

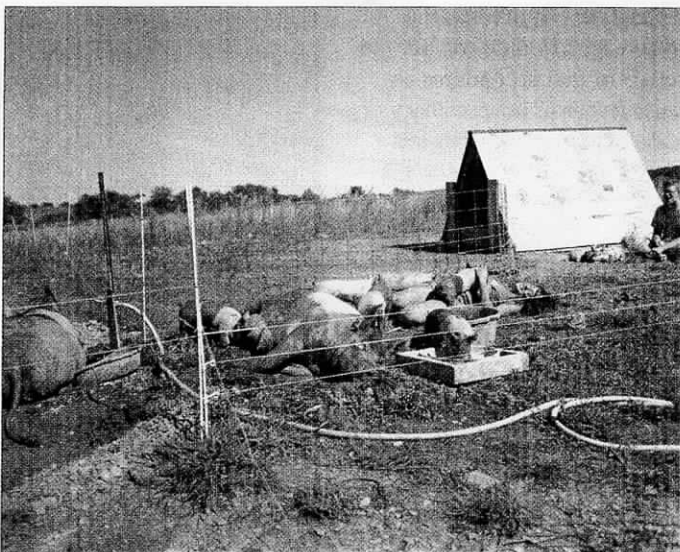
ARTnews

Judith Joy Ross

Pace/MacGill

Judith Joy Ross knows how to tell a story without giving away too much information, as demonstrated in these understated yet provocative pictures. As a documentary photographer of considerable restraint, Ross here examined environmental activists responding to nature as well as to political action. Despite their long titles, akin to newspaper captions, the images in this show, titled "The Devil Today and Reading to Dogs," stand on their own as vivid works of art.

Half the pictures were taken at the Aark Wildlife Rehabilitation and Education Center in Chalfont, Pennsylvania, where campers are encouraged to get up close to the animals. One woman lounges in the mud of a pigpen in *Grace with piglets* (2010), while a boy holds a black-and-white rabbit in the simply charming *Corey with bunny* (2011). But in *Children in Neshaminy Creek* (2011), Ross pulls back and allows the viewer to enter an Edenic scene of youngsters exploring a riverbed in a lush green forest.



Judith Joy Ross, *Grace with piglets*, 2010,
archival pigment ink print mounted on board, 30" x 37½".
Pace/MacGill.

Ross's pictures of town-hall meetings and public demonstrations are quite enlightening. Unlike stereotypical tree huggers, her activists look outright patrician. Scores of white-haired residents defend their property against the threat of fracking. In *Young woman waiting in line to speak to the DRBC* (Delaware River Basin Commission), 2011, Ross shows a girl waiting politely and patiently at the edge of the crowd. In *Men of LEPOCO* (Lehigh-Pocono Committee of Concern), 2011, the photographer catches three men, all neatly dressed as they stand casually by the highway holding signs protesting the governor's

budget proposals. These intimate views of a movement are straightforward and not excessively passionate. They are as well composed as a staged photograph by Jeff Wall. That Ross manages to keep this composure in chaotic circumstances makes her work all the more remarkable.

—Barbara Pollack