



A still life photograph featuring several pomegranates and dried flowers. One pomegranate is cut open, revealing its red seeds. The items are arranged on a light-colored, textured surface, possibly paper or fabric, with large green leaves in the background.

JOCELYN LEE

THE APPEARANCE OF THINGS
JUNE 16 – OCTOBER 14, 2018

CMCN
CENTER FOR MAINE CONTEMPORARY ART

21 Winter Street, Rockland, ME 04841
207 701 5005 | hello@cmcanow.org
  @cmcanow | #cmcanow
cmcanow.org

JOCELYN LEE

THE APPEARANCE OF THINGS

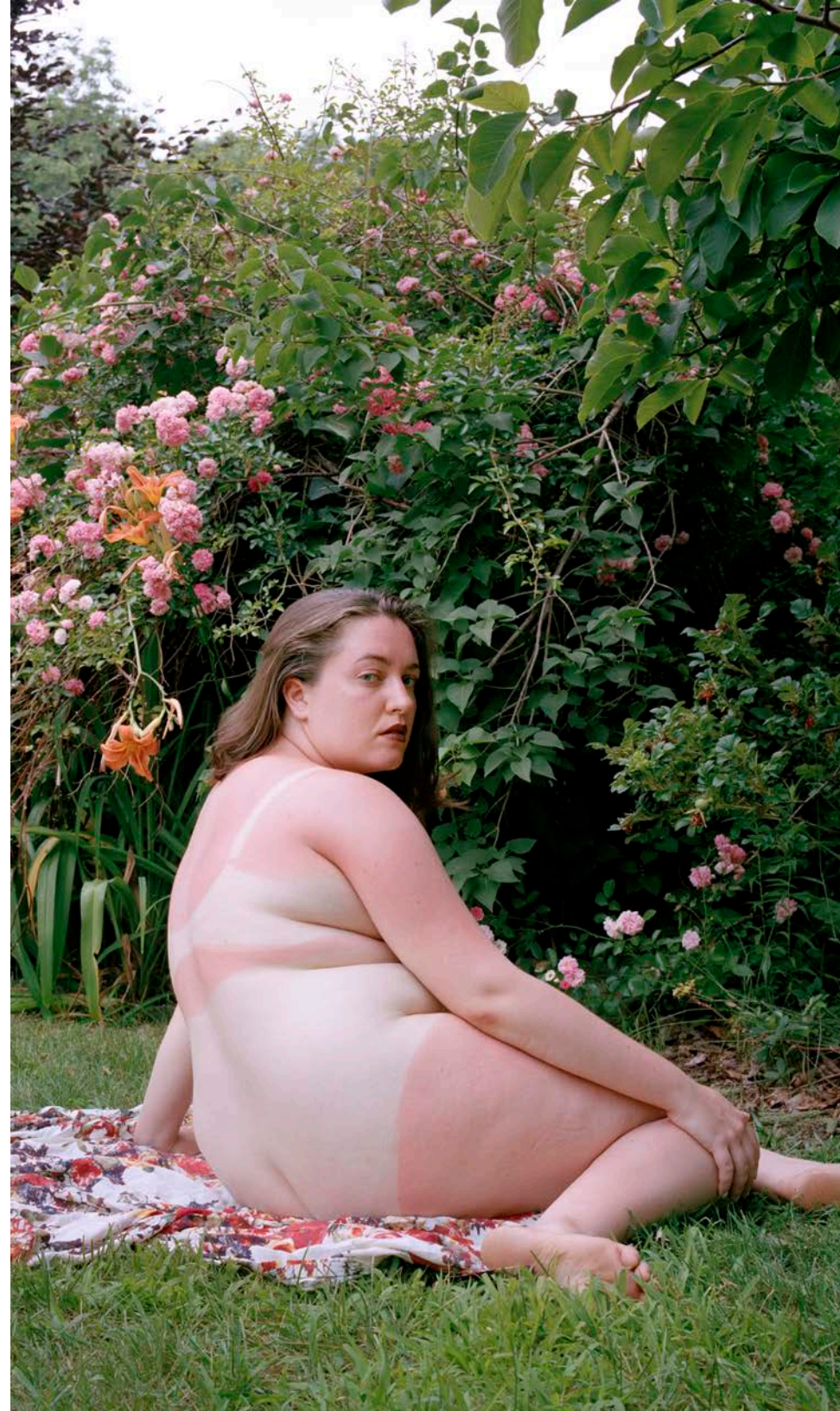
Center for Maine Contemporary Art | June 16 - October 14, 2018

A Jocelyn Lee photograph... is true to the mysteries of our lives... What is this flesh, anyway?! Are we "spirits" "in" bodies? We are bodies – something unexplained, unknown, and kept secret. We are reminded here that our bodies are nothing to be proud of, or ashamed of... Jocelyn Lee welcomes us to contemplate the secrets hidden in plain sight. — Sharon Olds

The Appearance of Things explores how we are enmeshed in an embodied and ephemeral world. All life, including our human form and being, passes through stages of birth, blossoming and death.

Life occupies environments – it makes itself at home, and enacts an arc of existence on this stage, be it a pond, a forest or a suburban home. Each image strives to celebrate a multitude of sensual bodies: animals, plants, and human beings. In many ways, the photographs are cabinets of wonder, echoing nineteenth century natural science's fascination with the diversity of life.

Printed at large scale, the photographs beckon the viewer to a cinematic immersion in the image. The installation of the work as triptychs and diptychs juxtapose various bodies and divergent earthly environments and shift scale significantly across the images. The works are meant to engage the body of the viewer and become galaxies of their own through the use of space and the dilation and contraction of scale.







