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THREADS

THIS MONTH,
 DAZED GETS
 PLAYFUL WITH
 FIVE ARTISTS
 WHO
 REFUSE TO
 GROW UP

DANIEL GORDON
 TAKES OFF ON A PHOTOGRAPHIC FLIGHT OF FANTASY

Brooklyn-based artist Daniel Gordon refuses to let a small thing like gravity ground his playful flights of fantasy. "I wanted to see if there was a way I could use the medium of photography to do something that's impossible," says the 29-year-old. Inspired by Edward Muybridge's motion study of human flight, in 2001 Gordon began to turn his body into a lean, mean flying machine.

After months of yoga, Pilates and step aerobics, he climbed into a snug pair of white tights and flung himself off a hill in Northern California. One hundred and twenty fifths of a second later he crashed back to terra firma in a crumpled heap. As maiden flights go, there have been more impressive. But, crucially, a friend captured his outstretched airborne body at its apex, and the *Flying Pictures* series was born.

Gordon's fusion of landscape photography and performance art awakens nascent superhero fantasies that have long been crushed by the constraints of reality. And he does it all without the help of Photoshop. "When I started making these pictures, Photoshop was really blossoming in the photo community," he recalls. "I was interested in pursuing a project that would showcase traditional methods of manipulation within straight photography. I can fly, just not very well."

Although his work has been exhibited in MoMa and won acclaim from Stephen Shore and Gregory Crewdson, some critics feel that it is too comedic. "Bah, hamburger!" he laughs. "A lot of artists whose work I find really funny is often dark. People like Olaf Breuning, William Wegman, and Fischli & Weiss. There are many examples of artists who might not be overtly comedic, but have a sharp wit that comes out as humorous."

So, what deep psychological human emotions does he hope to uncover with his athletic leaps of faith? "I want them to feel excitement, wonder, hope, and doom. I want people to pause for thought." *Tim Noakes*

Flying Pictures is published by Powerhouse powerhousebooks.com



**PREPARE FOR TAKE-OFF:
 A FLYING LESSON WITH
 DANIEL GORDON**

- 1) Don't
- 2) Bother
- 3) It
- 4) Is
- 5) Painful

