

Since 1973, a gallery promoting the work
of women artists and serving the community
through public events

547 W. 27th Street, Suite 301
New York, NY 10001
(212) 367-8994
(212) 367-8984 fax
Tues. – Sat. 12 – 6PM
info@soho20gallery.com
www.soho20gallery.com

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C H E L S E A

For Immediate Release:

Debbie Rasiel *Picturing Autism*

May 27 – June 21, 2014

Opening Reception: Thursday May 29, 6 - 8pm

Artist Talk: Saturday June 7, 2 - 4pm

Panel Discussion: Tuesday June 10, 7pm

Dr Bridget Taylor, PsyD, BCBA-D
Julie Fisher, Executive Director, New York Center for Autism
Molly Ola Pinney, Founder/ CEO, Global Autism Project



"Violet," 2013, pigment print, 22" x 33

Photographer Debbie Rasiel's *Picturing Autism*, on view at SOHO20 Chelsea Gallery through June 21, presents a collective portrait of the faces, families and global communities impacted by autism. The exhibition reflects her search to understand what autism looks like across language barriers and cultural divides. Over the course of two years, Rasiel traveled across disparate landscapes to make connections, garner trust, and gain access to photograph intimate moments. From the Upper West Side of Manhattan to Cuzco, Peru, Astoria, Queens to Jakarta, East Harlem to Akureyri, Iceland, Alpine New Jersey to Oaxaca, Mexico, Rasiel seeks to highlight the shared physical manifestations of autism against a backdrop of poignant individuality.

Rasiel's ongoing project has far reach, but documentation begins in her own home. She grounds her work in her kitchen with her son. When in remote areas where she struggled to get her bearings, recognizing signs of autism proved a source of familiarity, a veritable constant. Social and cultural divisions began to fall away as she connected with the children and their caregivers.

The exhibited photographs are an opportunity for the public to feel both a part of and apart from autism. For Rasiel, the large scale of the prints becomes a decisive form of experiential translation, enabling her to visually extend her own intimacy with the subject matter to the viewer. Capturing tense moments, dysregulated facial expressions, and misshapen hands, she exposes a side of the autism spectrum that public awareness campaigns avoid. Through the lens of guarded distance, she encourages the viewer to embrace nonverbal emotive engagement and feel safe with their curiosity.

Debbie Rasiel is a photographer and art historian. She has worked for NGO's in both New York and South Africa. In New York, her work for NGOs and privately funded advocacy organizations has documented the condition of inner-city youths and developmentally disabled adults. In South Africa she spent several years documenting a papermaking poverty relief program and an AIDS orphanage. Her photographs from South Africa are included in a book, "Women on Purpose," funded by the Ford Foundation. Debbie has also written about and curated exhibitions for other artists, including a book and an exhibit on Dorothea Lange, and has taught workshops in creative expression in both South Africa and New York. She received a BFA from the University of Florida, her MA from Tufts University and has completed coursework toward a PhD at the City University of New York with a concentration in photography and contemporary criticism. Debbie has had extensive training in digital media at the International Center of Photography. Her photographs are in many collections, both private and public, including Rutgers University, and the University of Johannesburg. She is represented by SoHo20 Chelsea Gallery in New York City.

For more information, please contact the gallery at 212-367-8994 or info@soho20gallery.com