

# GREGORY CREWDSON AT GAGOSIAN GALLERY

The line outside of Gagosian's 21st street gallery stretched around the block. As I stood there waiting among the masses, I started to wonder: could there be a list to get in? I felt as though I was waiting for a performance, and it might as well have been. Packed full of celebrities including Wes Anderson, Brian De Palma, Aziz Ansari, and Grace Coddington, the number of attendees to see Gregory Crewdson's newest, and most awaited series of work titled Cathedral of the Pines, reached over 3,000.

The last exhibition Gagosian presented of Gregory Crewdson's work – and the first for the gallery – was in the fall of 2010. To say it was a departure from the imagery he's most known for is an understatement. Presented at a smaller, more intimate scale, they were devoid of not only people but also color. They are also his only photographs to date captured outside the United States. So when, six years later, Gagosian announced that Crewdson would be exhibiting his newest set of work, staged more locally in Beckett, Massachusetts, the level of anticipation was naturally very high. Immediately, visitors could be seen swarming through the rooms to soak in the details of each new photograph.



GREGORY CREWDSON *The Haircut*, 2014 Digital pigment print  
Image size: 37 1/2 x 50 inches (95.3 x 127 cm); Framed size: 45 1/16 x 57 9/16 inches (114.5 x 146.2 cm) Edition of 3, plus 2 APs

GAGOSIAN GALLERY

As in his black and white series Sanctuary and Fireflies, Crewdson communicates intimacy by printing in a smaller scale than his earlier, most recognized work. For reference, his earlier work is normally 48" x 60." Sanctuary is 28.5"x 35.25" and Cathedral of the Pines is somewhere in the middle at 37.5" x 50." This time the intimacy is different. It's more liberating – it's raw. For the first time, Crewdson has crossed a boundary he has never crossed before; that is, including close friends and family into the compositions. His partner and close collaborator, Juliane Hiam, is featured prominently in various images, along with her son and daughter. Additionally, one or two other friends who have appeared in earlier works, return more significantly in Cathedral. "These images are definitely more intimate, more personal," says Crewdson. "I went through a long period where I didn't make any pictures, so these are about reconnecting. They're about hope."



GREGORY CREWDSON *Mother and Daughter*, 2014 Digital pigment print  
Image size: 37 1/2 x 50 inches (95.3 x 127 cm); Framed size: 45 1/16 x 57 9/16 inches (114.5 x 146.2 cm) Edition of 3, plus 2 APs

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Using a painterly and formalistic approach, Crewdson paints a "stripped-down" illustration of the human condition, one that is in constant search for a sense of belonging. "Which is reflective of my own search for a home," says Crewdson, reflecting on his move from his Brooklyn apartment to the Methodist church near Great Barrington where he now lives with his family. The fleshy figures in the majority of the scenes create a stark contrast to their wild surroundings, and while they gaze off into the distance, the viewers are left gazing upon them. Thus the tension that used to be contained within the borders of the photograph is now between the characters and the voyeuristic viewer.



GREGORY CREWDSON *Beneath the Bridge*, 2014 Digital pigment print  
Image size: 37 1/2 x 50 inches (95.3 x 127 cm); Framed size: 45 1/16 x 57 9/16 inches (114.5 x 146.2 cm) Edition of 3, plus 2 APs

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The 2011 exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum, "Rooms with a View" may have inspired Crewdson in his latest series, but the theme of windows or openings into other experiences is a familiar constant in his work. Juxtapositions between despair and hope, loneliness and connection, inside and outside are in abundance in Cathedral of the Pines. The nomadic figures, in their feral states of undress, exhibit both a connection and contrast to their environment. While, in most cases, they may be completely exposed to the elements, the placement of a car, outhouse, or small home offers them the possibility of refuge. When asked about how he felt at his opening, Crewdson said, "I feel gratified. I was working on them for many years in isolation and it's gratifying to be able to finally put them out in the world, and to get such a great response."

Text By Sabrina Wirth