

Jackson Fine Art
For Immediate Release

Sally Mann
Proud Flesh

Jackson Fine Art is honored to open the September season with a solo exhibition of work by celebrated photographer Sally Mann, widely considered one of the most influential artists in contemporary photography. Our September show will feature Mann's most recent body of work, *Proud Flesh*, an intimate series of black-and-white portraits focused—in an interesting reversal of gendered expectations of the artist/muse relationship—primarily on the artist's husband of thirty-nine years. Mann will be available at the opening reception to sign copies of her new book, *The Flesh and the Spirit*.

In *Proud Flesh*, taken over a six-year interval, Mann applies her process to the task of documenting her husband Larry, who suffers from late-onset muscular dystrophy. The resultant series of nudes is a startling yet tender depiction of a body in fragments. No one image offers a cohesive portrait of its subject; instead, viewers are invited to consider this frank portrayal of the mature male form with the same painstaking precision as Mann. As in her earlier projects, her evocative fusion of the material world and its representation—a confusion of process, in which the varied textures and striking aberrations familiar to followers of Mann's work often blur with the physical reality of her sitter—convey a timeless quality even while the work is so apparently personal. Mann, often describing the sessions between she and Larry as a kind of communion, speaks to this duality—

"[T]he series wasn't so much about his illness and the degradation of his body and muscle as it was just a paeon, just a love story. But you couldn't avoid looking at the waste of his right leg and his left arm. And he was completely willing to show that, which is extraordinary."

As in much of Mann's work, the emotional bond between photographer and subject lends this series a resonant power.

Since the 1970's, Mann has been widely acclaimed for her traditional printing process and her evocative representations of the American South. Her early output engages with a variety of subjects, from landscapes (*Deep South, Mother Land*) to portraits (*At Twelve: Portraits of Young Women, Immediate Family*). Her bold and intimate work with her three young children in *Immediate Family* invited international celebration—and its attendant controversy—during the culture wars of the early 1990s. In 2003's *What Remains*, Mann's focus ranges from the decomposing body of a family pet to the bodies interred at a forensics facility, resulting in a penetrating five-part study of mortality with all the due diligence of

scientific inquiry. Throughout these myriad projects, Mann has remained a gifted analyst of universal themes of mortality, sexuality, and perpetuity. Although Mann has experimented with a variety of mediums, her characteristic black and white collodion prints have captured viewers since the mid-90s. A devotee of the dark room as much as the field, Mann shoots with antique cameras and adheres to traditional developing methods, preferring the mystery of an anticipated revelation to the precision of contemporary approaches.

Sally Mann lives and works in Lexington, Virginia. A Guggenheim fellow and a three-time recipient of the National Endowment for the Arts fellowship, *Time* magazine named Mann "America's Best Photographer" in 2001. In May 2011, she served as prestigious speaker at Harvard University for the William E. Massey, Sr. Lecture in the History of American Civilization with a series entitled, "If Memory Serves." She has been the subject of two documentaries: *Blood Ties* (1994), which was nominated for an Academy Award, and *What Remains* (2007) which premiered at Sundance and was nominated for an Emmy for Best Documentary in 2008. She has been central to major exhibitions at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia, and the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. Her photographs can be found in many public and private collections, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, and the Whitney Museum of American Art. Mann is represented by Gagosian Gallery, New York.