

PHOTOGRAPHIC RESOURCE CENTER at Boston University

Group Portrait

NOVEMBER 18, 2005 - JANUARY 22, 2006

By Leslie K. Brown, PRC Curator



Ben Gest by Leslie K. Brown

Ben Gest portrays everyday domestic scenes, which upon further inspection, appear to be slowly unfolding right before one's eyes and then briefly halted, as if catching their breath, to begin once again. Viewers are plunged into Gest's pictures from a privileged perspective, as if we were actually in the scene itself. At first glance, one apprehends the whole, and then gradually we notice individual gestures and meaningful minutiae. Gest's working method in fact relates to and expands upon his artistic aim; that is, to call into question and remove a single point of view. To create his arrangements, he captures between 10-30 frames of film that he then scans and composites in the computer. The resulting shifts in perspective and focus guide our attention to important aspects with exacting detail, serving to flesh out the developing storylines. As he makes clear in his statement, "These ambiguous narratives of personal and simple everyday activities describe the way people sometimes disengage from those closest to them." Each of the figures seems lost in his or her own world, concentrating mostly on his or her actions or thoughts. Nevertheless, Gest suggests that such coping mechanisms, while a product of modern life, are neither bad nor good, but simply and indelibly human.

Leslie K. Brown

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PRC Curator

"Group Portrait" Exhibition Announcement

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