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CONTEMPORARY ART

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Jen DeNike – Don't Tread On Me

Sept 6 – Oct 27, 2007

First Thursday reception Sept 6th, 6-9pm

Portland, OR, August 11, 2007 – Quality Pictures is pleased to present a solo exhibition of recent photographs and video works by Brooklyn-based artist Jen DeNike. Entitled *Don't Tread On Me*, the exhibition will be DeNike's first in the Pacific Northwest, and runs from September 6th through October 27th, 2007. Ms. DeNike will be present at the September 6th First Thursday reception from 6 – 9 pm.

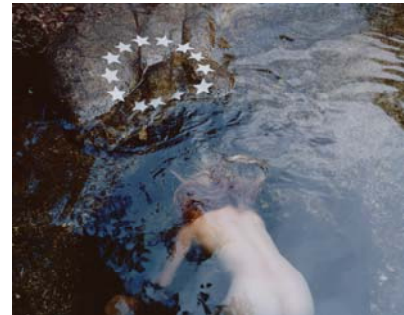
DeNike will be showing part of a growing body of work centered on flag language and symbolism. Often incorporating flags, or symbols associated with them, into natural or quotidian settings, DeNike's images explore the shifting character of the flag as a vernacular object. While the earlier works in the exhibition will focus on the American flag in particular, DeNike's recent more abstract investigations expand beyond this highly charged signifier to find the presence of flag symbolism outside the flag itself, in unexpected, and even mysterious, places.



On view will be three of DeNike's large-scale photographs, which feature adolescent boys against small-town, rural American backdrops. In each image a single flag is visible, its meaning rendered ambiguous, or contradictory, by its subtly unconventional placement. An upside-down flag in the hands of a stone-faced teenage boy turns patriotism into an SOS sign—or something else entirely.

Along with these photographs, DeNike will present *Flag Boy* (2007), a single-channel video work featuring a boy bobbing, submarine-like, in an outdoor pool, a small flag brandished above his watery head.

Also on view will be two of DeNike's recent smaller-scale photographs, which concentrate on stars (the symbolic mainstays of so many flags). In these images, stars appear in natural surroundings, in close relation to human bodies. A submerged body is accented by a circle of stars reminiscent of the colonial flag; alternately, a six-pointed star formed from stones is partially encircled by a nude male form. Additionally, DeNike will also premiere a second video piece, *The Conformist* (2007), which portrays a blindfolded young man, shirtless and barefoot, stumbling down an unmarked road surrounded by snow and woods. No clues to how or why he is there are given.



Finally, DeNike will debut a set of nine 8" x 10" contact prints made with a large-format view camera. Functioning together as a single work, the photographs spell out the word "Surrender" using the codes of semaphore flag language—a visual mode of communication employed by the Navy. This more sculptural component of the exhibition mirrors the conceptual processes at play in DeNike's current artistic practice.

Jen DeNike lives and works in Brooklyn, New York. She received her MFA from Bard College in 2002. DeNike has recently exhibited internationally, at SITE Gallery in Sheffield, Tensta Konsthall in Sweden, Kunst-Werke in Berlin, and in Greater New York 2005 at the P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center in New York. Her work is part of the permanent collection of The Museum of Modern Art, New York.