudati, Joan and Don Beall, Visionaries, LEF Foundation, the Women's Consortium of the Orange County Museum of Art, Christine and Jeff Masonek, FRAME Finnish Fund for Art Exchange, Patricia and Max Ellis, Anita Kunin Fund of The Minneapolis Foundation, The Consulate General of the Netherlands in Los Angeles, and an anonymous donor.

Sara Lee Corporation is the Lead Sponsor of the exhibition in St. Louis. Additional local funding has been generously provided by the Whitaker Foundation, Regional Arts Commission, Missouri Arts Council, Arts & Education Council, and Friends and Members of the Museum with in-kind support from the Chase Park Plaza Hotel.



CONTEMPORARYARTMUSEUMSTLOUIS

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GIRLS' NIGHT OUT

September 16 - December 31, 2005

CONTEMPORARYARTMUSEUMSTLOUIS



GIRLS' NIGHT OUT

Eija-Liisa Ahtila Elina Brotherus Dorit Cypis Rineke Dijkstra Katy Grannan

The exhibition *Girls' Night Out* presents groundbreaking photography and video by two generations of female artists who embrace a more evocative and poetic approach to female identity. Their work over the last decade shares themes such as youth culture, new notions of beauty, and a lyrical expression of the inner desires, dreams, and aspirations of their subjects.

Girls' Night Out, explores the work of a young generation of women artists—working primarily in photography and video—who incorporate many key issues of postmodernism associated with feminism, yet articulated in poetic, quasi-documentary and non-ironic modes. The conceptual and aesthetic stance of these artists is resonant with the legacy of issues related to gender, sexuality and its significance in culture, but not necessarily the major theme of the work or *raison d'être* for the artists' careers.

While an earlier generation of artists dealt with social and political themes in their work by reverting to the use of provocation and didacticism, the artists in *Girls' Night Out* employ a very different means of expression. In place of the use of satire and irony to convey their points, this younger generation's work has a quasi-documentary feel and a directness of approach. Within this rubric, this generation is engaged with such classical art genres as self-portraiture and portraiture (especially the passage from girlhood to adulthood), architectural subjects, and landscape. Formally rigorous and aesthetically resolved, this seemingly traditional imagery appears to be embedded with a lyrical and psychological atmosphere and, in some work, even a romantic quality. Along with revisiting classical subject matter, the artists in *Girls' Night Out* are engaged in fresh and provocative inquiries into such loaded themes as beauty, narrative, melodrama, power, personal and social space, and nature/culture.

Such an undertaking would not be poignant or invigorating without the high standards of *factura* and rigor found in this work. Formally, these postfeminist artists operate with a high degree of 'literacy' in diverse

Sarah Jones Kelly Nipper Daniela Rossell Shirana Shahbazi Salla Tykkä

media. They decide upon and employ photography or moving images when the theme and its research require it. While for the most part purist and self-referential in formal terms, many of the artists in *Girls' Night Out* make reference to or operate within registers drawn from documentary, journalistic, fashion and ethnographic fields; this in turn adds a hybrid layering to their evocative work.

The artists featured in *Girls' Night Out* are clustered around two distinct generations that are linked by their keen awareness of feminism and postmodernism. The pioneering figures include Dorit Cypis (b. 1951, lives in Los Angeles); Eija-Liisa Ahtila (b. 1959, lives in Helsinki); Sarah Jones (b. 1959, lives in London); and Rineke Dijkstra (b. 1959, lives in Amsterdam). Inspired by them and complicating their line of inquiry are Katy Grannan (b. 1969, lives in Los Angeles); Kelly Nipper (1971, lives in Los Angeles); Elina Brotherus (b. 1972, lives in Paris); Salla Tykkä (b. 1973, lives in Helsinki); Daniela Rossell (b. 1973, lives in Mexico City); and Shirana Shahbazi (b. 1974, lives in Zurich).

Now part of the global scene, with a postmodern and feminist legacy, the artists in *Girls' Night Out* engage our zeitgeist in creative and critical ways. Their quasi-documentary strategies, often focused on real people acting out their inner desires, dreams, and aspirations, or recording self-conscious and transcendent moments, embrace a psychological tension while reflecting a certain empathy. This approach comes naturally to a generation that has grown up with new media and the internet, with its overwhelming access to instant information, misinformation, documentation, and opinion. The artists in *Girls' Night Out* approach their broad and charged subject matter without being epic or heroic; conversely, their ruthless undertaking of subjectivity is characterized by an absence of victimization and pathsos.

Elizabeth Armstrong & Irene Hofmann

Images clockwise:
left: Rineke Dijkstra, *Stephany*, Saint Joseph Ballet, Orange County, California, USA, March 22, 2003, 2003, C-print, 49 5/8 x 42 1/8 inches. Collection of Darrel and Marsha Anderson, Newport Beach, CA
right: Dorit Cypis, *The Rest in Motion 1*, 2002, C-print, 42 x 57 3/4 inches. Collection Orange County Museum of Art; Museum purchase with funds provided through prior gift of Lois Outerbridge
bottom: Kelly Nipper, *Still from Bending Water into a Heart Shape*, 2003, four-channel video installation with sound dimensions variable. Collection of the Orange County Museum of Art, Newport Beach, California; Gift of the Alberta duPont Bonsal Foundation, with additional funds provided through prior gift of Lois Outerbridge

Images clockwise:
top: Eija-Liisa Ahtila, *Still from Lahja—The Present*, 2001, five-monitor installation on DVD-ROM with stereo sound, variable duration. Orange County Museum of Art; Museum purchase with funds provided through prior gift of Lois Outerbridge. Courtesy Klemens Gasser & Tanja Grunert, New York
right: Salla Tykkä, *The Sickest One*, 1997, C-print, 23 x 19 3/4 inches. Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Yvon Lambert, Paris and New York
bottom: Daniela Rossell, *Untitled (Ricas y famosas)*, 2001, Monterrey, Mexico, C-print, edition of 5, 50 x 60 inches. Courtesy Greene Naftali Inc., New York

