



jdc Fine Art
www.jdcfineart.com



Every breath we drew: photographs by Jess T. Dugan

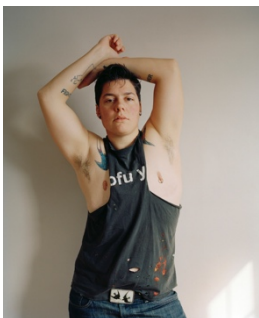
Exhibition Dates: June 1 – August 31, 2013

Opening with the artist: Saturday, June 8, 5:00 – 7:30 pm

The work of Jess T. Dugan is powerful, exploratory, substantive, honest and, above all, intimate. Through engaging portraiture, Dugan investigates the constructs of identity and sexuality. While we accept that our identities are the sum of our experiences, it may not occur to us as readily that our sexuality is *also* a construct that has been molded over time. Throughout several bodies of work, Dugan has explored how identity is formed, sexuality and desire are expressed, and personal connections are made. In an earlier series, *Transcendence*, Dugan made portraits of people within the transgender and gender variant community, focusing primarily on those on the female-to-male spectrum. Not only do these works reveal that there are indeed an endless number of gender identities, they also illustrate the fact that gender and biological sex are two distinct constructs. After focusing on masculinity and its construction for many years, Dugan became interested in the intersection of identity and the universal search for intimacy and connection. *Every breath we drew* is a highly personal collection of portraits of individuals and couples that explore the powerful relationship between identity and desire.

Dugan has a vested stake in this visual study and has even implicated herself in *Every breath we drew* through self-portraits. Her photographs are warm and welcoming, and the viewer is invited to participate on a profound level of intimacy. Dugan's sitters are natural and at ease; often they are depicted in their home or their bedroom. Without fuss or circumstance, the subjects are caught in a moment that lingers with a powerful presence. We feel no distinction between our space and theirs, and the connection that existed between photographer and subject is shared openly with us.

Dugan's work functions on levels beyond exploration and documentation. The whole of this work reveals complicated truths we want to simultaneously grasp and let fall away. Dugan's imagery makes us aware of the human desire to assign people into traditional gender categories, but in the instant we recognize this in ourselves we want to dismiss it. Rather than attempt to classify or define, we find ourselves enchanted by the beautiful humanity and individuality of each person we see.



About the Artist: **Jess T. Dugan** earned a BFA in Photography from the Massachusetts College of Art and Design, a Master of Liberal Arts in Museum Studies from Harvard University, and is currently pursuing an MFA in Photography from Columbia College Chicago. Dugan's work has been exhibited nationally the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; the Griffin Museum of Photography; the Leslie/Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art; the RayKo Photo Center, and the Photographic Resource Center at Boston University. Her photographs are in the permanent collections of the Harvard Art Museum, The Center for Creative Photography at the University of Arizona, the Michele and Donald D'Amour Museum of Fine Arts, and the Kinsey Institute for Research in Sex, Gender, and Reproduction.