

STEPHEN WIRTZ GALLERY

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MELANIE PULLEN

High Fashion Crime Scenes

Exhibition dates: October 3 – November 4, 2006

Opening reception for the artist, Thursday, October 5, 5:30-7:30 PM

Stephen Wirtz Gallery presents *High Fashion Crime Scenes*, photography by Melanie Pullen.

Using the Los Angeles Police Department and County Corner's office database as primary study for her reenacted crime scenes, Los Angeles based photographer Melanie Pullen presents high saturated chromogenic prints for her series aptly titled *High Fashion Crime Scenes*. Pullen's *High Fashion Crime Scenes* takes aim at the public's fascination with forensic investigations, crime scenes and bodies of evidence, while confusing the solemn feel of such scenes by the inclusion of haute couture.

Employing the body as vehicle, Pullen introduces such lifeless conduits treated with Bulgari, Gucci, Chanel, Vivienne Westwood and Louis Verdad, assessing the line between high fashion's ability to mask or draw attention away from harsh visual realities and it's opposite platform, that being of the everyday un-staged tragedy, existing wholly within the actuality of the daily. Seen in Pullen's photographs are productions against nature, so to speak, as the complete process is a mimicry of heinous crimes captured with the assistance of models, haute couture on loan from top fashion houses, and complete staffs consisting of set designers, makeup artists, and other associated stage hands.

Pullen's photographs beg the question of a number of issues regarding authenticity, the human obsession with other people's tragedy, the blurred line between reality and the fake spectacle in contemporary culture and the general disassociation that humans feel in regards to issues of mortality from such rapid exposure to violent imagery modern day. Raised in a family of photojournalists, Pullen was inspired by Luc Sante's 1992 book *Evidence* that contained crime scene images collected from the New York Police Department from 1912-1914.

Pullen works and lives in Los Angeles and has recently exhibited at the ACE Gallery, Los Angeles.

Stephen Wirtz Gallery is located at 49 Geary St., 3rd Fl., San Francisco, CA 94108, (415) 433-6879, Gallery hours are Tuesday-Friday, 9:30-5:30, Saturday 10:30-5:30.

For additional information please contact Julie Casemore, Tel.: (415) 433-6879, julie@wirtzgallery.com.