

STEPHEN WIRTZ GALLERY

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KELLI CONNELL

Double Life

Exhibition dates: June 7 – July 14, 2007

Opening reception for the artist Thursday, June 7, 5:30 – 7:30 pm

Stephen Wirtz Gallery announces an exhibition of photographs by Kelli Connell from her ongoing series *Double Life*.

Kelli Connell makes photographs that depict commonplace and emotionally charged scenes from an intimate relationship between two women—except in Connell’s pictures, the drama is constructed and both women are depicted by the same model, Kiba Jacobson, a college friend whom Connell has photographed exclusively for the series since its 2002 inception. Individual images of Jacobson posing, alternately as each person in the imaginary relationship, are digitally combined to create a fabricated—but seamless and believable—psychological narrative. The revelation that the two subjects are each portrayed by the same person unfolds slowly over time.

Connell describes her work as “an honest representation of the duality or multiplicity of the self.” Her images reveal that identity is not a fixed entity bound by tidy definitions. Connell’s masterful tableaus are familiar and have a subtlety that is easily absorbed by the viewer, providing the opportunity to question the acceptance of the photograph as an object of truth.

Martha Schwendener in the *New York Times* writes: “...these are ripe with big ideas: doubling (genetic versus digital), narcissism, same-sex relationships, the simulated versus the real, and the role of images in fabricating narratives (which also links Ms. Connell to photographers like Jeff Wall).”

Kelli Connell was born in Oklahoma City in 1974 and currently resides in Youngstown, OH. She will soon relocate to Chicago, where she has accepted a teaching position at Columbia College. She received a BFA in Photography and Visual Art Studies from University of North Texas, Denton, and an MFA in Photography from Texas Woman’s University, Denton, TX in 2003. Her work is included in the recent Phaidon publication *Vitamin Ph: New Perspectives in Photography*. She has received numerous awards and was a finalist for the Santa Fe Prize for Photography in 2004. Connell’s work is in the collections of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the Dallas Museum of Art among other public institutions.

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.

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