

## LAURA LONDON: "RELOCATION"

Chimento Contemporary

Exhibition Dates: April 16 – May 28, 2016

Opening Reception: Saturday, April 16, 2016, 5 – 8 pm

Photographer Laura London has a mantra, "Personal, universal, observation, imagination." Her most indelible images are animated by the meticulous and intuitive calibration of these dynamic dualities. From narrative symbolism to technical pragmatism, at every level London's phenomenological fantasies of her own design.

Her new series comprises a video work with audio; as well as photography, in a n eight-part portrait series in two folios plus a triptych. In both content and meaning, as well as technology and technique, these images represented a re-examination and directed evolution of her iconic celebrity-culture-critiques of 2000-2012 and the series of work exploring teen identity from 1995-1999. While those works took aim at the perverse and pervasive influence of celebrity thorough the American teen-ager, in 2015-2016, the new problem is selfie culture, and its new face is the Millennial.

But London's work is about both how society is and how society looks (in magazines then, on mobile screens today). So matching that look is an essential part of the message, a metaphor and a metonymy in which the images both depict and embody the whole proposition in their very forms. It's a negotiated aesthetic, one which recently saw London on a self-described "six year learning curve" due to the vagaries of an industry which regularly discontinues camera models and inconveniently her favorite film stock. She has however experienced this as kind of a blessing, a chance to relearn her craft in a new way, and the resulting intimacy shows in the new work. "Life is film school forever, why not learn on something you care about?"

And London really is a filmmaker – which is to say that even though her medium is still photography, she personally attends to everything from location scouting to casting, acting as stylist, grip, director, and finally camera women, in pursuit of a holistic and vertically integrated vision. She is one of those photographers who is dedicated to shooting film, particularly medium format, and as such its worth noting that both the classic Hasselblad and Rolleiflex Cameras used a square format long before Instagram made it ubiquitous. Her 30" x 30" archival pigment prints are thus both technical and conceptual.

The gallery installation will feature four color photographs facing off across the space with four black and white photographs of the same models. The color works (Character Studies 1 -4) depict a kind of reality in pared down studio portraits; while their black and white counterparts (Excerpts 1-4) depict emotional, cinematic, narrative scenarios. The ensuing visual and allegorical dialogue is one that both constructs and questions the ways in which memory and fantasy operate in society, in the most Laura London kind of way. The triptych of color photographs Lilac – Present, Rose Garden – Past, Camellia Forrest – Future show a young women with her head turned away, her gaze averted, her surroundings mysterious, lyrical, and overtly symbol-rich.

The video and the show are called Relocation. It's digital video but notably features hand-drawn animation – of camellia flowers in bloom and decay. It is set to a classic rendition of “Für Elise” in live piano, electric bass, live drums, electric guitar and ambient/nature sounds a la Hendrix. The sound, poured over by London, that exactly like her imagery and her process, are made to evoke a specific time and place and a way of doing things.

A video still small edition print has been created as well as a catalogue of the artwork in the exhibition.

Laura London's work has been exhibited in solo and group shows nationally and internationally. Her work is included in many collections both private and corporate. She is the recipient of two Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority Grants, for which she created both a permanent and a temporary art installation. Press coverage of her work includes reviews and features in the LA Times, LA Weekly, Huffington Post, Time Out New York and Artillery Magazine. She has also taught at Art Center College of Design in Pasadena and many other visiting artist and guest lectures appointments. She received her MFA from California Institute of the Arts and her BFA from university of Arizona.