

Epilogue

For the past three years that this exhibit has been in development, Dona Ann McAdams has been letting the horse come to her. She has been hard at work at the Saratoga race track – with a lead shank in one hand and her Leica in the other. She has been hot walking, assimilating, feeding, looking, riding, shooting...nurturing both her newest project and the horses and people that surround her.

This exhibit was nearing the halfway point in development when I stepped into working on this project at the Opalka Gallery. As the first of three studio visits approached, I knew that editing and manipulating several existing bodies of documentary work, all which speak very different on their own, into an art exhibit not labeled as a retrospective would be a delicate process. I had been viewing Dona's work from both that of a photographer's and a curatorial vantage point, and constantly battled with finding a balance for this exhibit. In its new context, was this the work of an artist or an activist? It wasn't until my final visit with Dona that I saw her work for this exhibit how I should have from the beginning - from that of a woman's perspective. When studying the photograph Amy on Of All Times, Saratoga, 2006, I realized that this was what I should have been doing all along. This image, says McAdams, "is a comma in the middle of my sentence". I needed to let the horse come to me, so to speak.

Some Women bestows us with a rare and re-contextualized view into several portfolios of Dona Ann McAdams. With Dona allowing us to pull work from her initial intentions, these photographs are no longer labeled as positives of institutionalized schizophrenics, PS 122 performance artists, prostitutes or nuns. Here, they are images of women – gesturing, arms outstretched, shielding their eyes, angry, protected, implied, curious or peaceful. Here, the content of the images can be viewed without inherent vice.

These photographs are made not only by an activist, raising the consciousness of change in social climate, or an artist, capturing light and time within the four borders of a frame, but by a woman - one who decided to be an artist and an activist. "I just want to make the work...make beauty", says Dona, as she holds down the phone to scream multiple obscenities at a low-flying police helicopter that is scaring her tribe of goats, "that's all".

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