

FRAENKEL

49 GEARY STREET SAN FRANCISCO 94108 415 981 2661

For immediate release:



KATY GRANNAN MAD RIVER

September 4 – October 25, 2025

Fraenkel Gallery is pleased to present *Katy Grannan: Mad River*, an exhibition of new photographs made in Northern California's Humboldt County, where Grannan has recently been living and working. In the ongoing portrait series, on view for the first time, Grannan depicts subjects who reflect the independent spirit of an area known for the privacy and seclusion it offers. Often building relationships with her subjects, Grannan explores the connections between self-presentation and place, creating a kind of collaborative fiction. This will be the gallery's sixth exhibition of Grannan's work since 2006. The gallery will hold a public reception with the artist on Saturday, September 13, from 2-4pm, concurrent with the opening reception for *Peter Hujar: The Gracie Mansion Show Revisited*.

FRAENKEL

49 GEARY STREET SAN FRANCISCO 94108 415 981 2661

Densely forested and largely rural, Humboldt County has been called a place where people go to disappear. Grannan first came to the area in 2023 and began photographing people she met through methods she knew, using Craigslist ads and fliers posted on local bulletin boards to find models. Her subjects are eager to be seen, and to collaborate with Grannan for reasons as varied as the individuals themselves: an autistic teenager, a circus performer, an actress, a queer farmer, a man and his goat. Over time, Grannan's network has expanded as subjects refer friends and roommates, offering a cross-section of a particular community. In a place that has long attracted nonconformists of different types, many of the people Grannan photographed are part of the area's different creative circles, and many identify as genderqueer.

Grannan made her first portraits more than twenty years ago, in series such as *Poughkeepsie Journal* and *Sugar Camp Road*, where she found subjects through newspaper ads. Since then, social media and ubiquitous digital cameras have reshaped the experience of being photographed, and Grannan's subjects today innately understand how they appear to her camera. In these photographs, Grannan focuses on ambiguous gestures, capturing the spaces between poses. Several images are set in a studio with bright red carpet, where subjects flirt with the language of fashion photography while subverting its rules. Others are set at the beach, in a forest, and in the shallow water of the Mad River. In a place known for its magnificent redwoods and dramatic coastline, the landscape is quiet in Grannan's images, leaving the focus on people while revealing the outlines of the place that shapes them.

Katy Grannan is a photographer and filmmaker who collaborates with her subjects to create revealing portraits, working in locations ranging from Upstate New York to California's Central Valley. Often built from long-term relationships, each photograph is imbued with secrecy, desire, and the yearning of American ambition. Grannan's photographs are included in the collections of the Whitney Museum of American Art; The Metropolitan Museum of Art; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, among many others. She is also a long-time contributor to *The New York Times Magazine*, *The New Yorker*, and many other important publications. Grannan received her BA from the University of Pennsylvania and her MFA from the Yale School of Art. There are eight monographs of her work: *Model American*, *The Westerns*, *Boulevard*, *The Ninety Nine & The Nine*, *The Glint of Light on Broken Glass*, and *Hundreds of Sparrows, Volumes I & II*. In 2016 she directed *The Nine*, her first feature film.

* * *

Image: Katy Grannan, *Morgan*, Arcata, CA, 2025

For press inquiries and images, please contact Rebecca Robertson
at 415.981.2661 or rrobertson@fraenkelgallery.com