

Boxers and Ballerinas

Center for Maine Contemporary Art

In BOXERS AND BALLERINAS, John Goodman of Boston and Friendship, Maine, presents over 40 photographs selected from two significant bodies of work. The Times Square Gym series dates from 1993 when Goodman noticed a grungy sign on 42nd Street announcing an upstairs gym long since disappeared. Himself the son of a street boxer in Boston, Goodman talked his way past the suspicious and decidedly unfriendly manager, took a few shots and when he returned with the results ten days later, earned an open welcome to photograph at will. More recently, for the past two springs, Goodman has been photographing rehearsals at the Boston Ballet.

At first glance the worlds of the boxer and dancer seem far removed one from the other. Goodman shows us otherwise as he explores the inherent dichotomies common to both athlete and dancer. Each graceful gesture is borne from extreme physical demands and pain, each hoped-for moment of public acclaim harbors a vulnerable private persona; each endlessly rehearsed routine must transcend itself into a momentary intuitive movement of the body, capable of thrilling audiences. What Goodman captures visually for our contemplation speaks to the character of Goodman himself. Contemplative, ever-searching, and questioning intentions and meaning on the one hand, the photographer is also the expansive teacher and friend, trigger-quick to speak and act in a blur of boundless enthusiasm and wit.

Goodman has had notable solo exhibitions in Boston, New York, and Toronto, and in 2004 enjoyed a 25-year retrospective exhibition at the Art Institute of Boston, where he is on faculty. He is also a much respected and popular teacher at the Maine Photographic Workshops here in Rockport. His photographs are included in the permanent collections of the Art Institute of Chicago; The Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University; the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; the Portland Museum of Art, Maine; and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, among others. The Times Square Gym monograph is available in the Gallery Shop by the front desk.

-Bruce Brown
Senior Curator, Center for Maine Contemporary Art
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