



Loretta Lux



Loretta Lux makes pictures of children that are as charming as they are creepy—a sweet-and-sour combo that proves surprisingly hard to resist, even if you suspect the work is little more than kitsch of the most sophisticated and unnerving sort. Lux, studied painting in Munich before switching to photography in 1999, but she actually works between the two media and generates the final results by computer. Her images are seamless amalgams of two different photographs—the figure and the background—that she enhances digitally with a program whose tools are probably closer to a retoucher's than a painter's but allow Lux to pursue her original training in a new form. The children, all the sons and daughters of friends, many of whom, Lux says, "remind me of my own childhood or the friends I had when I was little," are photographed against a white wall in a studio. Most of the settings, which include abandoned buildings, grassy fields, and a pebbly beach, begin as photos taken on travels throughout Europe. Whatever the original source, it's reworked in the computer until it has the sublime sheen of reality perfected, telling imperfection and all. Lux turns ordinary children into alluring aliens—icons of innocence so tainted by experience (or maybe just curdled nostalgia) they already feel antique. Because the work is strangely unmoored in place or time—drifting off into the idyllic past while hinting at a vacuous, sci-fi future—it manages to conflate memory and dread, sweetness and blight, in a dreamscape whose specificity reads as utterly imaginary. Maybe that's because it is. As with so much contemporary photography, nothing here is quite what it seems.

Are they paintings or photographs? Real or fantasy?
In Loretta Lux's gently surreal portraits of children,
nothing is quite what it seems.



Girl with a Loaf of Bread, 2001



"The Bride"

Photography, now in its second decade or so on this new technological juggernaut, has become a logical vehicle for bringing together elements from all realms. Lux says: "Usually I work with a digital camera and compose my works digitally or give them a finish on the computer, in order to make them meet my ideas perfectly." Today, a photographer may, if he or she chooses, approach the same tabula rasa the painter faces, and the images that wind up on it are not captured so much as rendered.



The Blue Dress, 2001



The Hush, 2000



Loretta Lux

born 1969 in Dresden

Lux trained at the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich and says she still feels more like a painter than a photographer. 'I use different media, but I still think as a painter. I organize my forms and colours on a screen like a painter does on a canvas.'



Study of a Boy 3, 2002,



Troll 3, 2000



Portrait of a Girl 1,



Portrait of a Girl 3,



"Lois" No. 2



"The Red Ball" No. 1



"Hidden Rooms" No. 1



"Hidden Rooms" No. 2



"Isabella"



"Dorothea"



"Megumi"



"Keisuke"



"Boy in a blue raincoat" No. 1



"Boy in a blue raincoat" No. 2



"Spring"



"Girl with crossed arms"



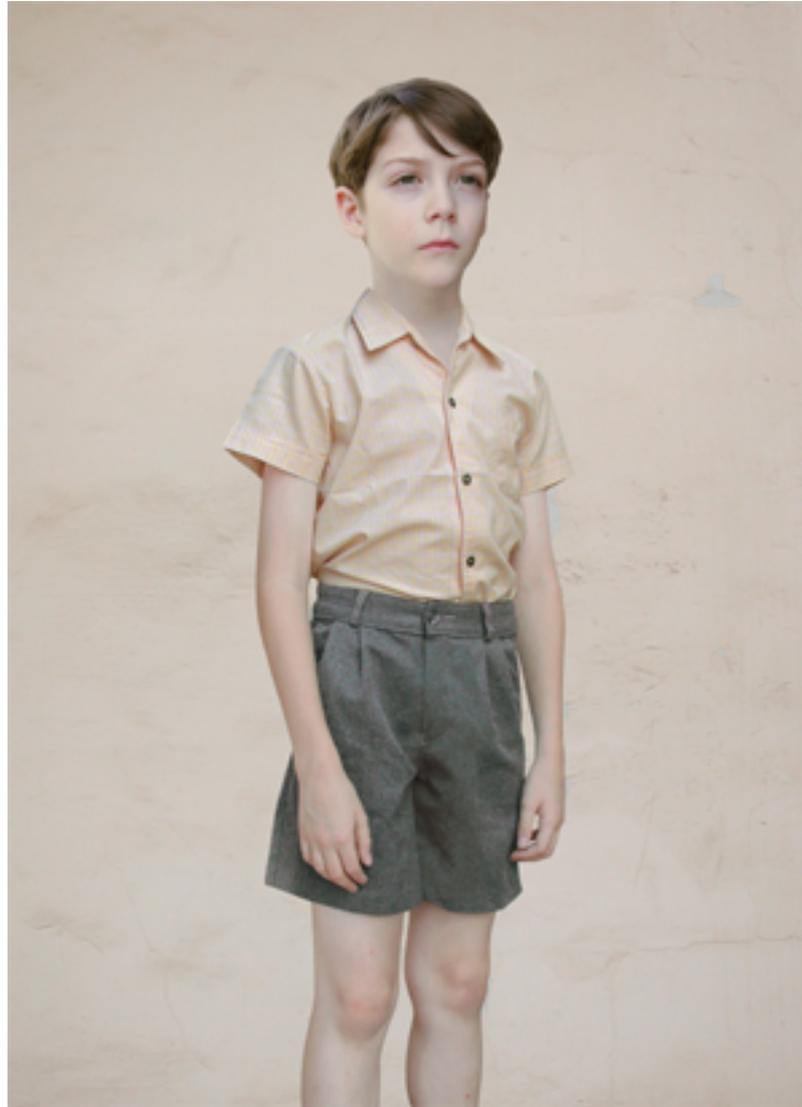
"Study of a Boy 1"



