Laurel Nakadate: Mother Line
and
MOTHER

Presented by Tephra ICA
and Mason Exhibitions
Laurel Nakadate: Mother Line
Solo Exhibition
On View at Tephra ICA
January 22–May 29, 2022

MOTHER
Group Exhibition
On View at Mason Exhibitions Arlington
April 1–May 29, 202

Curated by Laurel Nakadate, Don Russell, and Lily Siegel

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Acknowledgements
Laurel Nakadate (b. 1975, Austin, TX; lives and works in Boston and New York) creates work that explores contemporary modes of self-representation and identity formation. Exploring loneliness and relationships amongst strangers, her practice predates, yet foreshadows, the onslaught of social media that pervade our everyday lives, including Instagram and Facebook, freelance marketplaces like fiverr and Upwork, and consumer genetic testing services such as 23andMe. This exhibition presents two series, Relations and The Kingdom, which result directly from the artist embracing such platforms. Two works from Nakadate’s earlier Stars series are also included, stylistically heralding her Relations series.

After taking an at-home genetic test, Nakadate utilized subscription ancestry databases and social platforms to identify and connect with people who were reported to share her DNA within eight or nine generations. She connected with hundreds of distant relatives in the United States, and she asked to come and take their photograph in whatever manner they chose to present themselves. For each portrait in the Relations series, she met the person near their home, at night, using only a flashlight for illumination. In doing the research for Relations, only three of approximately 1,500 DNA connections appeared from her father’s side of the family. Nakadate’s father is Japanese American, and his family has only been in the United States for around 100 years. In result, what we see represented in this series of portraits is Nakadate’s matrilineal heritage – her matriline or “mother line”.

In The Kingdom, photographs depict Nakadate’s mother and newborn son together. In 2016, the artist gave birth to her son and her mother died shortly thereafter before having the opportunity to hold her grandson. To achieve the final images, Nakadate
hired a technician over the internet to merge images of grandmother and child, with
the only directive to put the baby in the grandmother’s arms. She was attracted to their
claim that, with their Photoshop skills, they could “fix anything.” The entire series is
being shown together for the first time.

Nakadate’s desire to connect with her genetic legacy as means of truth-finding
becomes emblematic of our collective desires for validation. Her methodically
devised research process also accepts chance as a source of narrative meaning.
Photography’s status as arbiter of truth, while not necessarily challenged, is revealed
as a lucid dream state where the real and the dream are experienced as one.

In conjunction with Mother Line, the exhibition MOTHER, is presented at Mason
Exhibitions Arlington which explores contemporary ideas of motherhood from a
diversity of perspectives. MOTHER includes photography and video made by artists
about mothers – their mothers, other people's mothers, themselves, the labor of
motherhood, the sadness, the joys, mystery, and discovery. Much as Nakadate
confronts these desires for validation in her work, MOTHER looks at the way we, as a
society, validate (or invalidate) mothers through different forms of mass representation.

MOTHER is the third iteration of the group exhibition co-organized by Nakadate, which
was first shown at Leslie Tonkonow Artworks+Projects, New York in 2018, with a
second iteration of the exhibition at the New Mexico State University Art Museum.
Mother Line
Select Images
Laurel Nakadate, Akron, Ohio #1, 2013
Laurel Nakadate, West Palm Beach, Florida #1, 2012
Laurel Nakadate, *The Kingdom #25*, 2018
MOTHER
Select Images
Wendy Red Star, Apsáalooke Feminist #1, 2016
Kaitlin Jencso, Untitled (April), 2020
Tracey Baran, *Daren Meets His Birth Family For The First Time*, 2003
Laurie Simmons, *Some New: Grace (Orange)*, 2018
Exhibition Checklist

**Mother Line**

**Star Portraits Series**

*Tucson #1*, 2011
Type-C print
41 x 61 inches

*Tucson #3*, 2011
Type-C print
41 x 61 inches

**Relations Series**

*Happy Valley, Oregon #1*, 2012
Type-C print
31 x 46 inches

*Hereford, Arizona #1*, 2012
Type-C print
31 x 46 inches

*West Palm Beach, Florida #1*, 2012
Type-C print
31 x 46 inches

*Akron, Ohio #1*, 2013
Type-C print
31 x 46 inches

*Carolina Beach, North Carolina #1*, 2013
Type-C print
31 x 46 inches

*Coleman, Alabama #1*, 2013
Type-C print
31 x 46 inches

*Gainesville, Georgia, #1*, 2013
Type-C print
31 x 46 inches

*San Diego, California #1*, 2013
Type-C print
31 x 46 inches

*St. Louis, Missouri #1*, 2013
Type-C print
31 x 46 inches

*Tyler, Texas #1*, 2013
Type-C print
41 x 60 inches

*Tyler, Texas #2*, 2013
Type-C print
41 x 60 inches

*Urbana, Illinois #1*, 2013
Type-C print
31 x 46 inches

*Haworth, Oklahoma #1*, 2014
Type-C print
31 x 46 inches

*Longwood, Florida #1*, 2014
Type-C print
41 x 60 inches

*Wilmington, North Carolina #1*, 2014
Type-C print
31 x 46 inches

*Branford, Connecticut #1*, 2015
Type-C print
31 x 46 inches

**Kingdom Series**

*The Kingdom (#1–34)*, 2018
Inkjet prints
11 x 8.5 inches

All courtesy of the artist and
Leslie Tonkonow Artworks + Projects
Exhibition Checklist

