

CLAMP



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Jimmy DeSana | *101 Nudes*

January 9–March 1, 2025

Opening Reception: Thursday, January 9, 2025, 6 – 8 PM

CLAMP is pleased to present *Jimmy DeSana | 101 Nudes*, an exhibition of the complete portfolio of the same title.

101 Nudes, produced in 1972, was Jimmy DeSana's final thesis project as an art student at Georgia State University in downtown Atlanta. GSU is located less than ten miles from where DeSana was raised in the city's suburbs, and the portfolio encapsulates in many ways the young artist's rejection of the American ideal such bedroom communities were meant to represent.

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Comprised of 56 lithographs of halftone black-and-white photographs shot over the course of a few years, the title of the project is a reference to the 1961 Walt Disney animated classic "101 Dalmatians," which was released in theaters in the spring of 1972. Disney films, in general, as unrealistically wholesome and saccharine constructs, stand in direct opposition to DeSana's knowingly lurid photographic series. *101 Nudes* points to American post-World War II bliss belied by the cultural upheaval of the Civil Rights movement, anti-war protests, feminism, and gay liberation.

DeSana wryly poses his mostly queer friends nude in bland, domestic settings as a flagrant protest to the rules and mandates of traditional American culture. Employing a deadpan aesthetic with ironic humor and camp, the artist uses absurd, artificial poses and unidealized naked bodies to transform familiar domestic environments into sardonic stages. And with the inclusion of portraits of Diamond Lil, a local drag performer of the day, DeSana further emphasizes role-play and the disarming power of genderfuck. Likely emboldened by gay activism on campus at the time, DeSana came out to his mother shortly before finishing *101 Nudes*.

In art photography in the late 1960s and early 1970s, there was a turn from traditional documentary pursuits toward theatrical, performative projects, as seen in imagery by artists such as Les Krims, Duane Michals, and Arthur Tress. In many ways, *101 Nudes* fits neatly into this new vein of photographic picture-making.

The artist's choice of an inexpensive printing process indicates his desire to distribute the project widely, perhaps as a nod to the salacious, blown-out photographs found in the softcore pornographic magazines of the day covertly consumed by the masses. And while DeSana first printed the series in 1972, he returned to the portfolio nearly two decades later in 1991 producing an edition of 50 + 50 Artist Proofs.

CLAMP is selling one 1991 portfolio intact and offering prints from a second portfolio for sale individually.

Thanks to curator Drew Sawyer for his astonishing essay in the exhibition catalogue *Submission*, which accompanied the landmark show at the Brooklyn Museum in 2023. His extensive analysis of *101 Nudes* was invaluable for framing CLAMP's exhibition.

For more information and images please contact Brian Paul Clamp, Director, or see www.clampart.com. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 10:00 am to 6:00 pm.

Image: Colophon from Jimmy DeSana's *101 Nudes*, 1972/1991. © Estate of Jimmy DeSana.