JOCELYN LEE | PHOTOGRAPHER

The Appearance of Things represents nearly ten years of work by photographer Jocelyn Lee and encompasses still life, portrait and landscape photographs, as well as many images that fuse these genres. This mingling is partly what the work is about: creating a shift in perspective where a body (portrait) becomes a landscape, a still life becomes a portrait, and a landscape becomes a body.

Throughout her work, Jocelyn Lee poignantly captures beauty and humanity's fragile nature. Her images of the natural and constructed world explore the sensuality and materiality of the environments against which life's events continually unfold.

What I always find in Jocelyn Lee's pictures: a balance between the "regular" unposed world... and the more shapely formal world of objects of art. Jocelyn Lee's work is true to both. When I look at these images I have the sense of being there – being here, in this place that, for all its strangeness, I recognize as our harvest home, our mortal planet.

—Sharon Olds

"...the very essence of transient beauty."

—*The New Yorker*

JOCELYN LEE | PHOTOGRAPHER

Jocelyn Lee was born in Naples, Italy. She received her B.A. in philosophy and visual arts from Yale University, and her M.F.A in photography from Hunter College. In 2013 she received a NYFA Fellowship, and in 2001 she received a Guggenheim Fellowship.

Ms. Lee is represented by Pace MacGill Gallery in New York and Flatland Gallery in Amsterdam, The Netherlands. She opens a show in April 2018 at the Huxley-Parlour gallery in London.

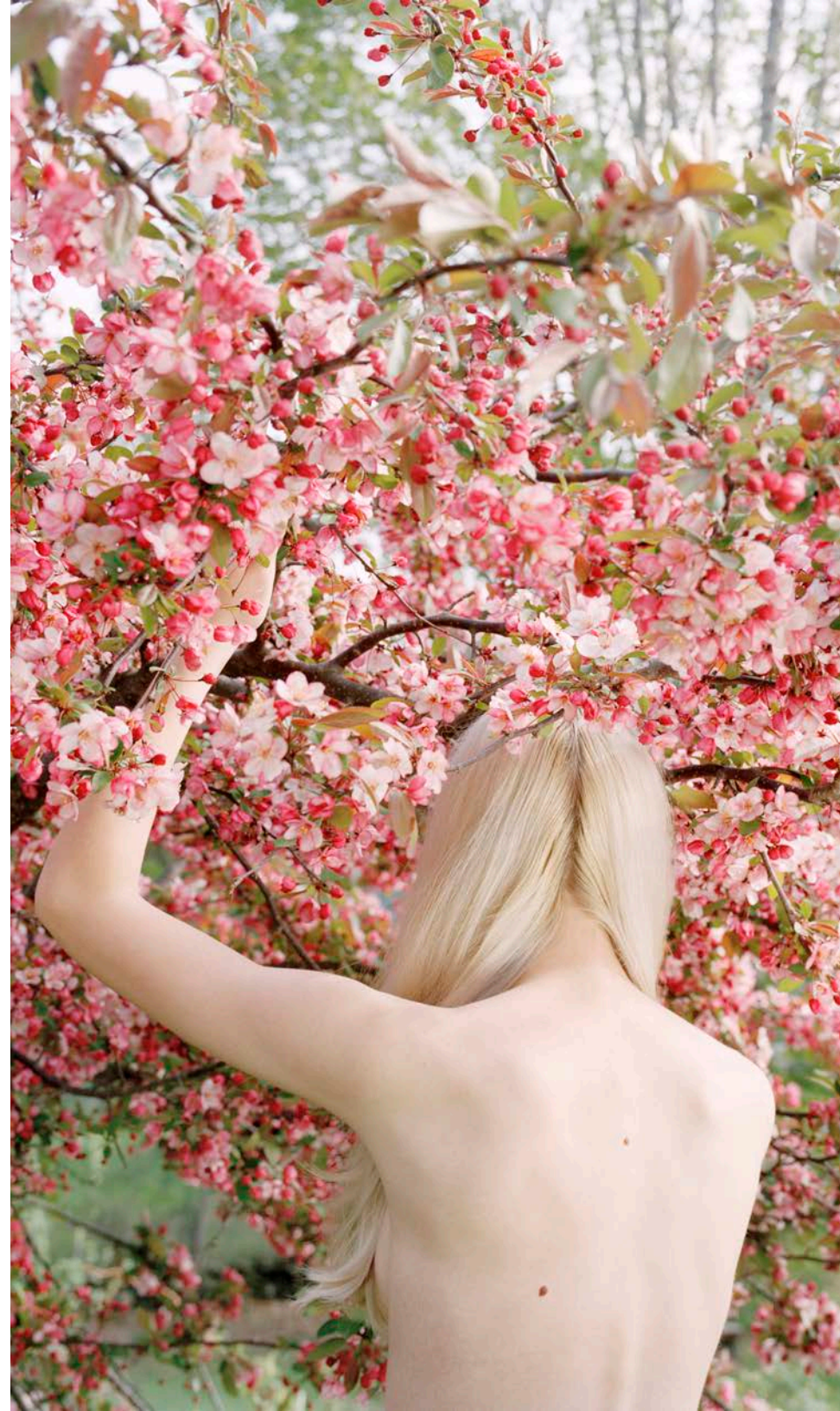
Lee's first monograph *nowhere but here* was published by Steidl Publishers in December 2010 with a forward by Sharon Olds. In 1996 DoubleTake Books and The Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University published her work *The Youngest Parents* in collaboration with Robert Coles and John Moses.

