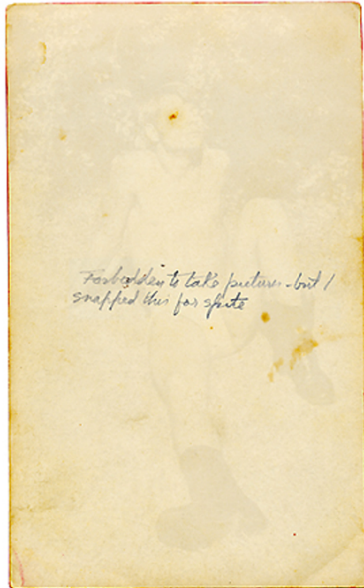


FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Project Gallery
Melanie Willhide: *Sleeping Beauties*
June 9 – July 16, 2011
Opening Reception Thursday, June 9, 6-8pm



The Yancey Richardson Gallery is pleased to present *Sleeping Beauties*, a project gallery exhibition of photographic works by Melanie Willhide. This is the artist's first exhibition at the gallery.

At first impression, the works on display appear to be old, found snapshots with personal messages scrawled on their backside. An opaque figure is barely discernable beneath the surface, as though seen from the other side of the worn paper. Bearing the residue of glue stains, fingerprints and age, the works are to be read as curious relics of a distant past – intimate portraits shared

between friends and lovers, only later to be stumbled upon at a flea market or a box in an attic. In fact, the works in *Sleeping Beauties* are carefully constructed “artificial artifacts” – imagined narrative moments addressing themes of memory, authenticity, and mortality.

Willhide's collages are built from photographic portraits she shoots, composited with digital layers meant to resemble naturally aged paper. The “front side” image is carefully constructed to be period accurate, and the “backside” is fabricated to appear timeworn and weather-beaten. The text is sourced from various locations, including excerpts of love letters sent to or received by the artist and her family members, and then dissected and reordered to fit the imagined narrative. The selection of work also includes text originally written by the artist's grandparents on the back of actual photographs. Importantly, the connection between image and text often communicates a deeply personal history for the artist, despite the allusion of being a found historical object.

Melanie Willhide lives and works in Los Angeles. She received her M.F.A. from Yale University and her B.F.A. from Rhode Island School of Design. Her work has been exhibited in San Francisco, Boston, Los Angeles, Miami, and New York and is in the Yale University Davenport Collection.

For visuals, please contact Walker Waugh at wwaugh@yanceyrichardson.com.