Afterimage Gallery, Inc.

Press Release

A Sampling of Contemporary Portraiture

September 7 to November 4, 2019

Fran Forman

Annette Elizabeth Fournet

R. J. Kern

Michael Massaia

Craig Varjabedian

Afterimage Gallery has put together an exhibit featuring five photographers who have produced some very compelling portraits. The show consists of three prints each by Fran Forman of Massachusetts, Annette Elizabeth Fournet of Tennessee, R. J. Kern of Minnesota, Michael Massaia of New Jersey, and Craig Varjabedian of New Mexico. Each brings a unique contemporary vision to the genre, and the artists are profiled below. (The show will open on the evening of the Dallas Art Dealers Association's Fall Gallery Walk, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.)

Fran Forman, (b. 1945) who lives in Massachusetts, is presently a Resident Scholar at the Women's Studies Research Center at Brandeis University. She has been in numerous shows and has won several prestigious international awards and honors for her art. We are currently exhibiting one print from her inventive series, "Noir Portals 2018-2019." Forman describes a photograph as "a portal that can take you from one perception of reality to another. And the portal becomes a crossroad…and we can only guess at which direction they will take." Also included in our show are two photographs from her series "Portraiture Redressed 2011-2018," in which she emulates the 17th century Dutch masters. In the Netherlands during this period, one's dress was determined by their social position. Her purpose is to "rectify and alter this arbitrary portrayal of one's worth. Everyone…deserves the honor of memorializing and recognition."

The exceptionally creative photography of **Annette Elizabeth Fournet** (b.1953) has been exhibited throughout the world as well as in the United States. She teaches photography in Memphis, Tennessee and in Prague, Czech Republic. In her work, "The Goddesses and Exceptional Women Series," she uses vintage portraits of women, transforming them, through the use of digital collage, into mythological goddesses or women who have made important contributions to society. Her work is her way of reacting against the repressive attitudes towards women that she sees in the world today.

R. J. Kern (b. 1978) is an artist from Minnesota who explains that his work "explores ideas of home, ancestry, and a sense of place through the interaction of people, animals, and cultural landscapes." His series, "The Unchosen Ones, "is photographed at county-fair animal contests, which culminate at the Minnesota State Fair. Kern explains his theme as, "One isn't a winner or loser, but a chooser. As we look at them, they look back, allowing us to think about how we choose winners and the repercussions for the ones not chosen."

Michael Massaia (b. 1978) is an innovative photographer from New Jersey. He uses a large-format view camera and makes his own beautiful split-toned silver prints. In reference to his series, "Deep in a Dream-Sheep Meadow-Verticals," Massaia explains, "In 2014, I began capturing individuals and couples laying in Central Park's Sheep Meadow and began printing them vertically and backwards. This seemed to heighten the mood of the subject, creating an almost anti-gravity detachment and surrender from the chaos of the surrounding city. My intention with this project was to capture people in what I considered to be perfect unassuming poses…and wait for the moment when the subjects appear to completely surrender to their environment."

Craig Varjabedian was born in Canada in 1957 and has lived in Santa Fe for decades. He has been awarded various grants, one being from the National Endowment for the Arts. He has authored several books, and his work is in many private and public collections. He has been in numerous one-person museum shows. Rather than merely documenting Native Americans, Varjabedian's portraits include "cultural, familial and ceremonial regalia and objects, and personal interactions resulting from such portrait sessions." His purpose is to "help them reassert their power over how they are represented to the rest of the world."

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