

- MELANIE PULLEN -

**High Fashion Crime Scenes**

September 19 – November 17 2007

Opening Tuesday September 18 at 6.30 pm



Nina



Phones



Caovilla

MiCamera presents the first European exhibition of **High Fashion Crime Scenes** a photographic series by the American artist **Melanie Pullen** - born 1975 in New York City she currently works and resides in Los Angeles.

Pullen's series *High Fashion Crime Scenes* is based entirely on vintage crime-scene images and documents Pullen mined from the files of both the New York and Los Angeles Police Departments, the Coroner's Office, and other sources. Drawn to the details and the stories preserved in the criminal records, in early 2002 she began recreating these events with both models and actresses (i.e. Rachel Miner and Juliette Lewis). Implementing haute couture into each image she tells a story and purposely distracts the viewer from the violence that confronts us in her work. The aim of the series is to take the viewer on a journey through the distractions swaying one ones attention from the reality of the crime.

*"I began recreating crime scene photos for many reasons, but one of them is that in all their darkness, they're a completed story – each a perfect photograph, a still shot that captures the final moment and if you look closely enough, always tell a tale. I think this is why so many photographers became fascinated with the subject in the 1940s and 50s."*

*"...when recreating the crime scenes, I attached layers of distractions to the photos to sway the viewer from the reality of the situation and deviate their attention – the goal being that the last thing you notice is the crime itself."*

For the realization of each shot, Melanie Pullen enlisted up to fifty crew members including: stunt men, makeup artists, gaffers, builders etc. She also incorporated lighting that is primarily used in movies and worked with professional cinematographers for advice creating her settings. As a result she creates images that are very cinematic and lay somewhere between fashion, crime photography, cinema, and art.

Pullen aims to pull the viewer in to fill in the blanks. Each photograph is based on a real story but she leaves it up to viewer to figure it out. She thereby acts like a storyteller who starts her narrative at the end and then obliges viewers to fill in whatever details are necessary to explain what they are looking at.

*"Today people tend to be so focused on glitz, glam and drama ... that we overlook the underlying layer and often what's really important. So for me this was an off-kilter exploration into how twisted I could make this topic, how far I could push it – taking a complexity and building on it to make it look oddly beautiful and overly shallow. In the end though, if one cares to look closely, past the effervescent facades and pretenses, there's always a story: a complete story with its beginning, middle and end just waiting to be discovered."*

The project **High Fashion Crime Scenes** has received considerable critical acclaim in the United States and abroad and has been published in an elegant monograph by the publisher **Nazraeli Press** in 2005.

**Melanie Pullen will be present for the opening reception.**

Curated by Giulia Zorzi and Flavio Franzoni for the Cultural Association MiCamera

#### **INFO**

Open to the public | 19 September - 17 November 2007 | Opening Tuesday September 18 | Free entrance

Opening hours | from Tuesday to Saturday | 10am – 1pm 4pm – 7pm | Closed Sunday Monday Tuesday

**MiCamera – photography and lens-based arts**

Via Medardo Rosso 19 | 20159 Milan | ph/fax +39 02 45481569 | [info@micamera.com](mailto:info@micamera.com) | [www.micamera.com](http://www.micamera.com)

#### **PRESS OFFICE**

**MiCamera** – Giulia Zorzi +39 335 5455828 – [giulia@micamera.com](mailto:giulia@micamera.com)

**Battage Comunicazione** - Margherita Baleni +39 347 4452374 [battage@battage.net](mailto:battage@battage.net)

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