Her works are in the collections of Maison Europeen de la Photographie, Paris, France; The Museum Folkwang, Essen, Germany; The Yale Museum of Art, New Haven, CT; The List Center at MIT, Cambridge, MA; The Portland Museum of Art, Portland, Maine; The Nelson Atkins Museum, Kansas City, MO; The Colby College Museum of Art, Waterville, ME; The Haggerty Museum of Art, Milwaukee, Wisconsin; The Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Brunswick, ME; The Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University, NC.; The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX; The Bates College Museum of Art, Lewiston, ME; The Farnsworth Art Museum, Rockport, ME; as well as in numerous private collections.

Her work has appeared in many national and international publications, including *The New York Times Magazine*, *The New Yorker*, *New York Magazine*, *Photo Raw* (Helsinki, Finland), *Snoeks* (Germany), *Real Simple*, *MORE Magazine*, *PDN*, *Allegra* (The Netherlands), *DoubleTake*, *the Hayden's Ferry Review*, *Marie Claire* (Taiwan), *Harper's*, and others.

Lee taught photography at Princeton University from 2003-2012 and at The Maine College of Art from 1993-2001. She has been a visiting artist at Yale University, Bowdoin College, Mass College of Art, and New York University.

jocelynleestudio.com | [@jocelynleephoto](https://www.instagram.com/jocelynleephoto)





ABOUT CMCA

21 Winter Street, Rockland, Maine

CMCA is a contemporary arts institution presenting year-round exhibitions, engaging events, and educational programs for all ages. Founded in 1952, CMCA is the leading institution dedicated to contemporary art in Maine.

In June 2016, CMCA opened a newly constructed 11,500+ square foot building, with 5,500 square feet of exceptional exhibition space, designed by award-winning architect Toshiko Mori, FAIA, (New York and North Haven, Maine). Located in the heart of downtown Rockland, Maine, across from the Farnsworth Art Museum and adjacent to the historic Strand Theatre, the new CMCA has three exhibition galleries, a gift shop, ArtLab classroom, and a 2,200 square foot courtyard open to the public. The courtyard is anchored by a 24-foot tall painted steel sculpture, Digital Man, 2016, created for the site by artist Jonathan Borofsky.

November through May, Wednesday - Saturday, 10am to 5pm; Sunday, 12 to 5 pm; June through October, Monday - Saturday, 10am to 5pm, Sunday, 12 to 5pm. Closed Federal holidays. Admission \$8; Seniors (65+) and students with ID \$6; children under 18 free; CMCA members free.

cmcanow.org

Press contact

Kristen Levesque, APR
Public Relations Consultant
207-329-3090
Kristen@kristenlevesquepr.com

CMCA
CENTER FOR MAINE CONTEMPORARY ART



Jocelyn Lee's photographs for this exhibition are drawn from work that she has completed in Maine, a place where she has spent much time. The images derive from several projects, including an advertising campaign for a local rug designer and a commission to portray adolescent girls. Seen together, they suggest the role that environment and narrative play in the art of portraiture. Although Lee is interested in photographing specific people at different stages of life, each portrait also provides a broader opportunity to reflect on our shared humanity. A recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship, Lee has served as a professor of photography at Princeton University since 2003.

- > Read [Jocelyn Lee's artist statement](#)
- > Listen to an [interview with Jocelyn Lee](#)



Untitled (Inuit woman in hospital, Rankin Island)

Jocelyn Lee

Chromogenic print, 2002

Published in the *New York Times Magazine*, May 5, 2002



Collection of the artist

© Jocelyn Lee



Untitled (Jocelyn with moth)

Jocelyn Lee

Chromogenic print, 2002

Collection of the artist

© Jocelyn Lee



Untitled (Robert Indiana)

Jocelyn Lee

Chromogenic print, 2002

Published in the *New York Times Magazine*, December 1, 2002

Collection of the artist

© Jocelyn Lee



Untitled (girl with red hair in foliage)



Jocelyn Lee
Chromogenic print, 1999
Collection of the artist
© Jocelyn Lee



Untitled (Kara on Easter)
Jocelyn Lee
Chromogenic print, 1999
Collection of the artist
© Jocelyn Lee

>> [Continue to Ryan McGinley](#)



[Credits](#) | [Copyright](#) | [Privacy Policy](#)

Interview with: Jocelyn Lee



© Jocelyn Lee

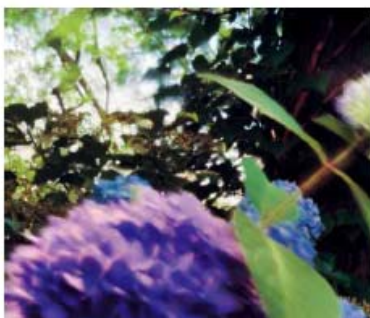
1. Your book "Nowhere but Here" collects images from your series "Portraits" but also a few pictures from your work "The Physical World". In the last part there is another series in which you tried to catch the last moments of your mother's life.

How did the book originate? Could you tell us something more about the relationship between these series?

The book began as a review of nearly 15 years of work. While my primary interest is portraiture, I occasionally make landscape images as a way to describe the physical environment within which we live. My portraits tend to focus on the internal lives of people, and the landscapes function as a backdrop or stage set on which personal lives unfold.

The second part of the book is called "Last Light" and deals specifically with the last year of my mother's life. During this time I made portraits of my dying mother and our family. I also made

landscapes of the blooming and passing of the flowers and trees around my mother's home during the final seasons of her life. The difference here is that the landscape photographs were made with a pinhole camera at very long exposures—up to several hours in some cases. This body of work is a meditation on time, mortality, and my attempt to pause the stampeding progress of both.





