

HASTED KRAEUTLER

J E F F B A R K

G O L D E N B O Y

APRIL 24 - JUNE 14, 2014

Reception for the artist on Thursday, April 24, 6 to 8 p.m.



Jeff Bark, *Goldenboy*, 2014

HASTED KRAEUTLER is pleased to announce, *GOLDENBOY*, an exhibition of new photographs by Jeff Bark, beginning April 24 and running through June 14, 2014.

The photographic tableaux in Jeff Bark's newest body of work, *GOLDENBOY*, exist in an eerily ambiguous time of day, somewhere between the burning, first rays of dawn and the last glow of sunset. Suffused by a warm, languorous light that evokes the close heat of Southern California, and set amidst colors and textures that recall the 1980s, the series was inspired by aspects of Bark's own autobiography. It was in a Southern California backyard in the '80s that he made his first photographs, and *GOLDENBOY*'s protagonist, is the same age as Bark was during those very years. But the similarities end there, as these works take viewers through a compelling though confounding journey, refusing at every turn to provide satisfactory answers as to what, exactly, is taking place in this young man's life—and who he will become.

Although most of the photographs appear to take place outside, and have an authentically rich, saturated West Coast palette, every one of them was actually taken inside Jeff Bark's New York garage, on a meticulously constructed set meant to replicate the California backyard in which he made his first photographs. Bark's insistence on building these complex, intricate sets from the ground up—working in the controlled environment of his studio, rather than at the whim of the elements—is an essential element of his meticulous, time-consuming process. In that spirit, the exhibition includes a site-specific installation that offers a wholly sensory and immersive experience. Soaked in the warm light so masterfully captured in the photographs, and scented to evoke the salt-kissed air of the sea, the installation is fitted with live parakeets, transforming Hasted Kraeutler into Southern California, circa 1980.

Bark is known for dreamy, atmospheric images that plumb the depths of a collective human experience in the manner of history painting's grand masters, from Jacques-Louis David to Delacroix. But rather than relate stories of conquest, Bark's photographs explore human life on a closer, more intimate scale, rendering epic the minutia of quotidian existence and revealing the mysteries contained in the commonplace. To that end, *GOLDENBOY* is sited inside and around the young man's California abode, offering a glimpse into the spaces and routines of his seemingly idyllic daily life. But something is always awry: near-appealing symbols of his languid existence are juxtaposed with disturbing, even macabre details. As he sits in a chaise lounge eating popsicles, a dead plant studded by sharp spikes hovers ominously behind him; an elegant arrangement of yellow roses is corrupted by the remains of a keg-party, their roots flooded by empty plastic cups. It's a disturbing clash of idyll and decay, the indulgent and the morbid. The question persists: will he live up to and embrace his own potential for greatness? Or perhaps he will turn away from it, choosing instead to pursue a darker destiny.

Jeff Bark, who was born in 1963 in Minnesota and is now based in New York, is part of renowned national collections including the Wilson Centre of Photography, the Sir Elton John Collection, and the 21 Century Museum, in Louisville, Kentucky. His photographs were recently included in the group exhibition *No Fashion, Please!* at Austria's Kunsthalle Wien, along with such international superstars as Philip-Lorca diCorcia, Erwin Olaf, Hanna Putz, Viviane Sassen, Sophia Wallace, and Bruce Weber.

For press inquiries or further information, please contact **HASTED KRAEUTLER** at info@hastedkraeutler.com.



Jeff Bark, *Black Cup*, 2014