

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FIRST U.S. EXHIBITION OF
JUSTINE KURLAND'S NEW ZEALAND PHOTOGRAPHS
AT THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY PHOTOGRAPHY,
COLUMBIA COLLEGE CHICAGO

CHICAGO: The Museum of Contemporary Photography will exhibit the photographs of Justine Kurland (United States, born 1969) from June 28 through September 14, 2002. Kurland is known for her series of photographs that chart the social landscape of girlhood; this will be the first exhibition in the United States of her work made in New Zealand at the invitation of the Auckland Art Gallery. The pictures were taken over the course of two months in 2001.

In these and other works, Kurland has constructed a view of reality through a narrative style of photography that is inventive, dramatic, and fragmentary. In New Zealand her methodology changed subtly so that the content of her pictures addresses the region's history and culture. Rather than working with models that she knew or met on the street, Kurland arranged for introductions to girls through the city's schools. She chose to photograph her models in their school uniforms, a departure from her treatment of girls in the United States who are presented in the worn garb that passes for adolescent glamour. In addition, rather than locating the photographs along the urban periphery, Kurland chose semitropical or lush pastoral sites, a critical distinction from her earlier work made in the United States.

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In discussing her trip to New Zealand, Kurland describes how the blend of Maori and European civilizations is made manifest today through a certain wild civility in dress and manner. Significantly, in her New Zealand photographs, adolescent girls are no longer cast as members of a closed society, but, through their uniforms, are made emblematic of the country's colonial history. The lushness of the New Zealand landscape contrasts starkly with the formality of the girls' appearance. As young women on the cusp of adulthood, they represent the future and cultural guardianship they will provide as mothers. Yet they are girls, remaining close to nature, wild, still free for a moment to choose a quite different course of history.

Kurland received her BFA from the School of the Visual Arts, New York, and graduated from Yale University in 1998 with an MFA in photography. Her photographs are in the permanent collections of The Detroit Institute of Arts, The International Center of Photography, and The Museum of Contemporary Photography, Columbia College Chicago. She is a frequent contributor to The New York Times Magazine.

Photographs by Kurland will be on view at The Museum of Contemporary Photography, Columbia College Chicago, from June 28 through September 14, 2002. The opening reception will be held on June 27, 2002, from 5 pm until 7 pm, and is free and open to the public.

This exhibition is partially funded by the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency, and the National Endowment for the Arts. American Airlines is the exclusive airlines of the event.

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The museum is free and open to the public weekdays from 10:00 am until 5:00 pm (Thursdays until 8:00 pm) and Saturdays from 12:00 until 5:00 pm. It is located at 600 S. Michigan Avenue across from Grant Park. Phone 312.663.5554 for additional information. To contact the museum on the worldwide web, go to www.mocp.org.