



EDWARD TYLER NAHEM



*Andres Serrano: Anarchy*  
Edward Tyler Nahem Fine Art  
The Armory Show  
March 8-11, 2012

Edward Tyler Nahem Fine Art, New York, will debut a powerful new series by contemporary artist Andres Serrano at The Armory Show, March 8-11, 2012. Entitled *Anarchy*, this series is comprised of photographs that are challenging, gripping and, true to the artist, somewhat controversial. As the artist himself states, "*Anarchy* subverts the innocence of childhood by using the archetypes of early youth to explore a sinister world of make believe. It is the invented universe of the young mind and the old mind as it straddles the line between the conscious and the unconscious, the playful and the critical, the rational and the unconscionable."

Throughout Serrano's 30-year career and numerous celebrated series that include *Immersion*s, *Bodily Fluids*, *Nomads*, *The Klan*, *America*, and *The Morgue*, Serrano has created a distinct visual language to propose questions about consumerism, religion, society, sex and death. Conceived in 2011 for Edward Tyler Nahem Fine Art, *Anarchy* relates to Serrano's well-documented body of work in its formal aspects: film is shot in a straightforward photographic technique, without the use of digital manipulation, achieving images that are equally iconic and timely, beautiful and mortifying. In *Anarchy*, Serrano departs from photographing people directly, instead employing toys and figurines, selectively lighted and in silhouette, to explore his chosen subjects. Germano Celant writes about Serrano's 2011 photographs in silhouette, *Holy Works*, from which this series follows, in the forthcoming monograph of the same title (Damiani Editore, Feb. 2012). Referring to these works as "Serrano's sublime shadows", Celant remarks that "... he wants to deal with the images that have structured our thought, be it worldly or transcendental: those 'icons' on which have been molded the idols, in negative or in positive, of the heuristic and human values of existence."

Works in the new *Anarchy* series include *American Monument*, *Celebrity*, *Level of Disobedience*, *Made in China*, *Oedipus*, *Rage*, *The Hanging*, *The Prisoner*, and *Traitor*. These compelling and provocative images range from a paparazzi-surrounded Jesus in *Celebrity* to the perplexing figure of a gesticulating soldier in *Traitor* (is he a “traitor” or is he exposing one?), from the dangling silhouette of a uniformed body in *The Hanging*, to a girl brandishing a pistol, execution-style, in *Level of Disobedience*. The subjects, staged or suspended in the studio with Plexiglas and colored backgrounds, are eerily seductive, their lack of overt detail facilitating an appreciation based on each viewer’s specific vantage point.

As is Serrano’s method, references and titles are often attributable to the photographed objects themselves. *Made in China* depicts a silhouetted figure with the manufacturing stamp “Made in China” and *Freud and the Big Vagina* depicts a figure labeled “Sigmund Freud.” Dissonance and disruption are caused when the viewer realizes that *Made in China* depicts the Statue of Liberty, a symbol of the United States, which, through global commodification, has now become part of China’s national exports. Sometimes the titles signify the theme of the work, as in *American Monument*, which the artist says, “epitomizes and encapsulates Iwo Jima and every monument of war and death.”

Andres Serrano (b. 1950, USA) is considered one of the most important contemporary artists working today. His work has been exhibited extensively in solo and group exhibitions since the 1980s. Serrano’s photographs are held in the permanent collections of many public institutions, including the Art Institute of Chicago; Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston; Israel Museum, Jerusalem; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid and The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, among many others. Serrano’s extensive bibliography includes numerous catalogues and the oversize monograph *America*, published by Taschen in 2004 and the forthcoming *Holy Works* by Germano Celant, published by Damiani Editore, February 2012. A short film by the artist, *I Declare*, will premiere at Armory Film.

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