

**Alex Prager
Week-end**

January 14 – February 20, 2010

Reception for the artist & signing: Thursday, January 14, 6 – 8 p.m.

Project gallery exhibition: Garry Winogrand *Women are Beautiful*



Yancey Richardson Gallery is pleased to present *Week-end*, an exhibition of new work by Alex Prager and the third installment in the photographic trilogy of staged female portraits by the Los Angeles-based artist. Simultaneous with our New York show, *Week-end* will be shown at the M + B Gallery in Los Angeles; both exhibitions will be accompanied by a catalog. In the project gallery we will feature a selection of prints from Garry Winogrand's *Women are Beautiful* portfolio.

Through her constructed narratives and dramatic portraits, Prager explores a range of female types from vulnerable to powerful, from tragic to tender and from coolly detached to literally playing with fire. As described by L.A. Times writer Jessica Gelt, "Alex Prager's is a vision of womanhood on the edge: On the edge of beauty, of breakdown, of lust, of listlessness." Prager's photographs are inspired by and set in her native city of Los Angeles, a place the artist describes as "A strange picture of perfection...with a sense of unease under the surface of all this beauty and promise." With wigs, makeup and retro costumes meticulously planned, Prager casts and directs her friends in the role of the protagonist, most often a solitary figure absorbed in a personal drama. Cinematic and darkly playful, Prager's photographs suggest a narrative occurring just outside the frame. But like fashion photographer Guy Bourdin, a master of the photographic *mise-en-scène*, Prager constructs more than a pretty picture, often infusing her narrative with a dark sense of foreboding.

Declaring that on some level "all women are actresses", Prager unabashedly references films by directors such as David Lynch, Alfred Hitchcock and Douglas Sirk. Frequently shot from an unexpected angle and dramatically lit, the images offer the audience a voyeur's view into the world of Prager's characters. However, with an ironic wink, in *Week-end* Prager has also included a photograph of a group of young women seated in a dark theater, fixated on an unseen screen, spellbound by the drama unfolding in front of them and, by implication, around them in the exhibition's other photographs.

Born in Los Angeles in 1979, Prager is a self-taught photographer. Her photographs have been included in 13 exhibitions in the United States and in London. In addition, her work has appeared in numerous publications including *i-D*, *Details*, *Rolling Stone*, *Flaunt*, *Complex*, *Elle Japan*, *MOJO* and *Tank*.

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