

Flash Art



New York New York

ART FRAGMENTS FROM THE BIG APPLE

Katy Grannan
*Artemis Greenberg
 Van Doren*

Katy Grannan's photographs explore many of the problematic issues at the heart of portraiture. For her series "Sugar Camp Road," Grannan made large-scale C-prints of everyday people in public parks in Massachusetts, New York, and Pennsylvania. Grannan's subjects, whom she found by advertising in local papers, were given free reign to do as they wished, and many of them, finding secluded areas in the

wilderness, decided to reveal themselves. Taking off some or all of their clothes, the figures often struck dramatic poses, wanting to appear glamorous, seductive, tough, or even tawdry. Yet in the end, Grannan's figures often look uneasy, comical, stunned, or sometimes embarrassed. Kamika, wearing an orange knit bikini and black high heels, looks awkward and uncomfortable as she sits, somewhat slumped over, on the side of an empty country road. For another series, "Morning Call," Grannan made small black-and-white photographs of people

inside domestic interiors. Like "Sugar Camp Road," this series of self-conscious portraits is purposely unsettling. Grannan's imagery openly addresses the tension between model and artist, and, by extension, the viewer, who participates as voyeur, and sometimes judge, in looking at the exposed strangers. While some writers have compared Grannan's work with that of Diane Arbus, one should note that Grannan does not depict figures at the fringe of society, nor does she become close with her subjects. Instead, Grannan remains

KATY GRANNAN, Kamika, near Route 9, Poughkeepsie, NY, 2003. C-print, 122 x 152 cm. Courtesy Artemis Greenberg Van Doren.

somewhat distant from her models, and her work says less about the bizarre in our culture and more about the neediness of the average American to be noticed, to want to perform by whatever means necessary. It may be no accident that Grannan's photography has received so much attention at a time when reality television has become so popular.

—Craig Houser