© Jocelyn Lee

2. Sharon Olds, an established American poet, wrote the foreword of your book *“Nowhere but Here”*. Could you tell us something about this collaboration? Are there any connections between your work and her poetry?

I have always been drawn to Sharon Olds' poetry. The themes are often domestic and familiar—children, husband, lover, sex, aging, birth, death, home—but they are described in an unsentimental and often raw way. Her work is frank, unapologetic and human. It looks with clear-eyed honesty at the place from which we all come—our homes, our families, our bodies. This is both inspiring and a great relief to me.

I'd have to say that these are the same themes that motivate my work, and I certainly try to be direct and honest in the way I photograph. My work is essentially familiar and seems to originate from the immediate sensual world (the world of the home and interpersonal experiences), rather than from an intellectual or political one. I usually begin with issues that have to do with the body—the fact that our bodies are the first point of connection between ourselves and the world around us—and then cycle out from there. I always photograph subjects I want to understand better—for example my mother's illness. I am very compulsive once I find a subject and my process can be seen as an obsession to see more clearly the thing that I don't yet understand.

Once I decide on a subject, I go out and find the people or events that help me study it more closely (unless it is already in my home, in which case I don't have far to go). This can be something as specific as “hunting”, (which I have photographed for years—bear, moose, deer and bowhead whale hunts to name a few), or as abstract as “sexuality in older age”. My methods will vary in terms of how I make the pictures, but the origin is always personal fascination.





© Jocelyn Lee

3. *With your photography, you are able to create a special moment between you and your subjects, and this is clearly visible in your images. When you photograph, the only important thing seems to be living "that" particular moment and being "there". I think this could be the main reason why you chose the title "Nowhere but Here".*

It made me think about "Hic et Nunc", a Latin motto that means "here and now".

Talking about the "here and now": how important is the moment of taking a photograph compared to the act of seeing the final, physical image?

Thank you. The relationship I have with my subjects is very important to me. The time it takes to make the picture (which is long), and the dynamic that develops during the shoot, is a significant part of the process and meaning of the pictures. There is a lot of respect coming from my side of the camera towards my subject. I've always taken issue with the interpretation that a photograph is a "stolen moment", stolen by one human being (the photographer) from another (the subject). I understand that premise and that way of making pictures (the stalking, secretive photographer—often used by

journalists) and I want to be clear that I think it's a valid way of making pictures, but it is not what I'm interested in. I'm interested in the relationship and what happens when two people spend a long time in a room together, intensely conscious of one another. Something changes. Expressions change. Facades drop. Boredom happens, humility happens, other states get revealed.

The final image is an amalgamation of my psychological interests and what my subjects end up generously revealing to me, and in so doing, the camera. It is hard to quantify. Sometimes I know I have a good picture before I look at the contact sheets, but more often than not I am surprised by what I see on the contact sheets, and I use that surprise to inform my choices. I remember someone saying to me very early on in my career as a photographer, "no surprise for the photographer, no surprise for the viewer", and I believe that is true. I will often leave many versions of an image up on my studio wall for days or weeks and the ones that get "tired" get taken down. Those that keep speaking, keep surprising, are the ones I select. Really strong photographs can never be owned or fully understood formally, narratively, or intellectually. They resonate outside the edges of the frame, and continue to speak over time. That ineffable quality is what I am looking for during the editing process; I hope I am present enough to recognize it when it is there. Sometimes this knowledge or awareness has to hit you obliquely. You can't study or edit the photographs "head on" so to speak. In other words, we have to get out of our own way. As I age, one of the biggest concerns I have is to avoid repeating myself formally, narratively or conceptually. It is not so easy to do. I am always looking for ways to refresh my process and let the medium speak to me again in new ways. The pinholes were one such effort.



© Jocelyn Lee

4. In most of your portraits, you photograph people naked or almost naked. How do you face with the problem or the relationship with nudity? Was it complicated to photograph people without clothes?

I think you can tell from all I've said that I'm driven by existential themes in my work—our bodies in space and time, our internal thoughts, our basic relationship to others, death, aging, sexuality, family etc—and it just seems that these issues can be addressed more honestly when people take their clothes off. That sounds strange, but taking our clothes off is a literal and metaphoric state of openness. It is hard to be naked in front of others. It is hard to be **seen** naked. It is brave in an essential way. The flaws we imagine are so much more visible when we are naked—and this goes for psychological flaws as well as physical. So nudity is important to me. Nakedness.

5. You usually photograph people that you know, for example your family components and friends, but also strangers. Which differences have you noticed in their attitude towards you as a photographer? Do they react differently in front of your camera?

No, I can't say they do. You would think they would act differently, but basically I don't think they do. Many of the familiar people I photograph (family or friends) still take time to adjust to being

photographed. If someone I photograph is enormously comfortable being photographed, I probably wouldn't be interested in photographing them. Again, I'm interested in vulnerability, and what arises from it. Of course, being naked is usually awkward for the average person, so that threshold always needs to be overcome or negotiated, and therein lies the psychological tension and the photographic material. Each shoot has its sensitive moments, and each subject has to evolve to a place of comfort in the shoot—or more accurately, a state of comfortable acceptance of the innate awkwardness of such an exchange.



