

# RACHEL WORONER

Patrick Leonard



*Kenya and David.* Rachel Woroner, 2011.

The images *David* and *Kenya* are drawn from a series of photographs by Rachel Woroner comprising a typology of the urban, artistically-inclined Canadian teenager. Depictions of her brother (David) and his friends, all students at public arts-academic high school Etobicoke School for the Arts in Toronto, Woroner's subjects confront the viewer with evocative nonchalance. Shot outdoors against a neutral grey backdrop, the photographs subvert the interior uniformity of the ritual school portrait through variegated natural light and the dead-pan stare. The removal of the smile and the pose strips the youth of personality and definitive gender, imposing an austerity in its place. At a stage between youth and adulthood, in a photograph that is equally a police document and fashion shot, the images mimic the experience of institutional containment customary of young adulthood. Woroner observes young subjects without celebration or nostalgia for youth, but allows a for confrontation between the subject and the viewer in which both stand on equal ground.

A graduate of Toronto's Rosedale Heights School of the Arts, twenty-year-old Worner was herself recently removed from a community like that she depicts. Working in art departments in the film industry and as a photographic intern led her to Concordia University's Faculty of Fine Arts two years ago. Her work was featured in *The Closer We Are to Death the More We Feel Alive* at Eastern Bloc during the Art Matters festival in 2011.