

Lucy Gray photography

Balancing Acts

Artist's Statement for exhibition at Stanford University April 8, 2005

I photographed these four prima ballerinas who are mothers from 1999 to 2013. I also recorded interviews with them periodically throughout the years. The images and the words will be published in a book by Princeton Architectural Press in the spring of 2015. Hilton Als has written an introduction for the book.

The purpose of this project was to celebrate human potential. These ballerinas are at the top of their field in a company competing on the world stage. In their field, it is very difficult and very rare to have children. These dancers work at San Francisco Ballet where they all, surprisingly, improved as dancers after they became mothers. The range of their experience is wider than most of ours and it is inspiring. Their experiences as working mothers are intense and visual which was the basis of my interest. I knew very little about dancers when I began the project and though I was also a working mother, what sustained my fascination and appreciation were our many differences in experience.