

FAHEY / KLEIN
G A L L E R Y

JULIE BLACKMON

Down Time

July 14th - September 3rd, 2016

Reception for the Artist: Thursday, July 14th 7-9 PM

Book Available

The Fahey/Klein Gallery is pleased to present *Down Time*, an exhibition of work by acclaimed photographer Julie Blackmon. Focusing on the complexities and contradictions of modern life, Blackmon explores, among other subjects, the overwhelming, often conflicting expectations and obligations of contemporary parenthood. Her busy, imaginary narratives walk a darkly humorous line between lighthearted Americana and the chaos and occasional darkness of our daily lives.

In her first book, *Domestic Vacations* (2008), Blackmon described the inspiration she received when encountering the works of 17th century Dutch master Jan Steen. "The conflation of art and life I discovered in Steen's work is an area I explored in photographing the everyday life of my family and the lives of my sisters and their families at home," she wrote of this book.

In recent years, Blackmon has moved beyond family matters to explore a broader picture of modern life, always tethered to a narrative dynamic. Beneath the inviting surface of her images, complexity lurks: there is often a serpent in her idyllic gardens. As art critic Laura Maloney noted, "At first glance, the work seems to depict an idealized America of the past, but upon further inspection, an unexpected darkness becomes apparent. Unsupervised children, often in dangerous situations, frolic happily about in an imperfectly perfect, sunny-macabre world ... are these images an attack on the neglectful parent or an attack on the helicopter parenting of today? Blackmon pays homage to a disappearing way of life even while she questions it."

Actor Reese Witherspoon, a collector of Blackmon's work, interviewed her in the foreword to her most recent collection, *Homegrown* (2014). Blackmon explained her goal is "to show the flaws, the torn lining, the parts of life that aren't so perfect. I think that's refreshing ... especially in this culture, where everything is so Instagram and cookie-cutter perfect."

Blackmon's works are a deft mash-up of pop phenomena, consumer culture, social satire, and sly references to iconic American works of art. They are often littered with the disposable artifacts that we often turn our eyes away from: potato chip bags and fast-food wrappers, discarded toys and magazines. Her unblinking eye often verges on the surreal, lending a bracing, irreverent snap to her unique world, where *Blue Velvet* meets Norman Rockwell.

Julie Blackmon is an award-winning photographer who lives in Springfield, Mo., only blocks from the home where she grew up. Her work has appeared on the covers of *TIME* and *New York Magazine*, and has been featured in many other publications. Her works are included in the permanent collections of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Portland Art Museum; Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago; and many others.

"Julie Blackmon has created images that speak to the contradictions of a culture that is both child centered and self-obsessed."

— *The Seattle Times* (Nancy Worssam)

"Julie Blackmon's photographs, taken together, form a paracosm, an imaginary world the viewer can enter like oddly fleshed out worlds of Oz and *Wonderland*."

— Billy Collins, two-time U.S. Poet Laureate

148 NORTH LA BREA AVENUE LOS ANGELES CA 90036

PH: (323) 934-2250 | FX: (323) 934-4243

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