

SUZANNE OPTON

SOLDIER

May 16 – June 28, 2014

Opening Reception: Friday, May 16, 6-8PM

Sikkema Jenkins & Co. is pleased to present *Soldier*, an exhibition of photographs by Suzanne Opton on view in Gallery 2 from May 16 through June 28, 2014.

Opton's *Soldier* series takes a serious look at the faces of American soldiers, and consider the impact of war on their lives and the lives of their families.

The large-scale color portraits, produced with the cooperation of the military at Fort Drum Army base, depict the faces of young men and women who have served in the recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Breaking with traditional portrait conventions, Opton photographs her subjects lying prone and with their face tilted towards the camera. By virtue of the slow process of working with a large format camera, the subject's mind may wander during the session. In this fashion, although conscious of being looked at, the subject may be lost in thought when the exposure is made. Although the implication of being shot down was not lost on these young men and women, the pose also recalls seeing someone opposite you with their head on the pillow.

Opton explains her motivation for the series: "We all experience strategic moments when we feel most alive. Whether transcendent or horrific, these are the moments that we will always remember. I wanted to look in the face of a young person who had seen something unforgettable."

The *Soldier Billboard* project presented billboards of the *Soldiers* in eight cities from 2008–10 along with the support of host arts organizations. More information on the project is available at www.soldiersface.com.

Suzanne Opton is a photographer whose work lies between documentary photography and conceptual art. The images in her work focus on portraits of people whom she works with over long periods of time and which often involve an interaction suggesting a performance between photographer and subject.

Opton's series *Many Wars* was the subject of a solo exhibition at the Chrysler Museum of Art, VA in 2012. Decode Books published *Soldier/Many Wars* in 2011 which is distributed through Decode and DAP.

Opton's photographs are in the collections of the Austin Museum of Art, TX; the Brooklyn Museum, NY; Cleveland Museum of Art, OH; The Chrysler Museum, VA; Fotomuseum Winterthur, Zurich; Museum of Fine Arts Houston, TX; The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, MO; Portland Museum of Art, ME; Smithsonian Museum of American Art, D.C.; and the Yale University Art Gallery, CT.

Opton was a recipient of a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship in 2009 and has received grants from the NEA, NYFA, and Vermont Council on the Arts. She lives and works in New York City and teaches at the International Center of Photography.

For additional information please contact Scott Briscoe at 212.929.2262 or scott@sikkemajenkinsco.com.

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