

PACE/MACGILL GALLERY

DIANA MICHENER: DOGS, FIRES, ME

May 5 through June 11, 2005

Gallery hours: Tuesday-Friday, 9:30-5:30; Saturday, 10:00-6:00

Pace/MacGill Gallery is pleased to announce an exhibition of new work by Diana Michener, "Dogs, Fires, Me." Consisting of over 20, 30 x 30" gelatin silver prints (2004-5), Michener's series features lushly ethereal and haunting imagery including a young girl and a man enacting the roles of a puppet and puppeteer, a woman in the guise of a bird experiencing the spatial confines of her cage, and conflagrations consuming houses and statuettes. The rich tonality of Michener's prints resembles graphite on paper and further contributes to the pictures' technical and conceptual depth; the artist is as equally proficient at capturing detail as she is at dissolving it.

Viewed singly, the photographs comprising "Dogs, Fires, Me" do not necessarily document an isolated action or particular moment in a specific time or place. Rather, Michener's pictures allude to multiple points that seemingly exist outside of time, a dreamy fusion of causes and effects resembling one's own memory. As a series, the photographs encourage the viewer to imagine a narrative based on symbolic elements and sequences. Exploring the complex relationships between discord, fracture, resolution and stasis, Michener's pictures encourage one's own process of searching and exist as contemplative markers blurring the distinction between what is eternal and ephemeral, what is abstract and real.

Addressing Michener's current work, artist Ofer Lellouche observed:

The obscure force that holds together the different elements is not anymore a number, but a combination. Trying to find some logic to that grouping, our restless glance will weave an endless web of interrogations between the items. When we face the sun, a landscape is a monochrome...We identify with it as our own reflection and proof of our own individual existence. But when the sun is at our back, it looks like a patchwork of colors shattering our oneness like a kaleidoscope. The world opens like a poker hand.

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Diana Michener (b. 1940) received her B.A. from Barnard College (1963) and also studied at Smith College, Northampton, MA, and the Sorbonne, Paris. A decade afterward, Michener attended a workshop with Ansel Adams (1973) and a year later studied with Lisette Model at the New School for Social Research, New York. In 1981-82, Michener wrote, directed and photographed the film "Cecilia" which was subsequently screened at the New York and Baltimore Film Festivals. Throughout the 1980s, she worked as a special photographer on a number of films including "Popeye" (Robert Altman, 1980), "My Dinner with Andre" (Louis Malle, 1980), and "The Designated Mourner" (David Hare, 1986). Michener's photography has been exhibited at venues both in the U.S. and abroad; in 2001, the Maison Européenne de la Photographie, Paris, organized the retrospective "Silence Me." Her work belongs to numerous public collections including the Denver Art Museum, the Maison Européenne de la Photographie, Paris, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Princeton University Art Museum, and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, among others.

Published by Steidl on the occasion of Michener's new series, the book "Dogs, Fires, Me" (2005) features writing by Michener and an essay by artist Ofer Lellouche.