



RYAN MCGINLEY BY KARIN NELSON

“SHOOT WHAT YOU KNOW,” THEY SAY . . . THIS PHOTOGRAPHER DOES JUST THAT

Given the voyeuristic world we live in, it's no surprise that 26-year-old Ryan McGinley won *American Photo's* 2003 Photographer of the Year award. For the past six years he's been capturing in photos his tight-knit crew of skateboarding, graffiti-bombing cohorts in the course of their day-to-day lives: stripped down, making out, getting high, and causing the usual juvenile-related chaos. McGinley's provocative, fly-on-the-wall style may be nothing new, but his affectionate gaze sets him apart. This is his generation, and the images are his artful mementos.

McGinley wants people to know that, despite being nubile and loose on New York City's streets, everyone in his pictures is doing just fine. Tellingly, the title of his show at New York's Whitney Museum last year—the first time the institution has honored an artist so young with a one-man show—was “The Kids Are Alright.”

Now McGinley is back with another, much-anticipated exhibition, on view at MoMA-affiliate P.S.1 in Queens through September 27. In one image, *Through Branches*, McGinley captures a group of boys and girls assembling naked in a

pine tree; in another, *Jake (Golden)*, he snaps a male subject blissfully splayed out in an illuminated bramble. The series may present a greener, more bucolic environment than his previous work, but it's clear he and his subjects are still hell-bent on reveling in one thing: freedom.

Karin Nelson is a freelance writer living in New York. Above: Ryan McGinley's *Untitled Self-Portrait* (2004), color print, 40 x 30 in. Courtesy of the artist and Peter Hay Halpert Fine Art, New York.