

Susan Lakin

Artist Statement

The *Television Portraits* included in this exhibition are part of a series examining the ubiquitous television and its authority in our homes. Staging a portrait, I photograph the resident's reflection on their inactive television set by enhancing the screen's mirror image with artificial light. Each photograph examines two alternate dimensions of a room, one in the television screen and the other of the room containing the television.

Fascinated with the cultural phenomenon of reality television and reflecting on the influence of media on the construction of our collective identities, as well as the artifice of the medium, I draw upon conventional photographic studio portraiture to pose my subjects. As portraits, my photographs look at the contemporary home in our society and identity through mass media. Much like these reality shows, the television photographs appeal to our sense of voyeurism and address the question of reality vs. representation. The camera is retouched out of the mirror image to visually remove the photographer from the screen. This leaves the audience questioning, at first, whether the television is tuned to a program, playing a video, or if they are observing a reflection.

My images look at the prominence of the television in our residence and the influence of the set on domestic design, each reflecting the personality of the residents. Today we are more interactive with electronic media than at the time when TVs emerged; we connect every day with screens from our televisions, movies, computer, and hand-held devices, blurring the lines between public and private spaces. How these screens frame our world, reflects on our lives.