**MOTHER**

**Tracey Baran**
*Daren Meets His Birth Family For The First Time*, 2003
Vintage type chromogenic print
30 x 40 inches
Courtesy Leslie Tonkonow Artworks + Projects, New York

**Patty Chang**
*Things I'm Scared of Right Now*, 2018
Inkjet prints
20 1/16 x 9 3/4 inches each
Courtesy of the artist

**Lenka Clayton**
*Mothers' Day*, 2020
7 1/2” x 4 3/4” inches
Published by An Artist Residency in Motherhood
2,000 copies

**Tierney Gearon**
*Untitled*, 2001
Chromogenic print
20 x 24 inches
Courtesy of the artist

**Kate Gilmore**
*Top Drawer*, 2014
Digital video
24:25 minutes
Courtesy of the artist

**Jon Henry**
*Untitled #55, Little Rock, AR*, 1/2020
Digital archival print
30 x 24 inches

*Untitled #31, Wynwood, FL*, 11/2017
Digital archival print
30 x 24 inches

**Jon Henry**

**Las Hermanas Iglesias**
*Commiserates I (disco ball)*, 2012
Digital print
14 x 10 inches

*Commiserates I (globe)*, 2012
Digital print
14 x 10 inches

*Commiserates I (watermelon)*, 2012
Digital print
14 x 10 inches

*Commiserates III (cabbage)*, 2019
Digital print
14 x 10 inches

*Commiserates IV (Janelle 37 weeks: Nove)*, 2020
Digital print
9 x 25 inches

**Kaitlin Jencso**
*Untitled (April)*, 2020
Archival pigment print
36 x 24 inches

**Lisa Kereszi**
*Showing her a leaf skeleton Connecticut*, 2016
Archival pigment print
25 x 21 inches

**Pao Houa Her**
*Maiyou and Derik*, 2016
Archival pigment print
24 x 30 inches

*Brian and Vince*, 2018
Archival pigment print
24 x 30 inches

Courtees of the artist

**Kaitlin Jencso**

**Lisa Kereszi**
Pregnancy test stick by the side of the road, Connecticut, 2016
Archival pigment print
21 x 25 inches
Courtesy of the artist

Tommy Kha
May (Summoning the Kitchen God), WI, 2015
Archival pigment print
32 x 40 inches
Courtesy of the artist

Justine Kurland
Expulsion, 2006
Chromogenic print
30 x 40 inches

Nursing in River, 2004
Chromogenic print
30 x 40 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Higher Pictures Generation

Malerie Marder
Untitled (Mother in Yellow Sweater with Peter), 2000
Archival pigment print
48 x 60 inches
 Courtesy of the artist

Marilyn Minter
Coral Ridge Towers (Mom Dyeing Eyebrows), 1969-1995
Gelatin silver print
48 1/4 x 40 3/8 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Salon 94, New York

Laurel Nakadate
The Kingdom, 2018
34 inkjet prints
11 x 8 1/2 inches each
Courtesy of the artist

Tyler, Texas #1, 2013
Chromogenic print
30 x 45 inches

Catherine Opie
Self-Portrait/Nursing, 2004
Chromogenic print
41 x 32 inches
Tony Podesta Collection, Washington, DC

Nzingah Oyo
Naima & Medhane, 1998
Chromogenic print
30 x 40 inches

Medhane & Naima, 2007
Chromogenic print
30 x 40 inches
Courtesy of the artist

Caitlin Teal Price
Untitled (NOMF), 2002
Chromogenic print
14 x 14 inches

Untitled (Mother), 2002
Chromogenic print
14 x 14 inches
Courtesy of the artist

Wendy Red Star
Apsáalooke Feminist #1, 2016
Digital archival print
34 x 40 inches
Courtesy of the artist

Laurie Simmons
Some New: Grace (Orange), 2018
Pigment print
71 1/8 x 49 1/8 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Salon 94, New York

Rachelle Mozman Solano
Hermana Americana, 2013
Chromogenic print
23 x 26 inches
Biography

Laurel Nakadate was born in Austin, TX and raised in Ames, IA. She currently lives and works in Boston and New York. Nakadate’s work can be found in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Yale University Art Gallery, the Hessel Museum of Art, Bard College, Princeton University Art Museum, Smith College Museum of Art, LACMA, the Guggenheim Museum, the Saatchi Collection, and other private collections. Nakadate received a BFA from Tufts University and The School of The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston and an MFA in photography from Yale University.
Acknowledgements

Tephra Institute of Contemporary Art (Tephra ICA) is committed to promoting innovative contemporary art and thinking. Leading with curiosity and care, we are a catalyst, generator, and advocate for visual and interdisciplinary arts.

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