



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

EXHIBITION:

**Chris Verene: Family
Gallery II: Jona Frank: Boys: In Progress**

SHOW DATES:

Sept 5 – Nov 7, 2009

RECEPTION:

Saturday, Sept 12, 6-8 pm

GALLERY HOURS:

Tuesday - Saturday 10-6

DNJ Gallery is pleased to announce its upcoming exhibition "Family" featuring the photographs of Chris Verene. Gallery II features the work of Los Angeles based artist Jona Frank in the show entitled "Boys: In Progress."

Chris Verene's new book and series "Family," published in 2009 by Twin Palms Publishers, is the sequel to his critically acclaimed monograph about his birthplace, Galesburg, Illinois, where his family has lived for three generations. Galesburg is a central Illinois town that has fallen on hard times, much like other small towns across the United States. This series conveys his bittersweet fondness for the now decaying community in which he grew up, which still holds lessons about aging, disability, unemployment, alcoholism and other difficulties.

Verene has been photographing his family and friends since 1984 and has committed to this project for the duration of his life. "The key to my artwork," Verene has written, "is that it can only be born out of real and deep friendships and bonds with the people in the pictures." Each image, whether it is of his family at Christmas breakfast, or of a run-down trailer of two of his friends, is accompanied by a hand-written, sincere text, giving the viewer an insight into Verene's relationship to his subjects.

Chris Verene has exhibited across the country and has been included in exhibitions at the Skirball Cultural Center, Los Angeles, The Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago and The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Verene's photographs are included in many esteemed collections such as The Whitney Museum of American Art, The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, The Walker Art Center, Minneapolis and The High Museum of Art in Atlanta. Verene is a professor of photography at the School Of Visual Arts in New York, and divides his time between New York, Galesburg, Illinois, and his career as a traveling musician.

In the exhibition, "Boys: In Progress," Jona Frank's on-going project follows boys from 8 years old to their early twenties. Her photographs vary from skaters to Boy Scouts to Mormon boys on their Mission. While the title of the show references the fact that this series is still in progress, it also refers to the boys themselves. She has revisited some of her subjects months or even years later to see how they have changed. For example, in the image "Simon, Santa Monica (2005)" a boy stands near a playground with long hair and a Metallica shirt. In "Simon, one year later (2006)" this same boy has not only grown in size, but has completely changed his appearance. With no hair to hide behind, the lines of his face and his eyes are clear. His stained lips (from a popsicle?) hint at the innocence of his ten years, while his shaved head and his rounded, sun burned face show the adolescent he will soon become. Frank has devoted much of her career as a photographer and filmmaker to documenting cultures of adolescence. As she has said about her work, "These portraits are not an all encompassing definition of who these kids are. Instead they're a moment in their development and self-definition. It's a time to experiment and try on different roles while searching for a place to belong."

Frank's book "RIGHT: Portraits From the Evangelical Ivy League" (Chronicle Books, 2008) has been featured in The New Yorker and was chosen as one of the best photo books of the year in American Photo Magazine. Her work is included in many private and public collections including the California Museum of Photography, Riverside, California, The Getty Museum, Los Angeles, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.

Please contact the gallery for more information or images.

dnj gallery

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