

For immediate release

## Cheryl McGinnis Gallery

The Bedroom

### Tony Gonzalez

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“The Bedroom” (2006-2008) is a new series of photographs that continues to investigate themes explored in an earlier series “The Bathers” (2004-2005), with references to the tradition of the nude, but which places the figure in a modern context. The figures in “The Bedroom” engage in many of the same domestic rituals depicted in historical genre paintings such as sleeping, dressing and other private moments that take place at home.

They are thoroughly contemporary figures who participate as collaborators rather than merely serve as muse. The figures depicted in this newest series are conscious of the camera’s presence but are seemingly indifferent to the artist, or by extension the viewer.

The artist’s interest in the figure, and in particular, observing the figure in private moments is long-standing. Gonzalez first began taking pictures in black and white of people he knew, usually in the intimate settings of their own home, fixating on the personal details of their inner lives as represented by their attire and surroundings. He continued to photograph people, but changed the focus of the setting to the public domain. After completing his MFA, he began work on his first major photographic project, the “Jersey Shore” (1991-1995) that focused on the people who populated the boardwalk towns along that part of New Jersey where he had come of age during the late 1970s and early 1980s. The barely clad strangers in this body of work reveal something of their personality through their uninhibited gestures and unmannered poses, many of which are repeated and reiterated in the “The Bedroom” series. However these new series takes the act of voyeurism a step further in that not only are the figures in “The Bedroom” aware of Gonzalez’s presence, but they also cooperate and collaborate with him even as they are absorbed in personal moments. Ultimately, the work seeks to further explore the voyeuristic nature of photography, the act of seeing and of being seen.

Gonzalez has been exploring the physical facts of photography, its materials and processes—by combining the vintage technique of Gum Bichromate (a 19th century printing process which combines Gum Arabic, Ammonium Dichromate and water color pigments) with 21st century digital technology. The Gum Bichromate process, while seemingly more akin to printmaking, is in fact a photographic process—albeit a painstakingly elaborate one—which sets itself deliberately against the idea of photographic transparency. With this process he is able to render images not just in full color, but also in color that is rich with meaning.