

BRUCE SILVERSTEIN

Rosalind Solomon

Portraits in the Time of AIDS, 1988

June 6th – August 2nd, 2013

Opening Reception: Thursday June 6th, 6-8pm

For Immediate Release



Bruce Silverstein is pleased to present a contemporary rendition of Rosalind Solomon's 1988 exhibition, *Portraits in the Time of AIDS*. Exhibited at New York University's Grey Art Gallery at the height of the AIDS epidemic, this historic show was comprised of seventy-five over sized portraits tacked to the wall at or above the viewer's height—some rather shocking and unabashed depictions of the ravaging symptoms of this illness. This exhibition prompted much debate regarding the polemical nature of depicting persons with AIDS as visibly ill, physically weakened, doomed, at a time when the general public and media were terrified, grappling with the nature of the illness and its effect on American society. Additionally, locating the work within the context of fine art as opposed to the documentary, the project incurred further criticism, namely for its prioritizing the artist's creative and aesthetic interests over those of her sitters. Yet, it is important to note, all of those photographed gave their permission to be a part of Solomon's project, trusting in art's communicative power.

Twenty-five years later, much has changed regarding the prognosis for those affected by AIDS. Now, photographs of individuals suffering from AIDS are read as historic. Equally, twenty-five years after this original show, our expectations for art have changed—especially for the photographic medium. An artist is now freer to use the camera in a manner that is not tethered to the documentary; we have come to understand that photography does more than bear witness but transforms 'fact'. In this case, drawing attention to the diverse face of AIDS, reminds each of us of our own tenuous and shifting proximity to illness and death--our shared fate. Solomon's portraits force us to recognize our common humanity and transcend a subject/viewer or sick/well dialogue. Confronting suffering and death has remained a particular obsession for Solomon and this body of work is but one part of an investigation she has pursued to the ends of the globe and for as long as she has been photographing.

This is the gallery's third solo exhibition by Solomon. She has been the recipient of the John Guggenheim Memorial Fellowship, an American Institute of Indian Studies Fellowship, and a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship. Her work is in the collections of over 50 museums, including Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris; Center for Creative Photography, Tucson; Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington; George Eastman House, Rochester; Metropolitan Museum, New York; Museo de Arte de Lima; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Museum of Modern Art, New York; National Gallery of Art, Washington; National Gallery of Canada, Ontario; Photographische Sammlung, Cologne; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; and the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.