

Cheryl McGinnis Gallery Presents

Tony Gonzalez

Naiads

November 12 – December 30, 2010

Opening Reception: Friday, November 12, 6-8 pm



We are delighted to present *Naiads*, Tony Gonzalez's new photographic series of contemporary images inspired by Neoclassical and Realist paintings. An artist with a nineteenth century sensibility working in a 21st century world, Gonzalez continues his ongoing studies of the traditional nude and the voyeuristic aspect of photography by combining digital technology with vintage gum bichromate printing techniques. Without being sentimental, *Naiads* empowers women, offering balance and an intimate connection with nature that still exists outside of today's techno-global bubble.

An extension of his urban series of *Bathers* and *The Bedroom*, which looked at private domestic rituals within the sitter's apartment, *Naiads* explores how those moments translate into a pastoral setting. Mythic sirens, sprites, mermaids, and naiads are women at their most comfortable in nature and with their own bodies. Although influenced by painters such as Bouguereau and Courbet, Gonzalez approaches his models as collaborators rather than as passive muses, including their names within the titles. Reminiscent of historic poses that have been reinvented by generations of painters, and of candid actions found in Gonzalez's black and white *Jersey Shore* series, the images reveal a rich range of new and unexpected gestures resulting from moments of abandon with nature. "However, the figures in this series, while seemingly unaware of being photographed, are in fact completely conscious of the camera's presence." Climbing rocks and tenuous branches along the Hudson River at locations often suggested by the models themselves, Gonzalez captures the timeless bucolic beauty and awe expressed in Hudson River School paintings, while engaging the viewer in the sensations of water rippling and rushing against flesh and wind carving hair. A master of echoing shapes and lines within minimal compositions, he reconnects the human form and presence to its organic roots.

Cheryl McGinnis Gallery

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