© Jocelyn Lee

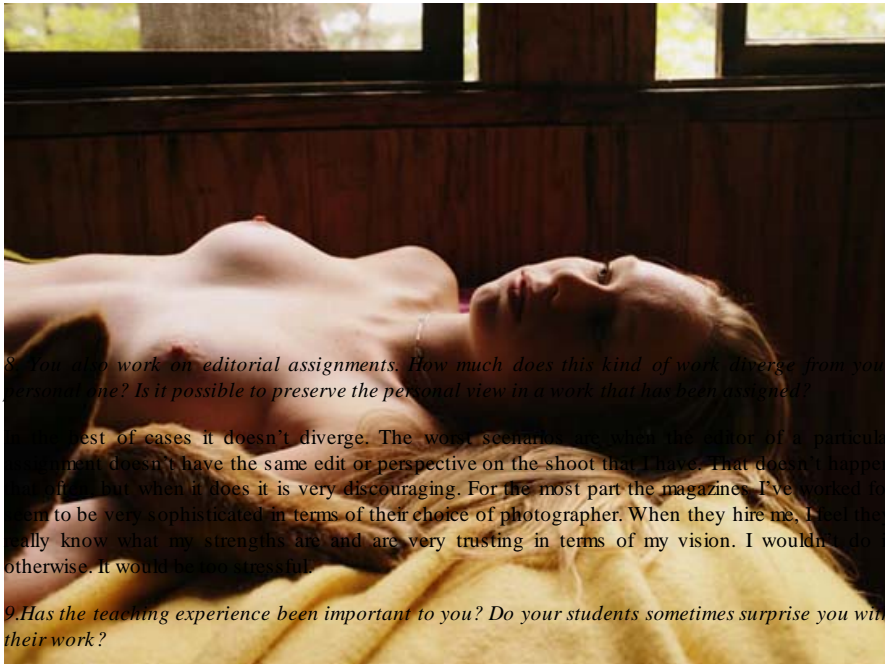


© Jocelyn Lee

6. Do your subjects usually see their photograph/s? Do they recognize themselves in your images? How do they face with their portrayed nudity?

It's about half and half. Some people see the pictures, and others don't. I'm always happy to share them. Surprisingly, some people don't care to. I'm surprised by that. I'd say more often than not people find the work intense. I think they are surprised by the image that I capture. I wouldn't say that they *don't* recognize themselves, but I would say they are surprised. I think many of them like it. It's empowering in some way, though I wouldn't say they think they look beautiful or idealized either. I feel strongly like we (the subject and I) are creating a third person, some blend of my interest in them and what they uniquely bring to the experience of being photographed. I don't think I am a documentary

photographer at all. I don't think I am capturing some truth about these individuals. I think I'm mining emotional states of being that feel familiar to all of us, expressed in the specificity of this one individual in a particular time and place.



8. You also work on editorial assignments. How much does this kind of work diverge from your personal one? Is it possible to preserve the personal view in a work that has been assigned?

In most cases it doesn't diverge. The worst scenario is when the editor of a particular assignment doesn't have the same edit or perspective on the shoot that I have. That doesn't happen often, but when it does it is very discouraging. For the most part the magazines I've worked for seem to be very sophisticated in terms of their choice of photographer. When they hire me, I feel that they really know what my strengths are and are very trusting in terms of my vision. I wouldn't be otherwise. It would be too stressful.

9. Has the teaching experience been important to you? Do your students sometimes surprise you with their work?

As hard as teaching is, it has proven to be very important to me. It is important in two ways: helping to articulate why I love photography; and helping to empower younger artists to speak through this medium that is essentially a mirror onto the world. Photography is remarkably powerful in that it speaks so quickly. It is unlike painting, sculpture or music, which requires years of training before you can utter an original sentence. Entry into photography is so fast, since it relies on such an accessible mechanical process. Because of this young artists can start to say things that matter to them, and perhaps to others, with relative speed. The camera is also a recording device that is controlled by the subjectivity of its operator, so it offers insight into the artist's perspective on the world. In other words, it speaks your mind whether you want it to or not. It is the opposite of objective. I love this about the medium. It is impossible NOT to see the photographer's vision in the contact sheets. If you are comy, the photographs are comy. If you are afraid, generally the photographs are tentative. If you are brave and curious, then the photographs are fresh...and so forth. I quickly learn the students' boundaries and potentials when looking at their work.

So, for the smart, creative young artist, photography can be very fertile. For those who are ready speak through this medium, it can be very exciting.



Interview by Anya Jasbar and Daniel Atgshöll

Copyright © Ahorn Magazine 2008-2011. All rights reserved.

© Jocelyn Lee, phlox in your garden during the last hour of your life
July 11, 2008, 5:00 to 6:50 a.m.



THE NEW YORKER

MAY 31, 2010

JOCELYN LEE

Lee's color photographs of friends, strangers, and her dying mother are tender, melancholy, and full of frustrated longing. Most of her subjects (half of whom she first met online) appear either nude or only partially clothed. Though the intimacy is artificial and sometimes strained, Lee still manages to connect in startling ways, especially with her older sitters. But if the work is about aging, it's also about mortality, and it finds its most powerful focus in a series of images that revolve around her mother's last year of life. Family occupies much of this grouping, and many of the pictures were taken in her mother's garden, where a sunflower or a wet peony seemed the very essence of transient beauty. Through June 12. (Pace MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. 212-759-7999.)

