

EDWYNN HOUK GALLERY

SALLY MANN

(American, b. 1951)

Sally Mann's made poetic photographs explore the most fundamental themes of the human condition: family, nature, desire, death, and storytelling. Her oeuvre, which spans more than four decades, is united by its rootedness in the American South, as well as the artist's experimental, masterful, and sometimes intentionally imperfect printmaking process.

Mann's series *At Twelve: Portraits of Young Women* (1988), a study of the complex transition of 12-year-old girls into adolescence and beyond, began Edwynn Houk Gallery's representation of the artist. From 1985 to 1994, Mann photographed her three children Emmett, Jessie, and Virginia at the family's secluded summer cabin in the Shenandoah Valley, Virginia. Using an 8x10 camera, she made pictures that recorded the carefree, daily activities of childhood — playing, sleeping, fighting, eating — as well as carefully staged scenes in collaboration with her children. Her images portray the range of human emotion through a child's eyes as well as existential themes, such as freedom, identity, and death. As Mann says, “Every mother has seen everything I’ve photographed — probably countless times.” The series was first exhibited at Edwynn Houk Gallery, Chicago in 1990 and was featured in a *New York Times Magazine* cover story in 1992 following the gallery's New York exhibition. In 2001, Mann was awarded *Time* magazine's "America's Best Photographer" distinction.

As her children grew into adolescence, Mann gradually turned from photographing her family to recording the surrounding landscape. The photographs she made throughout the South, from her native Virginia to Georgia, Louisiana, Alabama and Mississippi, often allude to national histories of war, suffering, and injustice as Mann's work illuminates how the land held the scars of the past. Connecting medium to subject, for this body of work Mann embraced the wet-plate collodion process, a nineteenth-century technology that dates to the Civil War.

In addition to representing Mann's *Immediate Family* series exclusively, Edwynn Houk Gallery has premiered the artist's *Mother Land* (1997), *Deep South (Landscapes / 1997)*, *Last Measure (Battlefields / 2000-3)* and ambrotype (*Faces and Omphalos*, 2012) bodies of work.

EDWYNN HOUK GALLERY

Sally Mann lives and works in Lexington, Virginia. A Guggenheim fellow and a three-time recipient of the National Endowment for the Arts fellowship, Mann has been the subject of two documentaries: *Blood Ties* (1994), which was nominated for an Academy Award, and *What Remains* (2006), which premiered at Sundance and was nominated for an Emmy for Best Documentary in 2008. Mann's *Hold Still: A Memoir with Photographs* (2015) received universal critical acclaim; it was named a finalist for the 2015 National Book Awards and in 2016 won the Andrew Carnegie Medal for Excellence in Nonfiction. In 2018, the National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C. and the Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, MA mounted a major mid-career exhibition, *A Thousand Crossings*. The show, which included more than 125 photographs, traveled through 2020 to the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles; The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Galerie nationale du Jeu de Paume, Paris; and the High Museum of Art, Atlanta.