

Note on *Sur l'Herbe*.

The general title is an oblique (and not overly serious) reference to Manet's *Le Déjeuner sur l'Herbe*. The ostensible subject matter of figures in a landscape, unclothed opposite clothed, might be viewed in part as a reworking of themes and iconography that have shown up in painting (Giorgione, Manet).

More than in such art-historical references, I am interested in setting up a context in which certain dualities and oppositions might be played out: contrived mise-en-scène and (auto)biographical document, planned set-up and improvisation, chance and control, voyeurism and exhibitionism. Such concerns are quite specific to photographically based work. Many pieces tend to involve a tension between the private realm and the public, between intimate and open space. A dose of humor and irony has increasingly crept into the work. The main figures here are my wife and myself (never hired models).

I started toying with the idea of this series in 2000, triggered by something we had shot in the fall of 1999. It remained a rather secondary preoccupation relative to the night pieces for some time, although we continued working intermittently on it. Currently however my involvement with this body of work has greatly increased and it is leading to forays beyond the realm of the photographic print.

For instance I have become concerned with the duality of the photographic image as representation, its referential capacity on one hand, and its "facticity" on the other – the photograph as a representable object, and notions of representation of representation. Such notions have driven my use of light boxes, and now especially my experiments with painting (pastel works).

Philippe Mazaud, 2007/2008.