ANTICIPATION OF BECOMING



AMY WILTON | KAREN LEWIS | JOCELYN LEE

While the Canvas has been focused mainly on painters, this issue marks the expansion of the concept of a canvas as a support for artwork in a variety of media—in this case, photography. One of photography's most notable qualities is its apparent ability to arrest time and create instant memories, which becomes especially obvious when photographing children. Amy Wilton, Karen Lewis, and Jocelyn Lee have explored this subject extensively and have created sensitive studies of the ever-changing human condition. The images presented here portray children living in their own worlds, trying out adult roles, and embodying the awkwardness of adolescence.

JOCELYN LEE

Jocelyn Lee has exhibited her work nationally, including at the National Portrait Gallery, DeCordova Museum and Sculpture Park, Smith College Museum of Art, the Rose Art Museum, and the Portland Museum of Art. Her work is in the collections of the Yale Museum of Art and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, among many other institutions. She received a Guggenheim Fellowship in 2001. She is represented by Pace/MacGill Gallery in New York City.



Jocelyn Lee has an almost uncanny ability to capture human vulnerability. She has done so in *Children's Games* (1990–1994), a series of photographs that feature children playing, mostly unsupervised, in her Austin neighborhood, and *The Youngest Parents* (1992–1996), which documents young parents and their children in Texas and Maine and which was later turned into a book. One ongoing series explores emotional connections to the world around us, and another portrays people close to the artist, mainly in the nude. Within the latter series it is particularly the arresting images of adolescents that transfix and touch us.

The poses reveal the physical and emotional awkwardness of the teenager. The subjects do not yet fully inhabit their budding adulthood, and everything seems slightly out of proportion. Aware of Lee's camera, they are themselves, but they don't quite know who that is yet. *Saidiya Watching TV* is part of a group of photographs Lee took of children and adolescents watching television—an attempt to capture their visceral reactions with as little posing as possible. Yet her youthful neighbor seems only partially absorbed as she self-consciously glances toward the camera. A strap has slipped and her slightly overweight body fills out her clothes amply, playfully mirrored by the overstuffed

sofa cushions that surround her. Additionally, the expanse of bare wall behind the girl adds extra weight to the lower half of the composition.

For some observers, Lee walks a narrow line, between voyeurism and exploitation on the one hand and empathy on the other. But her work is always empathic and respectful of her subjects. Her compositions make sensitive connections between background and subject, and the attention she spends on beautiful surfaces—whether skin or fabric—give her psychological portraits a quiet dignity. **MH+D**

For more information, see Resources on page 83.

Saidiya Watching TV, 2007, chromogenic print, 40" x 30"

THE CANVAS



The Face of Contemporary Portraiture

by Diana Gaston

As confounding as portraiture has always been, it seems to be getting trickier, with photographers making increasingly suspicious and ambiguous images. These portraits secure not so much an individual likeness but an emblematic presence. For many decades, photographic portraiture was shaped by the immediacy of the medium and its capacity for extremely intimate, casually framed images or, at the opposite end of the spectrum, passing grab-shots of strangers observed from safe distances. Formal portraiture was reserved for celebrities or momentous occasions like weddings or new babies. It is curiously jarring, then, to be confronted by full-length portraits of seemingly unposed, even indifferent subjects handled so formally that the prints themselves approach the imposing scale, luminous color, compositional structure, and gravity of traditional portrait painting. Photographers Jocelyn Lee, Rineke Dijkstra, and Hellen Van Meene produce just this kind of exquisitely unsettling work, expanding on the genre through surprisingly traditional means. Their beguiling portraits borrow from the formal conventions of painting, lending a certain temporal permanence to their subjects while maintaining the potency of the open-ended photographic narrative.

A young boy lies outstretched, naked, on a green lawn, flower petals scattered around him like a loose constellation. His eyes are closed, mouth slightly parted as though in sleep; his flawless white skin glows faintly. He floats, in a dream state, utterly relaxed and unbounded, a physical embodiment of childhood innocence and grace. His reclining form dictates the horizontal composition, and the camera hovers over him, standing guard while he sleeps. Is this a portrait of a boy or a personification of youthful perfection? What can we see in a portrait of an unknown sitter but our own narratives, constructed around subjective notions of physical beauty and human expression? Jocelyn Lee constructs her images around such ambiguities, training her camera on the vast human theater, drawing out not so much a fixed document or record of a sitter but the psychological intricacies that shiver through the body.

Lee, who lives in Maine and will begin teaching at Princeton University this fall, photographs family members as well as unknown subjects whom she meets for the first time on the day she photographs them. She deliberately maneuvers back and forth between levels of intimacy and unease, seeking out the challenges that each scenario presents. For years, she has taken out newspaper ads seeking models willing to sit, sometimes unclothed, for a portrait. She scouts out her locations beforehand and typically looks for minimal, unobtrusive environments, such as hotel rooms or certain outdoor sites. The environment significantly informs the tone and atmosphere of the sitting; the simpler the space, the more the viewer will focus on the individual and psychological exchange of the portrait for pertinent clues. Lee works with a medium-format camera, setting up and waiting, as she describes it, for her subjects "to breathe their own life into the room." She offers little in the way of direction, preferring to wait for the moment when the subject's awareness of the camera falls away and some underlying emotion or gesture presents itself, momentarily disrupting the sitter's carefully prescribed persona. This—the camera's ability to capture a momentary expression—is the hallmark of the photographic portrait; and yet Lee seems to reject the fleeting expression in exchange for something much more cumulative, framing a distant stare or a positioning of the body that has taken a lifetime to cohere.



Jocelyn Lee, *Untitled (Rever Anatomy)*, C print, 40 x 60", 2002. Courtesy of the Bernard Toale Gallery.

