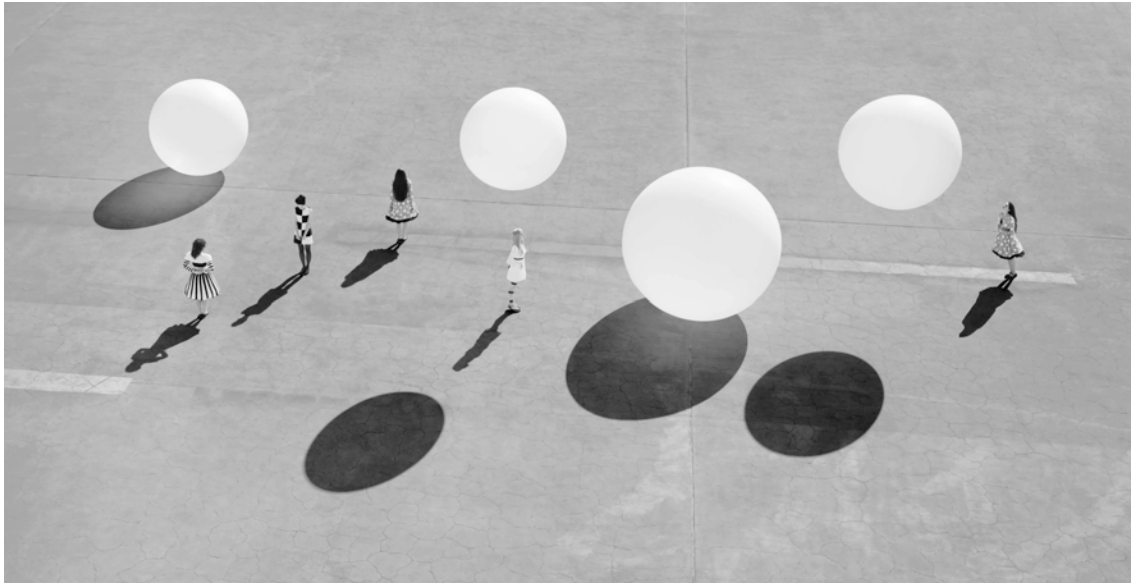


**MEDIA ALERT**

# E6 GALLERY



Jeff Charbonneau and Eliza French, *Dividing Suns*

## **Jeff Charbonneau and Eliza French**

### ***Circumspect***

July 30 – September 14, 2011

**Gallery Reception:**

**Saturday, July 30, 6:00 to 8:00 pm**

**Robert Berman/E6 Gallery**

**1632 Market Street, San Francisco, CA 94102**

*“Charbonneau and French’s work adds to the neo-dandy trajectory explored by such flamboyant self-documenting pairs as Pierre et Gilles, McDermott & McGough, and Gilbert and George. Now, however, dandyism has been given a noir edge.” -Peter Frank, On View*

**JUNE 2011, SAN FRANCISCO, CA.** – Los Angeles based collaborating photographers Jeff Charbonneau and Eliza French’s summer exhibition, *Circumspect*, at Robert Berman/E6 Gallery is a vigilant display of pure photography that invokes narratives reminiscent of Saki and Roald Dahl stories, or as previously described in *Photograph* magazine “Fellini’s take on Lewis Carroll.”

*Circumspect*, the duos’ first San Francisco exhibit, features 20 large-scale photographs from both Charbonneau and French’s *Massillon* series and their current *Playground* series. Utilizing traditional darkroom techniques (*read: without Photoshop*), and shooting with medium and large format film, Charbonneau and French’s photographs are rendered via meticulously executed installation staging and equally detail oriented post-production work.

Charbonneau explains, “Our images are essentially performance/installation stills, as we are very interested in capturing a real moment in time and adhering to the sentiments of traditional film based photography. As such, we prefer manipulating our images in a wet darkroom environment, rather than in the digital domain. In our *Massillon* series, where clouds are upside-down, or superimposed over a figure, the manipulations were done strictly in the darkroom using multiple negatives. In *Playground* we only retouched minor areas where the large orbs were tethered to the ground with small weights.” Charbonneau and French do, however, rely on digital technologies for the enlargement and printing process of their images. In the interest of maintaining consistency throughout their editions, large-scale exhibition prints are created using digital c-print technology based on their original silver gelatin masters.

Charbonneau’s twenty-year background in photography and in the motion picture and television industry, coupled with French’s background in screenwriting from NYU’s Tisch School of the Arts and Art History degree from UCLA, has created a partnership that consistently produces works that transport viewers to fanciful lands of visually interpreted imaginations, dreams, myths and memories. Ultimately, to discover oneself caught in the storybook narratives that unfold in the *Massillon* series or to experience Charbonneau and French’s *Playground* series, which will make you think differently about the alignment of the stars as you look into the night sky, brings to mind the fact that some pictures are worth a thousand words, or in the case of Charbonneau and French’s work, a thousand stories.

