

PRESS RELEASE



ANDERSON & LOW
RITUALS
Spiritual – Physical

September 26 – November 2, 2019

Opening Reception

Thursday, September 26, 6-8 pm.

Artist Talk

Saturday, September 28, 12 Noon.

Catalogue Available

Throckmorton Fine Art is pleased to offer a special photographic exhibition by Jonathan Anderson & Edwin Low who for many years have used sport as a recurrent muse in their work. As a window onto the human condition, – *RITUALS – Spiritual – Physical* – looks at human dreams, aspirations, hope, despair, endurance, determination and perseverance of world-class athletes including those in the fields of gymnastics, surfing, and traditional Indian wrestling.

Anderson & Low's portfolio *X PRINTS* will be featured at the exhibition. These 10 platinum-palladium prints were drawn from early projects that were unquestionably breakthrough projects. The images include the series *Athletes, American Athletes* and *Gymnasts* combined with early key images of the process of sport and the abstracted classical ideal of the athlete, as well as studies of the personality, iconography and physiognomy of sport. The portfolio is in the collection of the Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

They are looking at that process of training - the vocabulary and syntax that each different sport requires, the different physiognomy that each sport demands, the different mental state that each sport needs, as well as their common elements. This was expressed in projects *Athletes* (exhibited at the National Art Gallery of Malaysia, the National Portrait Gallery of Australia for Sydney 2000 Olympic Games) the US Olympic Center and many other venues), *American Athletes* (exhibited at the US Olympic Center), and *The Contenders* (exhibited at the National Portrait Gallery, London). Anderson and Low are interested in the iconography of sport, going right back to the statues of ancient Greece and Rome, and those seminal depictions of the "sporting ideal" which can be seen in some of our early platinum prints.

Anderson & Low's photography has taken them around the world and to the very heart of each sport they have portrayed. Their access to athletic champions is well known, ranging from their being named the official artists for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, including a solo exhibition, "*The Road to 2012*" at the National Portrait Gallery in London, to their breakthrough project and book, "*Gymnasts*," featuring the nude images of the national Danish Gymnastic Team based around four elements – earth, air, water and fire. They are particularly proud to have been given unprecedented access to the most elite Chinese Gymnastics training facility which resulted in the *Endure – An Intimate Journey with the Chinese Gymnasts*.

They say, "Because of the inherent trust that is evident in our work with sport - that we come to it with no preconceived agenda - we are also the only people in the world ever to be given complete, unrestricted, uncensored and uncontrolled access to work with the elite Chinese Gymnasts training in Beijing. That project is without precedent or parallel - a truly unique insight into the incredible and inspiring training that we found there. We believe gymnastics to be a special sport - in many ways one of the purest sports, but also the cruelest. You have to start training SO young, the risk of serious injury is always present and there is no other sport where you look so much like a god or a fool, with nothing in between."

Jonathan Anderson and Edwin Low have been collaborating as Anderson & Low since 1990. Their work includes portraiture, architectural studies, abstract images, reportage, nudes, and landscape and is noted for attention to concept, form, lighting, and printing. It is exhibited world-wide, residing in many public and private collections including: The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, Victoria & Albert Museum in London, National Portrait Galleries of both the UK and Australia, Museum of Fine Art in Houston,

High Museum of Art, Baltimore Art Museum in Atlanta, National Gallery of Australia, Akron Museum, The National Gallery of Australia, the US Olympic Center, the Southeast Photography Museum, Florida, and The Museet Fotokunst in Denmark.

Spencer Throckmorton says Anderson & Low have used their extraordinary understanding of sports and elite athletes in the most provocative ways in their photographs. The recognition they have earned is well deserved as well as inspiring. New commissions have come to them as a result of their collaboration. One of their memorable projects involved images of extraordinary film sets including those for the James Bond film, *Spectre* and for *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*.

A new series *Sacred Earth* is a study of Indian traditional wrestling. The partners say the portfolio is a study of a very specific training, and those who do it. They add, "It is unlike most of our other sporting projects in that the environment is extremely simple, without the trappings of high-tech sporting training halls. Also, it is a religious act. The earth on which these people wrestle is sacred and is always next to a shrine (hence the title). One has to be barefoot on the training area and its surroundings. They offer incense and prayers before training. They are strict vegetarians, with almonds being their main source of protein. Their life is *truly* spartan! But even though the training life is extremely basic and with few of the frills of western luxury, the power and simple force of both training and life is beyond question." This is what they capture in *Sacred Earth*, which is premiering at Throckmorton.

The *Spectre* project focused on the extraordinary, gargantuan and detailed sets created for the film, completely devoid of people. The sets are revealed in their magnificence, their obsessive detail, their vast scale and ultimately their falsehood: the level of artifice is highlighted, colliding directly with the harsh reality of the bare soundstages at Pinewood Studios that impinge on the imagery. They also created heroic images for the *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* film and these images were used for the main film posters and widely used in merchandising.

Anderson & Low released the book *Black Sand – Surfers in Taiwan* to explore the Taiwanese surfing culture. The volcanic black sand beaches, the grey sky of the typhoon season and a lead-colored sea provided a natural monochrome backdrop for this series. The only color in the photographs is found in the surfer's skin and the vibrant design of their surfboards and surfing attire. The resulting images are the antithesis of the archetypal surfing image – the blue skies, white sand, azure sea, blazing sun, tanned skin and sun-bleached blond hair are all absent.

Another Anderson & Low project *Manga Dreams* was a ground-breaking body of color work drawing heavily on contemporary youth culture. It portrays the concepts of identity, culture, costume, perception and video and explores a hybrid art-form involving photography, graphics, digital painting and calligraphy. It pushes the limits of photographic portraiture and has been widely lauded for its originality, artistic content, and execution. Works were exhibited in the 2011 Venice Biennale and have been acquired by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. There were solo museum exhibitions of this project in the UK, Canada and France.

The Exhibition will highlight over twenty years of work and we are honored and pleased to share this with you.



NDGT #1, 2001



Untitled, SACRED EARTH, 2018



EARTH #11, 2001

THROCKMORTON FINE ART

145 East 57th Street, 3rd Floor, NY, NY 10022

Tel. 212. 223. 1059 Fax. 212. 223. 1937

Info@throckmorton-nyc.com www.throckmorton-nyc.com