

Kerry Skarbakka & Marla Rutherford
Re-Presenting the Portrait

Two Concurrent Solo Exhibitions

June 30 -August 4

Opening Reception: Saturday June 30, 6-8 PM

Irvine Contemporary is pleased to announce an exhibition of new and recent photographs by internationally acclaimed artists Kerry Skarbakka and Marla Rutherford. Both artists are working at a vitally significant intersection of approaches to the photographic image today: performative photography, staged and provocative hyperreal fictions, and new approaches to the photographic portrait.

The exhibition will run from June 30 through August 4. An essay by photography collector Henry Thaggert will accompany the exhibition.

Kerry Skarbakka

In the series *The Struggle to Right Oneself*, Kerry Skarbakka stages himself in scenes of losing balance and control. His arresting photographs appear at the intersection of performance and artist's portraits, and each composition dramatizes one of the deepest themes of our moment--the sense losing balance and control both personally and socially.



Kerry Skarbakka, Croatia, 2006. C-Print

The photographs are actual shots of the artist in the scene with only the minimal rigging and wires used for the shot removed from the final print. The photographs also record a deep sense of risk-taking and often physical danger for the artist, who has taken falls and created physically demanding sets in the search of the right arresting image. Skarbakka extended this theme further in the performances commissioned by the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago in 2005, *Life Goes On*.

Artist's Statement

Heidegger described human existence as a process of perpetual falling, and it is the responsibility of each individual to "catch ourselves" from our own uncertainty. My work is in response to this delicate state. It questions what it means to resist the struggle, to simply let go, and the consequences of holding on. The images stand as reminders that we are all vulnerable to losing our footing and grasp, symbolizing the precarious balancing act between the struggle against our desire to survive and our fantasy to transcend our humanness. (Kerry Skarbakka)

About the Artist

Kerry Skarbakka has an MFA in Photography from Columbia College, Chicago, IL. His work has been exhibited internationally, including gallery exhibitions in Chicago, Seattle, Antwerp, Belgium, New York, and Los Angeles, and in major art fairs (Photo London, Paris Photo, Miami Photo, and The Armory Show). Kerry Skarbakka lives and works in Brooklyn, NY.

Marla Rutherford

Marla Rutherford's work references many genres of photography—the staged portrait, fashion and glamour, advertising, fetish, film stills, Pirelli Calendars—to present highly original fictional and performative portraits that play off incongruous worlds, often interrupting a domestic scene with a fantasy image or placing a seductive fetish portrait in a commonplace, everyday scene.



Marla Rutherford, *Abandoned Housewife*, 2006.
C-Print.

Marla Rutherford's arresting images merge several approaches in photography—the studio and staged portrait, the photographic image as performance, and photography's associations with fashion, advertising, and fetish. Her seductive and flawless C-prints from medium format negatives enter an art scene that has already assimilated Gregory Crewdson's cinematic staging, the domestic portraits of Tina Barney, Larry Sultan, and Philip-Lorca diCorcia, and the pop-porn, glam, and advertising style of David LaChapelle. Rutherford also reaches back to Helmut Newton and forward to recent futuristic cyberfetish images. She stages her models in incongruous domestic and banal settings and achieves the effect of simultaneously disrupting the everyday with heightened

erotic drama and domesticating the otherworld of fetish.

Marla Rutherford's work is now in the traveling museum exhibition, *reGeneration: 50 Photographers of Tomorrow*, which was organized by the curators at the Musée de l'Elysée in Lausanne, Switzerland. The exhibition was launched in the US at the Aperture gallery in New York, and Aperture Press has published the exhibition catalogue, *reGeneration: 50 Photographers of Tomorrow*.

About the Artist

Marla Rutherford has her BFA in Photography from Art Center College of Design, Pasadena, CA (2005). Her work has been exhibited in galleries in Los Angeles, New York, and Paris, and she has published photographs in *The Village Voice*, *TIME*, *The New Yorker*, and *PHOTO Magazine (France)*, among many others. Marla Rutherford lives and works in Los Angeles, CA.