Art in Review

Ryan McGinley

I Know Where the Summer Goes

Team Gallery
83 Grand Street, between Wooster and Greene Streets, SoHo
Through May 3

Ryan McGinley has come a long way from his solo debut at the Whitney Museum of American Art in 2003, which featured shots of bratty young rebels reveling in bodily fluids. His latest photographs, inspired by nudist magazines from the ’60s and ’70s, have a gentler, midsummer-night-s’dream air of magic and mischief.

As in Mr. McGinley’s previous bodies of work, naked teenagers with sun-streaked hair and not a shred of body fat cavort on beaches and campgrounds. The photographs convey the idea, rather than the experience, of spontaneity; Mr. McGinley has been candid about the fact that his road trips are methodically produced events involving carefully screened and directed models. A couple of photographs have been blown up to life-size scale, which doesn’t suit the natural intimacy of Mr. McGinley’s work, but this is a minor problem.

His gently tumbling and floating sylphs seem impervious to gravity. In “Falling (Sand)” (2007-8), two bodies make a soft landing on a dune. Only “Coley (Injured),” which shows a large gash on a young man’s right hip, questions the wisdom of rock climbing or roller skating in the buff.

Often the sensual atmosphere has been artificially enhanced: with fog machines in “Dusk Flip Smoke Strip” and pyrotechnics in “Fireworks Hysteria.” Mr. McGinley doesn’t need these special effects to make beautiful photographs, but he subordinates them to his overall vision of youthful abandon.

KAREN ROSENBERG