

ROSEGALLERY is pleased to present *TABLEAUX VIVANTS*, the debut U.S. exhibition by photographer Michael G. Wilson.



Michael G. Wilson, by Sparky Greene

Michael G. Wilson is widely known in the world of photography as an expert on 19th Century photography. His vast photography collection ranges from the earliest examples of the medium to contemporary work and has been the basis for many major exhibitions worldwide. With *TABLEAUX VIVANTS*, he reveals his own talent.

A tableau vivant is a reenactment of a scene of historical, cultural, or religious import. As an art form, the tableau vivant has been performed from the Middle Ages to the present. The arrival of photography in the 19th Century both widened the ability to create and to view such reenactments and allowed the form to become popularized. Pioneering British photographers William Henry Fox Talbot and Reverend Calvert Jones produced an early example in 1845, when they posed friends and family as fruit sellers. Following the 19th Century, modern photography saw the production of such “story pictures” languish. However, recent decades are witness to the return of the art form among contemporary photographers.

Wilson has chosen to revisit the tradition armed with both his deep knowledge of history and his love of photography with its new technical capabilities. His resulting images are large, impressive and lush with detail. Some are inspired by traditional European renderings of biblical stories and classical mythology, others by political events or social movements. In one case, a song provides the spark. Apart from the formidable Last Supper triptych, the subjects are represented in the costume and context of our time. Wilson skillfully depicts each retelling with parallels from the present day. To wit, his portrayal of Alan Henning, the English cab driver who was executed by ISIS in 2014, is modeled after Caravaggio’s *The Calling of St. Matthew*. In dramatic chiaroscuro, the scene presents the doomed Henning, bathed in beautiful light, as he hears the plight of two Syrian refugees who will inspire him to leave his family and his job to join humanitarian relief efforts only to be executed. The depiction is gorgeous and made even more poignant by the knowledge of its story. This Exhibition presents eleven tableau vivant, each created in reference to the past, living in the present.



The Calling of Alan Henning (after Caravaggio), 2022, printed 2023, Archival pigment print

TABLEAUX VIVANTS will be on view at ROSEGALLERY from 22 April until 6 May 2023. Opening Reception: Saturday 22 April | 3 – 6PM

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