

LYNN GOLDSMITH

The Looking Glass

September 9 – October 23, 2010

Opening reception and book signing
September 23, 6:00 – 8:00 PM

Jenkins Johnson Gallery, New York

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Hours: Tuesday - Saturday 10:00 AM – 6:00 PM



Tea Cup Dreams, 2008, archival pigment ink print, 30x40 inches, edition of 6

Jenkins Johnson Gallery is pleased to announce a solo exhibition of acclaimed photographer Lynn Goldsmith's work, entitled *The Looking Glass*, which accompanies a book of the same name. The book includes a foreword by Glenn O'Brien and will be printed in a limited edition run of 1,000, enclosed in a deluxe slipcase. An opening reception and book signing for the artist will be held later in September.

Ironically, Lynn Goldsmith began to question the purpose of traditional portraits at a time when her own rock and roll portraiture was receiving critical acclaim, landing on the covers of publications like *Rolling Stone*, *Newsweek*, and *The New Yorker*. She wanted to develop a way to confront the inherent emptiness of portraiture while also exploring meaning of identity through self-portrayals. Her examination began when she started photographing high-end department store windows throughout New York City, and altering the images by removing and adding particular elements to suit her narrative. Once she has the setting as desired, Goldsmith makes elaborate self-portraits with stylized hair and makeup, which are then digitally placed onto the mannequins within the window scenes. Ultimately, her photographs are hybrids of fantasy and reality, offering greater investigation than found in a typical portrait.

The Looking Glass delves into the psychological relationship between what one sees and what one imagines by combining art history, Hollywood cinematography, and fashion ideals into various characters from myths, religion, and fairy tales. "Teacup Dreams," a lavishly detailed scene, arouses questions as to the duality of the narrative; has the figure fallen into a sleep after her Jack Daniels spiked tea, dreaming of the scene around her, or are she and the clown with the snacks a part of the same reality? Everywhere we look we are confronted with details reflecting the duality of the scene: ribbon candy on the table, a stack of muffins in the corner, varied dog figurines in the foreground – are these parts of her dream, or integral figures in the complex narrative taking place? Goldsmith's elaborately adorned self-portraits are layered onto the figures in the vignettes, though they still occupy the ultimately vacant world of the mannequins. As seen in "The Divided Self," the mannequins are reminiscent of Goldsmith's visage but still retain blank stares, stiff figures, and non-bending hands; however, Goldsmith's decision to depict two identical figures looking in different directions highlights the idea of a discrepancy between what is seen and what is imagined, how we present ourselves and how we want others to perceive us.

Goldsmith's self portraits have transcended the stereotype of vacant portraiture by addressing questions of identity and how it is constructed – how sure can we ever truly be about someone's identity? Is the identity of the image the same as or related to the identity of the subject? Who do you become if you are not yourself? Goldsmith's lush photographs leave the answers to these questions solely to the viewer, not wanting to impart her own identity on anyone else. We may never know what is real within these scenes, but in allowing us the freedom to decide for ourselves, Goldsmith has succeeded in driving the relationship between reality and the imagined to the forefront of the conversation.

Goldsmith made a widely known name for herself in the photography world through her portraits that have appeared in countless publications, including covers for *Life*, *Newsweek*, *Time*, *Rolling Stone*, *Sports Illustrated*, *People*, and *Elle*, among others. Her current series, *The Looking Glass*, recently won first place in PDN's Faces Competition, as well as second place in PX3 Prix de la Photographie Paris. Her work is in the permanent collections of: Museum of Modern Art, New York; Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago; The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, Cleveland; and the Smithsonian, Washington, D.C. She has published ten photographic books, directed video magnification for rock concerts and music documentaries, and was the youngest person ever inducted into the Director's Guild of America for her work as director of the first rock and roll concert on network television. In addition to being an accomplished photographer, Goldsmith was a chart-topping recording artist under the pseudonym Will Powers.