"Study of a Boy 2"



"The Walk"



"The Boy"



"Girl with a Teddy Bear"



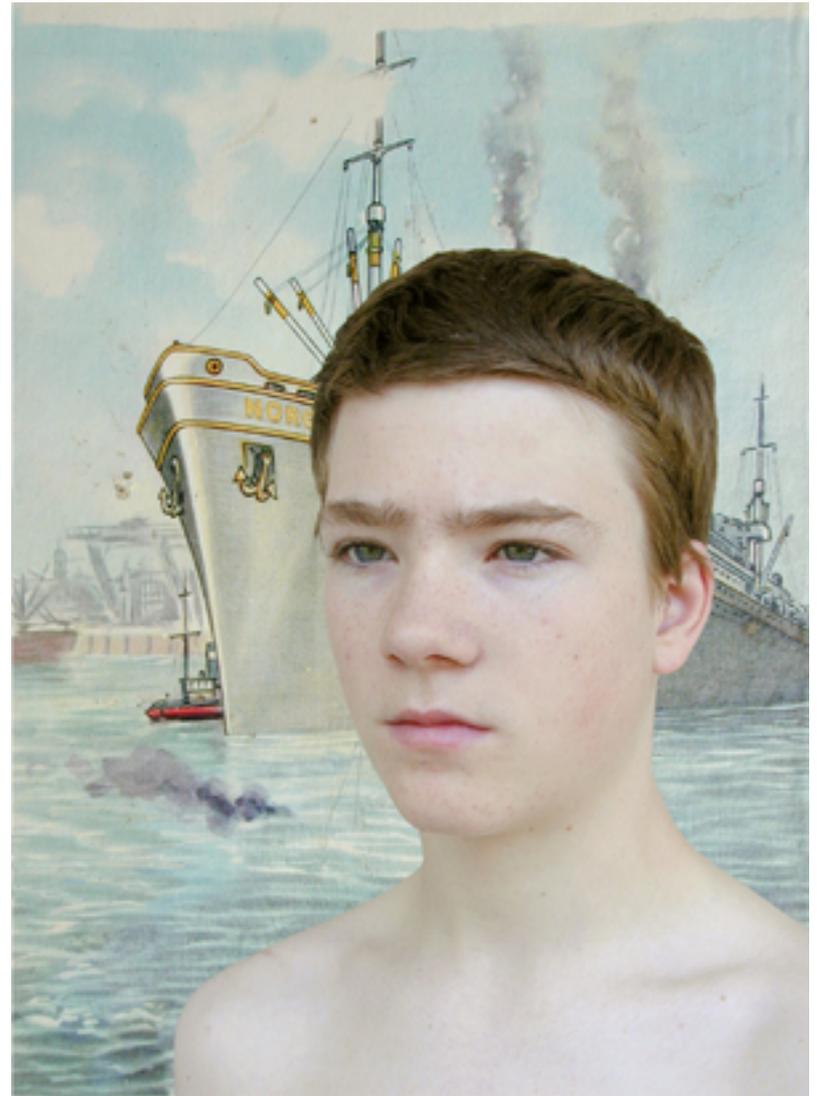
"The Drummer"



"Study of a Girl 1"



"Philipp" No. 1



"Philipp" No. 2



"The Book"



Balthus (1908-) - *Salon*, 1942



"Yanan"



*Jeune fille assoupie (1955) huile sur toile 116 x 89 cm.
Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia*



"Marianne"



"Paulin"



"Martha"



"The Wanderer"



"The Fish"