

NEWS RELEASE

Exhibition: Susan Lipper, Grapevine 1988-1992

Dates: November 22 – January 14, 2016

Higher Pictures is pleased to present its first exhibition with Susan Lipper, which is also the first U.S. solo presentation of her legendary project Grapevine (1988–92). The exhibition comprises fourteen large-scale gelatin silver photographs that were printed in 1993 for the debut of Grapevine at The Photographers' Gallery in London in 1994.

The series takes its name from Grapevine Branch, West Virginia, a small community where Lipper took up intermittent residency for over five years. In time, she became an inside member of this closed community and developed intimate relationships with the residents, whom she interviewed and photographed with a medium-format camera. Although Lipper's images seem to be constructed within the established vocabulary of documentary photography, she broke from this tradition by granting her sitters the theatrical license to perform as actors—as versions of themselves that may or may not have been true. After developing her prints, Lipper reviewed them with her sitters so they could refine or alter their poses. The resulting collaborative process paradoxically fulfills a traditional documentary function by throwing the gender and class roles enacted in small-town America into greater relief and asks viewers to recall the images of rural American communities we hold in our collective visual memory. In Lipper's photographs, each role, whether inhabited or performed, reveals itself to be artifice or fantasy as much as a means of personal expression. In this way, Grapevine enacts a double manifestation of self, picturing both Lipper's own psychic imagination—her creation and exploration of a fictional Eden removed from the reach of empty consumerism—and her subjects' keen self-awareness in their posturing.

Susan Lipper is a New York based artist. She received her MFA from Yale University in 1983. Among the monographs on her work are *Bed and Breakfast*, 2000, *trip*, 1999, and *GRAPEVINE*, 1994. Lipper is represented, amongst other places, in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. She is the recipient of numerous awards, including fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, New York Foundation for the Arts, and most recently the 2015 Guggenheim Fellowship.

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