

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
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**Recent Photographs by Leah Oates & Maria Passarotti**  
**April 19-June 3, 2012**  
**Opening Reception: Thursday, April 19, 6-8 pm**

**MARIA PASSAROTTI**

Maria Passarotti's current series "In The Night" is staged in Rockland County, NY, a suburban region along the Hudson River, and in New York City. Reacting to her previous "Rooftop" series, the artist has now moved to street level, working in alleyways and along suburban roads, where quaint main streets and historic buildings play muse to the artist's fertile imagination.

Passarotti shoots her photographs at night, often lit simply by streetlights or with the headlights of her own car. The darkness helps to shroud the scene in mystery and create a narrative where there was none. The artist crops out extraneous elements, creating the theatrical stage set she had envisioned when first scouting the site. There is a haunted beauty in the aging brick facades and faded murals, as well as a longing for a simpler time. A house with a picket fence and shrub seems to have wandered off the set of a *Grapes of Wrath* revival, expressing an all-American, nostalgic quality.

Shadowy figures—sometimes barely discernible—populate the fringes of the scenes, indicating a human presence. Individuals or clusters of figures flow through each frame, moving beyond as mysteriously as they had entered. Passarotti achieves this effect by shooting herself in long exposure time, from 1-15 minutes, so she can flow through the scene, costumed and in character, while photographing it.

## LEAH OATES

Leah Oates “Transitory Space” series (2008-11) is comprised of color photographs taken in China, Canada, Finland and the US that explore the notion of flux. Oates has been examining the idea that everything is in a constant state of change in the natural and man-made worlds, and that movement, not stasis, is the norm. The artist achieves this transitory, impressionistic quality through double and sometimes triple exposure in the camera onto the negative.

From Newfoundland the artist gives us pictures of industrial telephone towers, shot against intense blue skies. Shadows and wind move across the images and the crisscrossing of branches, tower architecture and cables create a filigree pattern that belies the industrial subject matter.

During her Beijing residency, Oates captured the rapid changes taking place in China through images of buildings being razed to make room for new construction. Oates’ photographs from Finland show us that she can make mundane, industrial objects—a chain link fence a set of train tracks, a house in disrepair—look exquisite and refined. Her message seems to be that there is beauty in aging and progress in erosion.

Oates’ photographs are rendered in mirrored and superimposed pattern. There’s a sense that we are witness to something fleeting, which may evaporate into the mist. We may wish to reach out and touch them, as if to confirm that these hallucinatory, ephemeral pictures are not imagined.



Oates



Passarotti