

Ryan McGinley, “Everybody Knows This Is Nowhere”

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Team Gallery, through Apr 17
(see Soho)

Like Larry Clark, Nan Goldin and Catherine Opie before him, Ryan McGinley made a name for himself photographing the subculture he knew best—in his case, the East Village skateboarders, graffiti artists and musicians he lived among in the late 1990s. More celebratory than disaffected, McGinley’s vision of youth has been playful and knowing, suggesting themes of fantasy and typology beyond the identity politics and *vérité* style of his predecessors.

In 2007, for example, he followed Morrissey’s world tour and captured second-generation fans in various states of reverent abandon—their faces and bodies suffused in ecstatic prisms of rainbow-colored light. By 2008, McGinley had formed his own posse of traveling youth, and he photographed them

as they pranced about (mostly naked) in Edenic landscapes throughout the United States.

The artist’s current exhibition strips away all context of place, exploring the tradition of the black-and-white studio nude through a series of 74 silver-gelatin prints. Presented in grid formations, these moderately scaled (mostly 18 by 12 inches) portraits of handpicked models are the results of hundreds of test shots, each figure presented against the same gray background.

Marrying the flawless formalism of Robert Mapplethorpe with the contorted pathos of Egon Schiele,

McGinley’s nudes conjure a deliberately awkward beauty. That each portrait conveys the same type of person—young, skinny, attractive—while still holding its own allure is a testament not only to McGinley’s technical prowess but also to his capacity to see in every subject’s pose, no matter how fleeting, some measure of the eternal.—*Jane Harris*