Like her Dutch contemporaries Rineke Dijkstra and Hellen Van Meene, Lee is particularly drawn to photographing the provocative shifts experienced in aging, motherhood, and adolescence. One of Lee's portraits depicts a middle-age woman with long dark hair sitting on a sofa in a formally appointed New England home, her gaze falling flatly on the middle space of the room. She wears a sheer, black lace negligee and tall, black leather boots, her clothing deeply encoded with sexual expectation and fantasy at odds with her resigned posture and staid environment. Her feet are positioned at an awkward angle, as though she might stand up to leave at any moment, but her flaccid expression suggests that she is nowhere close to gathering the momentum to move.

Dijkstra, who lives and works in Amsterdam, photographs subjects who have recently experienced particularly stressful or physically dangerous situations—Israeli soldiers after engaging in combat, women after childbirth, and Portuguese matadors still bloody and bruised from their encounters in the ring—as a means of capturing individuals whose self-consciousness has been momentarily stripped away. For several years she photographed adolescents posed in their bathing suits at the beach—clearly a less perilous situation, but one that afforded the subjects little to hide behind. The young subjects are presented in full-length portraits, isolated within the frame, the ocean behind them. She grants them the authority of positioning themselves, leaving each one to openly display varying degrees of awkwardness and poise. The young girls she photographed at Coney Island and Hilton Head Island self-consciously assume poses they've studied in fashion magazines, while their counterparts in Eastern Europe and Belgium present themselves to the camera without any pretense; one young woman, pale and thin, mimics the grace of a Botticelli without a shred of irony.

These photographers, in very distinct ways, look for slight breaks in their subject's composure, seeking the physical and emotional vulnerabilities that surface only when their minds begin to wander or when they lose interest in the camera.

While Lee's subjects do not always make eye contact with the camera, her presence—or more accurately the scopical presence of the camera—is still quite palpable. In one of her few titled pieces, *Beaver Anatomy*, two girls crouch over a wet, presumably dead beaver in a clearing in the woods. They have laid him out on brown paper; a magnifying glass and Xacto knife are arranged nearby like a surgeon's instruments, signaling the scientific inquiry that is about to play out but also hinting at some impending violence. The camera hovers above the girls, who are distracted and unaware of its presence. The image is composed like a traditional pastoral painting, with heavy tree branches framing the view. In this medium, however, the framing device is muddled by the camera's depth of field, which throws the branches slightly out of focus and calls attention to their looming presence somewhere just outside the frame. The idyllic scene is swiftly redirected to a more psychologically charged space of surveillance. This method of disrupting the tranquil beauty of the surface with an underlying narrative, however distant or vague, is at the crux of her imagery. Another image depicts a hunting scene of two boys crouched in tall grass, holding rifles and outfitted in fluorescent orange hunting jackets. They are as carefully posed as a Dutch still life and as emblematic of impending mortality as a pair of recently killed waterfowl, positioned as they are against a glorious autumnal landscape. The photographer stands off to one side, trespassing on the scene, although the boys do not acknowledge the camera's presence. They seem a pair of colorful decoys, drawing us unwittingly into a dangerous situation.

In many ways, these portraits are not portraits at all in the traditional sense; they do not reflect a particular likeness as much as a transient emotional state or sensation. They are brilliant cues, provoking certain empathetic responses, just as the subjects triggered something familiar in the photographer. And for all of their transparency and exquisite detail, the subjects themselves remain unknown, deftly eclipsing the camera's attempts to capture them. ■

Diana Geston is a freelance curator and writer living in Boston, MA.

Galleries

Block By Block

Re-discover the 57th Street galleries for a night

BY VALERIE GLADSTONE

While much of the attention of collectors and art voyeurs is focused on Chelsea, the galleries on East 57th Street rank among the most elegant in the world. But finding time to view the uptown riches—from contemporary paintings, sculpture and photography, to exquisite antique furniture and museum-quality works by Old Masters—can prove difficult for art lovers unable to break away from typical routines.

After several years of witnessing the success of the Fuller Building's annual evening openings—which officially ended last year—Nohra Haime decided to expand the concept to 57th Street, and managed to get nearly 50 galleries to join in. "It's fun to look at art after hours," Haime says. Her distinguished eponymous gallery, now at 730 Fifth Ave., has graced 57th Street for almost 30 years. "For most people, it's much more engaging, when they have nothing else on their minds and can focus on the works."

Many galleries have arranged exhibit schedules so that they will open their major fall shows the evening of Oct. 14. At this year's gallery walk, visitors will be able to get the expected wine and cheese with their art viewings, and a few galleries are planning a little more; A. Jain Marunouchi Gallery will even present a live jazz concert.

Haime plans to celebrate groundbreaking artist Adam Straus' 20th anniversary, with the provocative show *Air and Water or: Everything's Fine Until It's Not*, the title inspired by the oil spill disaster in the Gulf of Mexico. His 21 recent

