



Jeanette May, *Easy on the Eyes*

May 27 – June 21, 2009

Reception: Thursday, May 28, 6 – 8 pm

BROOKLYN, NY, MAY 20, 2009 - A.I.R. Gallery is pleased to announce *Easy on the Eyes*, a solo exhibition by photographer **Jeanette May**. The exhibition will be on view from May 27th through June 21st, 2009, with an opening reception on Thursday, May 28th from 6 to 8 pm.

Easy on the Eyes fills a surprising gap in art history, presenting vivid scenes featuring attractive men designed specifically for a heterosexual female viewer—though others are encouraged to look over her shoulder. While one can cite a few exceptions, principally in portraiture, most often the female viewer of fine art sees images of men created by men for male patrons. However tantalizing she may find these images, she is looking at them sidelong. *Easy on the Eyes* makes the female viewer central in order to ask how women look at men—both now and historically.



These carefully staged photographs utilize a cinematic lens, ambiguous symbolism, and implied narrative. Each scene includes a male character depicted mid-storyline and an “implied woman” somewhere just outside the frame. Playing with the conventions of visual narrative, May uses a cast-off shoe, an abandoned purse, or a Halloween prop as evidence of a character who is present by her absence. In this way the photographer suggests the implied woman truly drives the narrative: where has she gone, what game is she playing, why does she need three passports? *He* is the photograph’s subject matter, but *she* is the protagonist.

“Jeanette May’s photographs suggest the delicious paradox of being allowed to watch other people’s drama.”
–Rocío Aranda-Alvarado, Jersey City Museum

Where else do we find images of attractive men created for a female viewer? Rarely in the history of art, nor in most narrative cinema, where - as film critic Laura Mulvey points out - the female gaze is simply missing. The novel offers the most historically rich and accessible source for detailed descriptions of the pleasure women find in beautiful men. For this reason, May juxtaposes each scene with a passage from a novel by a prominent female author describing a male character. The text disrupts, misdirects, and complicates the implied narrative of the photographic image.

Jeanette May earned her MFA at CalArts and her BFA at the University of Illinois–Urbana Champaign. She has been awarded grants and fellowships from the NEA Regional Artists’ Projects Fund, Illinois Arts Council, and Ms. Foundation. May’s work is exhibited internationally, including New York, Washington D.C., Chicago, Los Angeles, Toronto, and Athens. She is a National Artist of [A.I.R. Gallery](http://www.airgallery.org) in Brooklyn and represented by Heineman Myers Contemporary Art in Washington D.C. Please visit her website at www.jeanettemay.com for more information.

A.I.R. Gallery is located at 111 Front Street, #228, in the DUMBO neighborhood of Brooklyn. Gallery hours: Wed. – Sun., 11am to 6pm. For directions please see www.airgallery.org. For more information please contact Gallery Director, Kat Griefen at 212-255-6651 or kgriefen@airgallery.org.