



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ARCADIA

July 6 – August 25, 2006

Reception for the Artist: Thursday July 6, 6-8 pm

Summer Hours: Monday – Friday, 10-6

The Yancey Richardson Gallery is pleased to present Arcadia, a group exhibition of photographs, video and sculpture in which artists present the relationship between nature and man as either idyllic, threatening or diminished. The exhibition features work by Jim Cooke, Elger Esser, Angelo Filomeno, Anthony Goicolea, David Hilliard, Jodie Vicenta Jacobson, Justine Kurland, David Melrose, Gonzalo Puch, Jem Southam, Clare Richardson, David Spero, Joel Sternfeld and Jeff Whetstone.

A number of artists have either captured or recreated the Arcadian ideal. Clare Richardson's young man shouldering a rustic wooden pitchfork while gazing out over the Transylvanian landscape transcends the documentary to refer back to the epic portrayals of peasants by Corot and Millet while Elger Esser's rustic boat floating on a golden-hued river suggests a pre-industrial time of idyllic tranquility. Jodie Vicenta Jacobson's video *The Vale* made in New Zealand in 2006, renders a cow dotted valley wrapped in early morning mist as a subtly animated Corot. Jem Southam's portrait of a pig, goat and lamb huddled together in a lush field recreates The Peaceable Kingdom in a bucolic setting. Justine Kurland's group of naked women and toddlers in a pine forest equates nature with fertility and innocence.

Several works explore the dark side of returning to nature. Anthony Goicolea's *Camp Site* and Clare Richardson's *Harlemville* both show boys alone and free in the landscape, reverting to a more primeval state, a la *Lord of the Flies*. Similarly, Jeff Whetstone's two boys on rocks mid-stream seem innocent enough until you notice the snake that seems to be crawling out of the older boys swim trunks.

In David Spero's photograph, from his photographic series on environmentally low impact communities built in British forests, back-to-the-land settlers embrace the landscape as a metaphorical shelter, an escape from the disenchantments of the modern urban world. In his series *Sweet Earth: Experimental Utopias in America*, Joel Sternfeld has documented similar social experiments wherein ecological sustainability and proximity to nature is the mission. Works by David Hilliard, Jim Cooke, Gonzalo Puch comment on our disassociation from nature in the 21st century. Hilliard's *Perennial* presents a suffocating profusion of flowers be found in a Florida Wal-Mart – all artificial. Cooke has photographed *The Eden Project*, a series of geodesic domes in England which house plants from temperate climates that are promoted as a tourist attraction. Finally, in Gonzalo Puch's photograph he has constructed a tower of glass beakers with bits of ivy and a cluster of grapes - Arcadia reduced to a few essential elements and maintained in a laboratory setting.



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