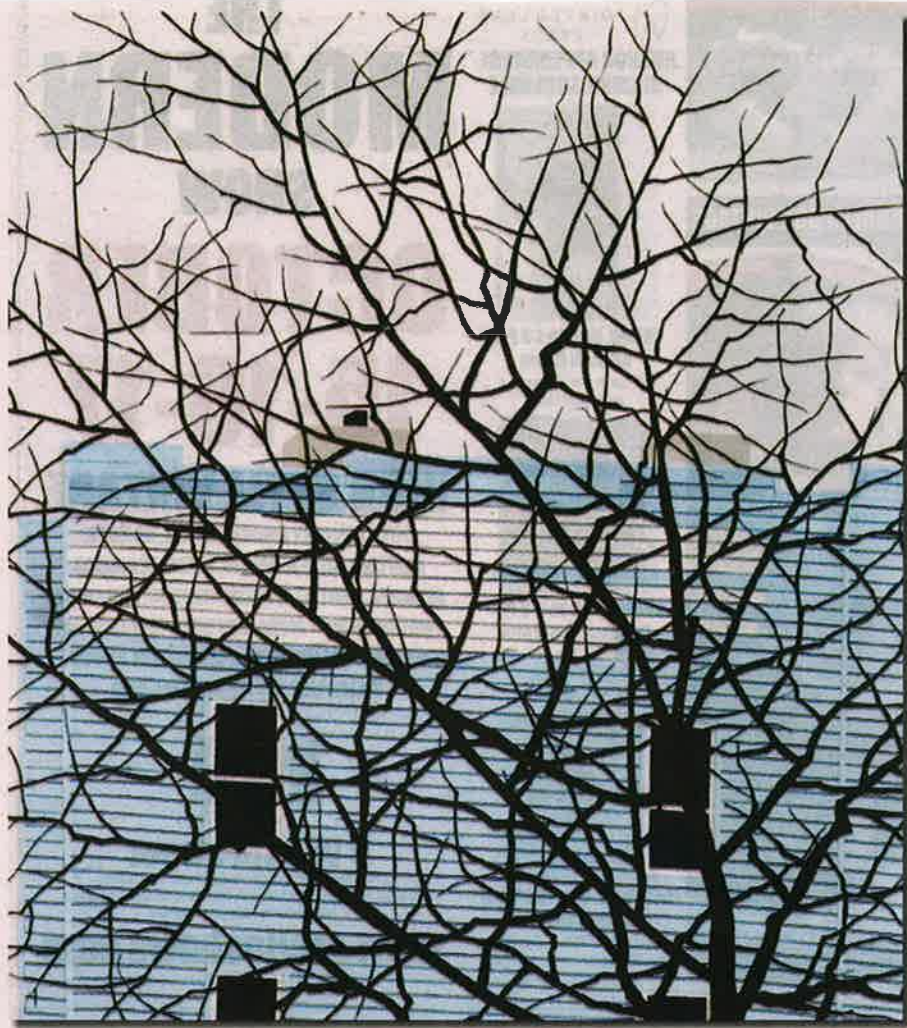
paintings make up a moving statement about man's relationship to the natural world.

The David Findlay Gallery organized a tribute to the Abstract Expressionist painter Jon Schuler, titled *The Castelli Years, 1955-1959*, because of his affiliation with the legendary art dealer Leo Castelli during that period. "I'm so glad we're doing this event," Louis Newman, the gallery's director, says. "It's always seemed to me that we've had it backwards anyway. We really should be open evenings and weekends all the time. I hope this turns into a monthly affair."

Visitors will find a treasure trove of photographs in the show *Looking Forward, Looking Back: An Exhibition to Honor 50 Years at The Pace Gallery*, at, of course, the Pace/MacGill Gallery. Robert Frank, Paul Graham, Irving Penn, Charles Sheeler, Alfred Stieglitz, Paul Strand and Edward Weston are only a few of the great photographers featured. "Last year," says Lauren Panzo, the director, "we had many people coming in who had never been here before. But it's not only a good idea because we're widening our audience through the special evening; it's terrific that all the galleries are joining forces and doing something together." Nearby at Pace Primitive and Pace Prints, the exhibit is dedicated to Louise Nevelson's explorations in etching, lithography, aquatint, lead intaglio relief, cast paper pulp and three-dimensional multiples.

Spencer Throckmorton III, owner of Throckmorton Fine Art, decided to interest more than one kind of art lover. So he chose to have on view both the arresting *India*:





Erik Benson's "Small Works" (above) at Edward Tyler Nahem Fine Art; Jon Schueler's "The First Snow Cloud (58-3)" (right) at David Findlay Jr. Fine Art; Louise Nevelson's works (below left) on view at Pace Primitive.

A *Pilgrimage*, a collection 35 black-and-white silver gelatin prints by photographer Marilyn Bridges that document her journey along sacred Indian rivers, and, simultaneously, at least three remarkable pieces of ancient Chinese art, among them a 14th-century statue of the goddess of mercy, a lacquer coffer from the Ming period and a 3rd-century limestone Buddha head.

China is well represented by the Ana Tzarev Gallery, which will be opening its show, *Legends of Asia*, while the Marlborough Gallery (40 W. 57th St.) is exhibiting *Threading Orbs*, recent Jacquard tapestries and works on paper by Thierry W. Despont. He is best known for luminous paintings on wood-panel or on copper mounted on wood-panel that depict nebulas, celestial bodies and planets.

Those who enjoy meeting artists will have the opportunity at Edward Tyler Nahem Fine Art, where young, Brooklyn-based painter Erik Benson will be available to talk about his work: stunning paintings inspired by the urban landscape.

"I'm excited to introduce Erik's work to a new crowd of fresh faces," director Kristin Chiacchia says. "He can explain his



process, which involves painting acrylic on glass, cutting it out into strips and shapes, peeling it off the glass and then collaging it onto the canvas. So each of the bricks, leaves and branches that you see in a painting have been individually cut out and applied to the canvas. I think relating to artists humanizes the art."

Haime more than agrees. "The open evening also humanizes the gallery experience. It's as if we're opening our homes," Haime says. "We want everyone to relax, stroll around, ask questions, and share in what gives our lives meaning." ■

Oct. 14, 212-888-3550; 5-8 p.m.