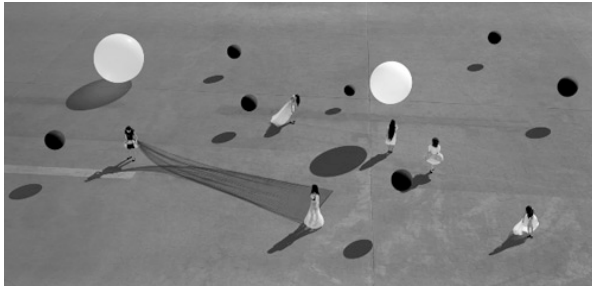


JEFF CHARBONNEAU & ELIZA FRENCH



Jeff Charbonneau & Eliza French, *Long Before Pluto*, 2010

**artillery**  
KILLER TEXT ON ART

Having established a strong identity based on goth-romantic figure-in-landscape imagery, Jeff Charbonneau and Eliza French loosen the spirit somewhat with a downright playful theme and an even more playful approach to it. In the photographs of "Playground," Charbonneau & French continue to concentrate on young women as protagonists in a dream world—a cheap trick, one might protest, but in fact a way of transcending a nagging trope by exploiting it with almost businesslike matter-of-facture. Setting any other kind of figure—old ladies, say, or babies—in these fields and gardens and plazas would invoke a more specific reading; the young women most easily become the viewer's ciphers, and their interactions with so many white weather balloons becomes at once a stylized ballet and a universalized metaphor for dreamy transport and the freshness (and perhaps even innocence) available through the imagination. Not the artists' imagination, which of course drives (and thus determines the subjective framework of) the entire series, but *our* imagination, which the project seeks to incite. The concurrences of figures and balloons, mirroring one another in their sun-reflecting whiteness, invite interpretation less through their ravishing clarity—the initial optical lure—than through their genial incongruity. Something is happening here, however gently and slowly, keeping one's curiosity piqued.

—Peter Frank