

## Dead Eagle Trail Jane Hilton

Crane Kalman Brighton is pleased to present **Dead Eagle Trail** – an exhibition of London based photographer and film maker Jane Hilton. This body of work marks Hilton's empathetic portrayal of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century cowboy. Unlike previous expositions of the American West, Hilton's subjects are photographed within their own personal environments, surrounded by their collections of artefacts and memorabilia. **Dead Eagle Trail** will be exhibited at the Crane Kalman Brighton Gallery from 14<sup>th</sup> July - 29<sup>th</sup> August 2010.

Jane Hilton studied as a classical musician, graduating in 1984 with a BA (Hons) in Music and Visual Art from Lancaster University. Her love of photography brought her to London, working as an assistant for numerous fashion and advertising photographers, before going it alone in 1988. Early work included both fashion and editorial alongside her documentary projects, which is the mainstay and passion of her work today.

It was on her first trip to Arizona in 1988, that she discovered an obsession for America and American culture. The contradictions in American society and the American dream is a recurring theme. Her work in Las Vegas is an epitome of this, where the line between fantasy and reality is constantly blurred. The transient nature of Vegas mixed with the incessant gambling philosophy provides a unique breeding ground for characters who live out these contradictions. Her series "Forever Starts Now" on the McDonalds' style wedding culture illustrates this.

From proclamations of everlasting happiness in Vegas, Jane hit the empty desert roads of Nevada ending up 350 miles away near Reno, where a roadside brothel called 'Madam Kitty's Cathouse' caught her eye. This chance encounter became a two year project and resulted in a ten-part documentary series for the BBC, "The Brothel / Love For Sale", as well as a series of exhibitions on desert landscapes, pimps and prostitutes.

In 2006, she returned to Arizona on a commission to photograph a handsome 17-year-old cowboy, Jeremiah Karsten, during a gruelling 4,000-mile trip on horseback from his native Alaska to Mexico, which took him two and a half years. Karsten's journey inspired Hilton's own epic pilgrimage, crisscrossing the cowboy states of Nevada, Arizona, Utah, Texas, New Mexico and Wyoming to capture one of the most iconic archetypes of American culture and history and a way of life that is in steady decline as developers buy up ranch land across the old West. The work on show here in **Dead Eagle Trail** is the culmination of Hilton's four year photographic expedition which was recently published by Schilt Publishing (distributed by Thames and Hudson) in May of this year.

Hilton persuaded many of her subjects to be photographed in their most intimate surroundings: their bedrooms. "This created a paradox between the macho subject matter and their sometimes feminine environments," says Hilton. "I love the contradictions the pictures raise; there's an elegance to them which is in contrast to the harshness of their daily lives. The light flooding in through the windows gives the images a connection with the outside world and an almost spiritual quality."

Jane's work is regularly published in The Sunday Times Magazine and The Telegraph Magazine, and has also been exhibited extensively including shows at Flowers East and HOST and featured in this year's Taylor Wessing Photographic Portrait Prize at the National Portrait Gallery.

**Dead Eagle Trail – Jane Hilton** will run from 14<sup>th</sup> July - 29<sup>th</sup> August at the Crane Kalman Gallery, Brighton, 38 Kensington Gardens, North Laine, Brighton BN1 4AL – [www.cranekalmanbrighton.com](http://www.cranekalmanbrighton.com).

For further information, or a selection of images, please contact Richard Kalman on 01273 697096 or via email on [enquiries@cranekalmanbrighton.com](mailto:enquiries@cranekalmanbrighton.com)

*Crane Kalman Brighton is a member of the **Own Art** scheme run by the Arts Council. The scheme provides interest-free loans of up to £2,000 to buy contemporary art work.*