



ARTIST

Marion Faller

TITLE

Pumpkin Dummy Couple, Chittenango, NY

DATE

1989

DIMENSIONS

19 in H x 14.5 in W

MEDIUM

Chromogenic Color Prints

CATALOGUE NUMBER

1984.045

CURRENT LOCATION

2024-4C

MARION FALLER

BORN

1941

DIED

2014

BIRTHPLACE

Wallington, NJ

GENDER

Female

CITIZENSHIP

United States

CULTURAL HERITAGE

European-American

LIGHT WORK RELATIONSHIP

Light Work Grant, 1976

Light Work Gallery, 1979

Lecturer, 1979

Light Work Retrospective Exhibition, 1985

Robert B. Menschel Gallery, 1988

Artist-in-Residence, 1989

LIGHT WORK PUBLICATIONS

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Menschel Gallery Catalogue 14

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ESSAYS

Just as paths are worn over time to connect locations, so the outlines of our lives are exposed by accumulated events, from the genetic patterns we inherit, to our position in family photographs. Before we realize it, our experiences have repeated over time to chart a signature constellation. Attention to detail is the starting point of Marion Faller's wide range of projects that evolve into inventories of living traditions. In this retrospective of her work titled, *DETAIL - REPETITION - VARIATION*, seven selections from her major projects of the last decade are presented. In her *TIME CAPSULE* series, Faller has followed two years in the life of her son, Will, by photographing the objects she cleaned out of his pockets on laundry day. Beginning in 1979, when Will was twelve, Faller recorded 110 days of candy wrappers, pennies, pocket knives, and an assortment of other miniature prizes. Each wash day is represented by a small still life that has been photographed against a medium grey card, printed 4 x 6 inches - to life size - and matted in a sequence of five across. The arrangements challenge our notion of 'still life' in their lively expression of physical and intellectual activity. The warm realistic color of the photographs brings us even closer to the personal nature of the project which is about mother and son. The cherished details of Will's daily travels contribute also to the broader tale of adolescent growing pain where plastic insects and pipe cleaners give way to cash receipts, a comb, and occasional detention slip. *FLORA* (1977 - 1979), the earliest series in the exhibition, explores women of different ages who are 'decorated' with the names of flowers. Faller uses late nineteenth century photographs of anonymous women and frames them with silhouettes of their namesake flowers, ribbons, and other notions. Though they share the same format and generally central position, each portrait undergoes a unique process from straight black-and-white print to cyanotype and some collage as well. *LOCAL CONVENTIONS* (1979 - 1983) is a wonderful contribution to backyard cultural history where Faller combines straight documentary with the repetition of a theme to make wry commentary on the accepted arrangement of outdoor property. Each set of four post card sized photographs plots what Faller describes as, 'the everyday aesthetic decisions that people take--decisions that are usually personal and traditional at the same time.' The seasons are an important aspect of this selection taken from a larger series of over 200 photographs. The homemade goblins on porches in October and the flower boxes full of petunias in July were photographed at rural Central New York crossroads and record preparations for the welcome change of seasons. *NATIVITY* is an ongoing survey started in 1982 as another 'theme and variations' collection. Faller exposes our pagan instinct for filling spiritual voids with pageantry in our generic depictions of the holy family. While she was involved with this series, Faller made connections with Kate Koperski, a folk art consultant also living in Buffalo, NY. *SWIENCONKA* and the *ALTARS* are a result of this logical alliance. The swienconka, or Easter baskets, were photographed at the St. John Kanty R.C. Church in Buffalo on Holy Saturday. Each 16 x 20 inch color photograph is taken at an angle where the owner tips her or his basket towards the camera for us to admire. In the catalogue of their joint exhibit, 'The Iconography of Rebirth, Aspects of the Polish American Easter Celebration', Koperski explains that these personal variations on the tradition of blessing and sharing special food in Spring fuel the survival of the ritual and our desire to contemplate it. *NEITHER-NOR, A PRIMER* is the newest portfolio of prints that celebrate compound words 'whose meaning is given in neither the former word nor the latter.' The simple graphic illustrations of paired words like footnote, greenhorn and dreamboat have been generated on an Amiga 1000 computer. The prints are set up like pages from a book and combine elements of printmaking with media production in an 'easy reader' style. This series is a whimsical departure from her straightforward documents of social customs but refers to a legacy of manuscript illumination. The variety of projects represented in this exhibition demonstrate the artist's flexibility in charting the quirks of human nature. From the personal and public standpoint Faller applies her skillful observation, a creative willingness to collaborate with her subject, and free spirit to experiment with process. Faller's consistent attention to detail provides the direction to coexist with past and future. Gina Murtagh (c)1988