

JIMMY DESANA

Lower Gallery

16 April – 15 May 2016

Wilkinson Gallery is pleased to announce it's fourth solo exhibition by Jimmy DeSana (1949 – 1990), focusing on DeSana's portraiture work, documenting the figures he associated with the downtown punk scene of mid-1970s.

DeSana is primarily known for his sexually anguished images, intending to "push sexuality to the limit". These images, released under their singular evocative title "submission" placed DeSana within a wider cultural moment of both the punk scene but also as an extension of the American subversive spirit seen in the works of William Burroughs and Robert Mapplethorpe. Yet both as an alternative practice and as paid work DeSana produced black and white images for magazines such as *Artforum*, *File* and *The New York Rockers*. These images are of musicians from the Downtown scene such as James Chance, Debbie Harry, Robin Crutchfield and the bands Nervous Breakdown and Teenage Jesus and the Jerks, as well as wider cultural figures such as Yoko Ono, Brian Eno, Billy Idol and Andy Warhol.

For DeSana these images provided an income, as Laurie Simmons states for New York photographers the mixing of cultural outlets from magazines to galleries was a reality. Today the juxtaposition between low and high cultural is often highly intentional, yet as Simmons states it was the "way that you made your living. One week you might sell an art photo and the next week you might have a commission to do some portraits... you make the work your life and the way you make a living". DeSana later stated "I see it as a part of my life, really, because these people were my friends. I didn't pursue them on a truly commercial basis and I usually didn't make much money from it. It felt very natural to shoot them. It seemed like an extension of my own personal work. In fact, I used some of these portraits in a show in 1980 on 57th Street. So the portraits became part of my art".

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Jimmy DeSana (b.1949, Detroit, Michigan, d. 1990, New York, NY). Inspired by Surrealist imagery, DeSana's photographs from the 1970s & 1980s present unexpected collisions between provocative postures and commonplace objects; DeSana was a pioneer in terms of colour photography technique and printed his photographs by hand in the studio. DeSana currently has work in the group show 'Performing for the Camera' at Tate Modern, London, closing 12 June 2016. Solo exhibitions include White Columns, New York (2007), Jablonka Galerie, Cologne (1989) and Pat Hearn Gallery, New York (1988, 1986). Group exhibitions include Tate Liverpool (2013), The Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, The Walker Art Center Minneapolis, and The Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston

(2012-13), The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2010), The Museum of Modern Art, New York (2009), Simon Watson Gallery, New York (1989), National Portrait Gallery, London (1986), and MoMA PSI, New York (1981).