

PEOPLE
ARE
TALKING
ABOUT

PHOTOGRAPHY

two for the road

*Justine Kurland, son in tow,
shifts her lens from
girlhood to maternity.*

Photographer **Justine Kurland** first drew notice with her images of fierce, feral girls on the loose in raw landscapes that evoke Church and Cole reveries as easily as they do Victorian fairy paintings. The adolescents were directed with an incantation—"You're running away, you live in trees, you eat nectar, you torture boys, and you're a little bit mean"—that suggested an alternate version of *Peter Pan*, one in which Wendy wasn't the nurturing type. Now, inspired in part by the birth of her son, Casper, with sculptor Corey McCorkle, in 2004, Kurland has turned her attention to those girls' futures. In new works at the Mitchell-Innes & Nash gallery in Chelsea, naked mothers and children roam along blustery coasts and through forests, imbuing the rough settings with an idyllic grace.

"Having a baby has thrown me back to something knowable only to women, a certain immediacy and connectedness to this little being and by extension to many other beings," Kurland explains. "These pictures are not about family—they're more like a secret, knowing glance two women might exchange while

pushing their children in shopping carts past each other in a grocery store."

Kurland spent much of her own childhood on the road and around communes. She settled down long enough to attend art school at Yale, where she studied with the modern master of staged narrative pic-

tures, Gregory Crewdson. She went on to become one of his assistants, and he later selected her work for "Another Girl, Another Planet," the seminal 1999 group show that announced a new generation of young female photographers. These days, Kurland travels the country looking for big landscapes and fellow free spirits. "You always feel like she's on the move, running away or running toward something,"

Crewdson says. "That's the way she always was, even in grad school, and she's able to take that and put it in her work in a very positive way."

Motherhood hasn't changed her artistic methods. McCorkle stays in New York, while mother and son take extended road trips together in a tricked-out minivan that Casper calls the "mama car," showering at truck stops and visiting zoos and playgrounds along the way. "It's the most romantic thing I can imagine, living with my baby in a van," Kurland says. "I am more Gypsy now, more beholden to fate, luck, and the weather."—ANNE STRINGFIELD *pata* >166

MOTHER AND SON
KURLAND'S
PHOTOGRAPH OF
HERSELF AND
CASPER IN
COVINGTON,
LOUISIANA, 2006.



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