

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



Deborah Bell Photographs

'Yorktown, 2010' photos by Susan Paulsen at Deborah Bell Photographs.

ON PHOTOGRAPHY | By William Meyers

Sweetness and Light: Reveling in Simplicity

Susan Paulsen: Sarah Rhymes With Clara

■ Deborah Bell Photographs
511 W. 25th St., (212) 691-3883
Through April 30

Susan Paulsen's best photographs represent the triumph of simplicity. "Yorktown, 2010" is an informal color portrait of a young girl. She is a pretty child with pale skin, blue eyes, tousled blond hair, and is wearing a plain sundress. She looks at the photographer calmly. The picture appears to have been taken by natural light, producing the pastel colors that are Ms. Paulsen's usual palette. The picture is so casual, so free of gimmicks, it seems to have taken itself, which is precisely the hardest of artistic accomplishments. The same could be said of "Evanston, 2009," a snapshot-like picture of an infant in

white held by an anonymous woman in a dark dress.

There are pictures of fruits and of flowers that are reminiscent of Josef Sudek; "Katonah, 2009" is a bunch of pale-pink hydrangeas wrapped in a newspaper's classified ads. Among several nudes, one also titled "Yorktown, 2010" is a seated woman, full-figured, with her face turned away from the camera and toward the light. Her expression is introspective. A towel or bathrobe on the floor behind her and an unmade bed in the next room hint at a narrative. Besides these works, there are enigmatic pictures of hands, dead animals in bell jars and a recurring dog.

Mr. Meyers writes on photography for the Journal. To see his work, go to williammeyer-photography.com