### ***Massillon***



Included in *Circumspect* are select works from *Massillon*, Charbonneau and French’s premiere body of work, which takes its name from the Ohio town where French’s great grandmother Zeta Eliza Woolley lived at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Creating images with Victorian-era aesthetics and a 19<sup>th</sup> century craftsmanship, combined with traditional black and white darkroom techniques and contemporary photographic processes, *Massillon*, for Charbonneau and French, “is a meditation on memory, and how it functions through the two of us, and between us.” Part of an unraveling narrative inspired by the life of French’s ancestor, *Massillon* reads as an archive of the

artist’s memories, old family folklore, dreams and childhood reminiscence, transformed into works that have been described as “stills, it would seem, [from] an Edgar Allan Poe film adaptation by Ingmar Bergman.”

### ***Playground***



*Playground*, Charbonneau and French’s most current body of work, focuses on the study of primary shapes, in particular the sphere, and its literal and symbolic relationship to human subjects and the natural world. Notes French, “In these highly designed pictures we have strayed away from the emotionally driven narrative that characterized our previous series, *Massillon*, to create visual poetry through experiments with proportion, distance, and repetition in space.”

With the *Playground* series, Charbonneau and French have ventured into such realms of influence as classic mythology, Buckminster Fuller's utopian communities, mid twentieth-century architectural sketches, Dava Sobel's book, *Planets*, and their own childhood experiences with weather balloons. Set upon sweeping and stark landscapes, as if in a play-space one might comfortably reach into and rearrange on a whim, each photograph in *Playground* begins with the artists sculptural intervention into a found landscape or surface through the decisive placement of people and objects, such as large monochromatic spheres and diminutive and fanciful female figures, and concludes with performances, postures and arrangements captured on film that are often infused with elements of classical mythology and subtle references to the universe as created and manipulated by gods and goddesses of polytheistic times.

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or

Charbonneau French

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**Calendar Editors Please Note:**

**What:** *Circumspect*

**When:** Saturday, July 30, 2011 – Opening Reception

**Hours:** 6pm – 8pm

**Where:** 1632 Market Street, San Francisco, CA 94102

**URL:** [www.e6gallery.com](http://www.e6gallery.com)

**Show Dates:** July 30 – September 14, 2011

**Highlights:**

- **Los Angeles based collaborating photographers, Jeff Charbonneau and Eliza French's premiere San Francisco exhibition.**
  - **Traditional photography coupled with meticulous installation/performance staging.**
  - **Select images from two bodies of work reflecting 8 years of photographic collaboration.**
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**About Robert Berman Gallery (Santa Monica) and E6 Gallery (San Francisco):**

The Robert Berman Gallery was founded in Santa Monica, California in 1979. One of the first galleries to be located at Bergamot Station Arts Center, the gallery has occupied two exhibition spaces there for nearly twenty years. Founder and owner Robert Berman was an early exhibitor of such artists as Keith Haring and Raymond Pettibon, and host to historical and seminal exhibitions by such artists as William S. Burroughs and Man Ray. The Robert Berman Gallery continues to feature a rotating exhibition schedule specializing in mid-career and established artists in all mediums.

For more information visit: <http://www.robertbermangallery.com/robertbermangallery/intro.htm>

Robert Berman's E6 Gallery in San Francisco, celebrated its pre-opening in January 2009 with wall drawings and performances by Raymond Pettibon and the Nichemakers. Since its opening, E6 has held numerous exhibitions including solo exhibitions of Bay Area artists Victor Reyes, Rob Setrakian, Winston Smith, and Moses Nornberg, as well as work by Cameron Gray, historical photographs by Julius Schulman, and recently an emerging Bay Area artists group show called "Say Something!" earlier this year. In conjunction with the gallery's exhibitions, E6 has held various performance events, including live painting, music, video/film screenings and dance. For more information visit: [www.e6gallery.com](http://www.e6gallery.com)

**About Jeff Charbonneau and Eliza French:**

Jeff Charbonneau and Eliza French have been working together since 2004 when a mutual interest in the photographic medium brought them together. Their performance-based images are created through a partnership from conception to finish, and have been exhibited nationally and internationally in group shows and art fairs since 2006, as well as featured in such international publications as *Photograph Magazine*, *American Photo*, and *Photo +*.

Charbonneau is a masterful printer working in traditional black and white darkroom technique. He attended the University of Wisconsin and UCLA for graduate studies where he studied music, anthropology and photography. He has divided his time between the motion picture and television industry and photography for twenty years. Eliza French studied screenwriting at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts and earned a degree in Art History from UCLA in 2001. In 2008 she became a full-time artist in collaboration with Charbonneau after working for several years in the entertainment and arts industries.

Charbonneau and French's work is currently included in a traveling museum exhibition, "The Art of Caring: A Look at Life Through Photography," which opened at the New Orleans Museum of Art in 2008 and includes work by renowned photography luminaries as Sally Mann, Nan Goldin and Nicholas Nixon.

Charbonneau and French both live and work in Los Angeles.  
For more information visit: <http://www.sevensistersasleep.com/>