

JIMMY DE SANA

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Wilkinson Gallery is pleased to announce its third solo exhibition by Jimmy de Sana (1950-1990), showcasing De Sana's colour photographs, produced during the late 70s and early 80s. In 2008, Wilkinson exhibited De Sana's seminal photographic work *101 Nudes*, which consisted of 56 half-tone reproductions of De Sana's (seemingly) casually shot black-and-white photographs, originally created in 1972 when the artist was in his early twenties. In 2010, Wilkinson exhibited a selection of colour works from later in De Sana's career, not shown since his final exhibition in New York with Pat Hearn Gallery in 1988.

De Sana's colour photographs are revolutionary in their embracing of photography as an art medium. De Sana made his images rather than taking photographs. He worked in a similar vein to Man Ray, concocting images from scratch in the dark room, enhancing colours, and utilising solarisation. Up until this point, De Sana had mainly worked with black and white images, with series such as *101 Nudes* and *Submission*, mainly intended as portfolios and catalogues. The colour photographs were his first works intended for presentation on a wall. This series coincides with the move of photography into art galleries that begun in the late 60s / early 70s, with the appointment of curators, such as John Szarkowski at New York's MOMA. Szarkowski curated some of the first photography exhibitions in a gallery, including the 1976 exhibition of William Eggleston's work, marking a tipping point in regards to the acceptance of colour photography within the art institution. De Sana's work was some of the first photography as art, creating a shock value that De Sana maintained and enhanced through his use of exaggerated colour and sexual imagery.

On the other hand, De Sana also puts the 'colourisation' of his works down to the bad reception he had on his TV whilst living in his Midtown apartment for over ten years. De Sana's relationship and involvement in 1970s/80s New York defined his work. He arrived in New York in his early 1920s from the Bible belt. The photographer, Laurie Simmons remembers Jimmy as wondering New York, wearing a white Panama hat and a white spray-painted Yashica around his neck. He became a key figure in the punk art scene of downtown New York, taking portraits of key art and music figures, setting a style that became dominant throughout underground journals and newspapers. He photographed the likes of John Giorno, Jack Smith, Laurie Anderson, Debbie Harry, Billy Idol and the Talking Heads, coming to define an era of punk.

As with De Sana's own move from Atlanta to New York City, his photographs begin within a suburban setting, but one slowly infiltrated with the sexuality and absurdity that could only be found in a decaying lower Manhattan, only able to support the likes of a No Wave art movement. De Sana was influenced from a young age by the writings of William Burroughs, an influence that dispatched the beatific, underground, punk sensibilities and the eccentric, perverse tone that came to define the photographs of De Sana. De Sana's photographs are a sequential uncovering of the perversions of "normal", happening from within the cracks in our society of straight edges. It is the graphic exposure and leaking discovery of licentiousness, carried out within a suburban home - in the bathroom, with jockstraps - only the most inappropriate of places. As

Burroughs puts it, “Look at these pictures in Submission...My dear, its all so *Christian* and *medieval* and *gloomy*.”

Jimmy De Sana is currently included in the exhibition, *Glam! The Performance of Style* at Tate Liverpool and *This Will Have Been: Art, Love & Politics in the 1980's* at The Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago. Solo exhibitions include, Wilkinson Gallery (2008 and 2007), White Columns, New York (2007), Pat Hearn Gallery, New York (1997, 1995, 1988, 1986), and Galerie Jablonka, Cologne (1989). Group Shows include *This Will Have Been: Art, Love & Politics in the 1980's*, The Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston (2012-2013) and The Walker Art Centre, Minneapolis (2012), *Off the Wall: Part 1 – Thirty Performative Actions*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2010), *Looking at Music: Side 2*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York (2009), *Eat the Document*, curated by Dean Daderko, Larissa Goldston Gallery, New York (2008), *Blow Both of Us*, curated by Shannon Ebner and Adam Putnam, Participant Inc, New York (2007), *Erotophobia*, Simon Watson Gallery, New York (1989), *Staging The Self: photography 1840 -1985*, National Portrait Gallery, London (1986), *New York, New Wave*, PS1, New York (1981) and *Times Square Show*, New York (1980).