

JACK RUTBERG FINE ARTS

Joel-Peter Witkin is renowned as the creator of elaborately staged and often erotically charged scenes exploring grand themes of religion, sex and mortality. His provocative imagery has created a sensation since early in his career in the 1960s, and particularly in museum exhibitions in the early 80s at the Stedelijk in Amsterdam and San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. He was afforded a retrospective survey at the Guggenheim Museum in 1995. Recent major exhibitions include the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris, and the Biblioteca Nacional de Chile, Santiago. Critically, his riveting works elicit controversial and dramatic response, well typified by critic Grace Glueck's 2006 *New York Times* review where she states: "The calculated madness of Joel-Peter Witkin's photographs conveys a sense of 19th-century horror, like the dreamworks of the Symbolist painter Gustave Moreau... there's a master of surrealistic photography at work." His photographs are in the permanent collections of the National Gallery, the Museum of Modern Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles, the Victoria and Albert Museum, and the Centre Georges Pompidou, among many others. Among his numerous awards, he was the recipient of the Commandeur d'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres de France in 2000.