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GALLERY

# L'ŒIL DE LA PHOTOGRAPHIE

WENDY EWALD & REFRACTION: NEW PHOTOGRAPHY OF AFRICA  
AND ITS DIASPORA

April 17, 2018



Steven Kasher Gallery, New York is pleased to present Works, Projects, Collaborations 1975 – 1996, an exhibition featuring over 70 black and white vintage prints from seven of Wendy Ewald's earliest projects. It begins with her first extended collaboration in Kentucky in 1975 and includes projects from Mexico (1991), India (1989-1991), the Netherlands (1996), Colombia (1982-1985), South Africa (1992) and Morocco (1995).

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For over 40 years, Wendy Ewald has traveled the globe as part of a sustained and evolving artistic and educational project. Ewald begins by addressing the conceptual, formal, and narrative aspects of photography with her students, and teaches them to use the camera, many for the first time. These photographs are many things, but one thing they are not is the singular vision of Wendy Ewald. What Ewald produces with her students is a different kind of story about children, an illustrated tale that adults would never imagine. Their photographs are as haunting and heartbreaking as anything by Diane Arbus, Nan Goldin, Eugene Meatyard or any other photographer documenting the rough poetry of everyday life.

In parallel, the gallery is presenting Refraction: New Photography of Africa and its Diaspora, curated by Steven Kasher Gallery Director Cassandra Johnson and Niama Safia Sandy, Independent Curator and Cultural Anthropologist.

Refraction presents a generation of photographic artists of African descent born in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. They reside in Luanda, Paris, Philadelphia, Addis Ababa, New York and beyond. These artists portray Black bodies in acts of cultural mediation. They revive the traditional African rites of masking, costuming, quilting, body ornamentation and invocation of spirits. They refract those rituals through the lenses of contemporary art practices such as performative self portraiture, collage, montage and digital manipulation. They merge cultures past and present, looking towards a more inclusive, harmonious future.

Refraction is an ocular cleanse. The work of these artists bridges the gap between Black stereotypes Black and Black reality. The photographs in the exhibition navigate the complex relationship between innate identities and identities evolved from social, political and cultural influences. On a technical level, these artists are heralds of new dimensions in photography, bending, transmuting and pushing the medium.

Opening Reception: Thursday, April 19th, 2018 from 6-8pm.