



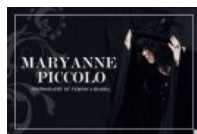
FEATURES



SPOTLITE



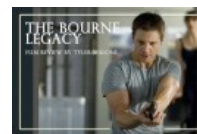
FOTO FIX



WHO AM I ?



FASHIONATION



THE REEL DEAL

ONCE UPON A TIME

A Spotlight on Artist MEGHAN BOODY

Meghan Boody by Anita Marie Antonini

March 2011

Once upon a time, I sat down with Meghan Boody, an artist based out of New York City and Long Island, working in both photography and sculpture. I wanted to have a conversation with her to discuss her surreal body of work in her *Lighthouse Series* of photographs.

These pieces are steeped in symbolism and highly psychological, opening up many different possibilities and interpretations. Her narratives, which contain mostly children, are enchanting, moody and sometimes downright scary.

While staging modern day fairy tales in her work, she leaves it to the viewer to decide how *once upon a time* begins and if there is a *happily ever after*.

Anita Marie Antonini: Childhood and dreams are two words that come to my mind immediately upon seeing your photographs from *The Lighthouse Project*, evoking a restlessness and curiosity, like being in a dream-like state, not sure if awake or not. Can you tell us a little bit about your childhood fantasies and dreams in terms of how it relates to your work?

Meghan Boody: I think you're onto something. The whole series can be read as one little girl's daydream of finding a place for herself in the world after being cast away and adrift in foreign territory. I grew up on the Upper East Side of New York in a very confined, regulated existence. I was the only adopted child of older parents and my home had a dark, critical undercurrent beneath the plush exterior. As a way out, I lost myself in creating little worlds of make-believe, where I would spend as much time as possible. We had a house in Bridgehampton, LI and my best times were roaming the fields and making forts in the tangled patches of nature you could still find out there. The girl in *Lighthouse* also escapes from a highly monitored existence and throws herself into the rampant countryside surrounding her. There anything is possible. She finds companions in the strays and urchins she encounters while she follows the beacon of light towards her rescue.

AMA: I also feel that I can go into one of your photographs and stay there awhile, how is it for you in making a body of work and being able to move on?

MB: My process engulfs me. I spend countless hours composing a patchwork of layers, each piece taking several months to complete. What I've always found fascinating and a little sad (and I think this is true for many artists) is that this all-consuming pursuit is an embrace and refusal of life: An embrace because I'm delving into an exploration of what makes us tick and trying to capture some of that beauty and complexity, and a refusal because this requires so much time and that means I'm participating less and looking in from the outside.

Of course I get very attached to each image. Every one is like a little birth. I have to clothe my characters and induce them to interact in an intelligible way during the shoot. And then transpose them into a believable environment where they feel at home. By the end I am loath to leave. Maybe that's why I linger so laboriously on each one—to prolong my eventual departure!

AMA: Your frames are also sometimes detailed with an eye. Does that represent your looking-glass back at the viewer?

MB: I like the impression that my images are framed by something alive and sentient, that there's an unseen force guarding them. In my most recent frames, larvae and lizards crawl out of crevices and nestle in corners and among the decorative carvings.

And as the viewer looks at the picture, the eye looks back, compelling an outward gaze to turn inward. Exploration of the deep recesses of (eye)identity motivates this work as it follows the quest of a girl in pursuit of her lost self. As she moves away from girlhood into the wilderness of adulthood, she picks up the pieces of her shattered past, reassembling them into a newly integrated whole.

AMA: You have a home on the North Fork of Long Island near a lighthouse. Has that influenced your existence or driven you in any way while making this body of work for *The Lighthouse Project II: Visitation*?

MB: I was a couple of years into making *Lighthouse* when I bought my place on the North Fork, so my lighthouse sonar was already activated and that must have irrevocably drawn me to the property. It's a working lighthouse and at night the beam sweeps across swaths of trees and part of the house and at first it was a little spooky even for us. Now it feels more like a benevolent protective force field.

I try to pay attention to symbols and how certain leitmotifs appear and reappear in my life and dreams. They often function as guideposts, confirming that I'm on the right track, and if intentionally sought out they can invoke certain energies. The lighthouse is such a marker for me. When I came across a house next door to a real live lighthouse, there was no denying that I had found the perfect spot. From paranormal accounts to spiritual tracts and psychoanalysis, even politics, a point of light is among the most inspiring, stirring and potent symbols that exists. Or I could say, at the risk of appearing a complete cornball, in the words of Debbie Boone (*accompanied by violins*): "It lights up my life and gives me hope to carry on."

AMA: You have a very busy month with *The Lighthouse Project II: Visitation*, opening March 1, 2011 at Affirmation Arts, plus *Psyche and Smut Lives*, opening March 4, 2011 at Salomon Contemporary. What's next for you?

MB: *Lighthouse* travels to Galerie Caprice Horn in Berlin in April and I'm looking forward to seeing what kind of response my pictures receive there. As for *Psyche and Smut*, there have been rumblings about making this story of twin rival sisters into a coming-of-age book that incorporates a sound component for each image. And I am in the midst of fleshing out the last *Lighthouse* installment—where my young orphalines militarize their institutional uniforms and strike out once again into the wilds. This time to fight against the forces of evil, embodied by darkly seductive armored horsemen on back steeds.

Meghan Boody is an artist based out of New York City and Long Island, working in both photography and sculpture. One of her main artistic projects, *The Lighthouse Project*, takes place, as she explains: "in a 19th century anglo countryside where urchins and strays struggle to find their way. Theirs is a wild, unsettling world that splits off parallel versions of itself, a hope and the dashing of that hope, a balancing act that hovers between being lost and found. Using first lines of Victorian novels as titles, the narrative revolves around a young girl in an impossible situation who struggles to escape and dreams of rescue. She ends up embarking on a character-forming quest that explores the mark of the human hand on the natural world and how nature

affects the wanderer. Here the prospect of metamorphosis crops up and the road forks and doubles back again and again. Caught in the adolescent briar patch of uncertainty, the woman-child is caught in a labyrinth of choice, a netherworld of past and future, pushing blindly forward towards an altered state."

LINKS

[MEGHAN BOODY'S Official Site: LOOKING GLASS LABS](#)

[AFFIRMATION ARTS Site](#)

[RICK WESTER FINE ARTS Site](#)

[CAPRICE HORN Site](#)

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Meghan Boody interviewed by Anita Marie Antonini

Written by Anita Marie Antonini

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Art & Photography by Meghan Boody

Design by Marie Havens

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Captions:

Page 1/Cover:

"East o' the Sun, West o' the Moon" 2006, Fujiflex print, 50x70.5 inches, edition of 5, Courtesy & © Meghan Boody

Page 2:

"Night is generally my time for walking", 2006, Fujiflex print, 50x70.5 inches, edition of 5, Courtesy & © Meghan Boody

Page 3:

"Guard! What place is this?" 2010, Fujiflex print, 50x70.5 inches, edition of 5, Courtesy & © Meghan Boody

Page 4:

"It was one of those exquisite days that come in winter, in which it seems no longer the dead body, but the lovely ghost of summer", 2009, Fujiflex print, 50x70.5 inches, edition of 5, Courtesy & © Meghan Boody

Page 5:

(L) The Assisment of Smut, 2000, Lightjet print, 56x41 inches, edition of 5, Courtesy & © Meghan Boody

(R) Psyche Supernova, 2000, Lightjet print, 56x41 inches, edition of 5, Courtesy & © Meghan Boody

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