

CONNER CONTEMPORARY ART

Civic Endurance

October 11 - November 22, 2003

Catalogue available:

Bradley McCallum & Jacqueline Tarry : Civic Endurance

foreword by Franklin Sirmans

Essay: Franklin Sirmans

Conner Contemporary Art announces the premier exhibition of *Civic Endurance* by New York artists Bradley McCallum and Jacqueline Tarry. In life-size color photographs and video this forceful exhibition documents a 25-hour endurance performance by homeless teenagers. Ten percent of the sales proceeds will be donated to Peace on the Street by Kids from the Streets (PSKS).

The collective action took place on a public sidewalk in a Seattle, WA. From 6:00 p.m., August 5, 2002 until 6:59 p.m. the following day 26 homeless youths stood for an hour in succession while being videotaped with a time-lapse technique. In the video each performer maintains a sculptural presence amid a flux of passing traffic and pedestrians. Over the course of the edited 130-minute video, ambient natural light fades into darkness and reemerges at dawn. The audio track combines street sounds with the voices of homeless teens whose stories amplify the visual testament of their images.

For these youth, who face drug addiction among other physical challenges, standing motionless for an hour was truly an act of endurance. Two interconnected ideas inspired their stamina. Each participant dedicated his or her performance to the memory of a friend who died from life on the streets. As they "stood for" those who were absent, the youths engaged in an act of civil disobedience by violating Seattle Civility Laws according to which standing or sitting motionless in public is a criminal offense.

The still color portraits in this series possess a profoundly unsettling appeal. The heroine-chic of Endurance Jessica is too true-to-life for the pages of Vogue and Endurance: Jarred might be a Gap ad were it not for strain street life revealed in the model's sunken eyes. In *Civic Endurance* McCallum and Terry redefine the profile of activist art by putting an alternative face on American youth.

As Franklin Sirmans explains in his foreword to the exhibition catalogue, "McCallum and Tarry's work cleverly subverts the norms of politically challenging contemporary art with seductive formal qualities. On one level, *Civic Endurance* is a beautiful series of original portrait photography. On another level, *Civic Endurance* embodies the spirit of making art matter in our moment."

McCallum & Tarry's work is currently on view at the Neuberger Museum of Art 2003 Biennial Exhibition of Public Art in Purchase, NY.