

## KATHY SUDER: KNOCKOUT!

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Silverstein Photography is pleased to announce KATHY SUDER: KNOCKOUT!, a photographic exhibition featuring large-scale color works created within the boxing ring. While Suder's choice of subject and style clearly evokes reference to the iconic boxing paintings of Ashcan artist George Wesley Bellows, her photographs, with close attention to chiaroscuro, human musculature and vigorous twisted form, in fact more closely recall the style of Renaissance painting and sculpture. Yet beyond the photograph's highly saturated colors and skillfully composed frames, are depictions of men at war with each other and themselves. Within these images are clear metaphors for the human condition - pain, struggle, fear, and pride. It is this commitment by the artist to the subject in general that is very often missing in the cold and removed large-scale photographs so popular today.

Born in Fort Worth, Texas, in 1959, Kathy Suder's boxing photographs have been greatly influenced by her own experiences. As a young girl Suder was beaten up by school bullies for being Jewish. Following that incident, her father, a regional Golden Gloves boxing champ, encouraged his daughter to stand up for herself by teaching her to fight. Despite her petite size, Suder learned quickly and went on to train as the only female in the Panther Boys Club boxing team. This was the start of Kathy Suder's lifelong fascination with boxing. This lesson stayed with Suder all her life, especially when she began to suffer migraine headaches in her mid-30s. Not willing to accept the fate that befalls many migraine sufferers, Suder drew on the powerful lesson from her childhood in fighting back. Suder believes that there is a direct correlation between her migraines and her infatuation with boxing and art: "The intimacy of boxing, the hot, piercing lights of the ring, the relentless pain that the fighter must endure in order to face his opponent (which in my case is myself--my migraine), the whole hellish proving ground for how much can one withstand to say in the end I have triumphed. That's a drama I share with the fighters. I feel certain all humanity lives that experience in their own way."

After graduating from Tulane University, Suder began a promising career in art and journalism. As Assistant Fashion Editor at Glamour magazine, Suder was not only exposed to the New York art and fashion world, but also to the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, and the Frick. Inspired by the art around her, Kathy Suder began to paint. Naturally her subject matter would eventually turn to boxing. Suder's introduction to fight photography began with local professional fights in Texas more than 10 years ago. As she followed the career of Paulie Ayala, a local boxer who went on to become Bantam and Super Bantam Weight World Champion, Suder's craft took her to Las Vegas and Hanover, Germany where she experienced first hand the excitement and power of professional boxing at the highest level. For most of those years, Suder looked at these photographs as preliminary experiments for her haunting and cruelly beautiful paintings. It was not until in 2001, spurred by the advice of master photographer Eikoh Hosoe, that Suder began to see her photographs as her true artistic medium.

Suder writes: "There is incredible beauty in boxing that is simultaneous with brutality. Physical perfection and the glistening strained muscles of each boxer has its own unique beauty. Each time I approach the ring with my camera, I feel the fear, the heightened sense of energy and anxiety that I imagine the boxer feels as he prepares to step through the ropes...as I am pressed against the ropes, sprayed with the aftermath of each blow, I stretch to capture what remains in human nature after pain. It is those experiences and their effects on me that I try to impart in my

work. The colors, the intense theater of the lights, the physical anatomy, the smell of fear and even the sensuality of the bodies in motion, all combine to create what you see in my work. "