

Grace Weston
Artist Statement

As an artist working in the genre of staged photography, I construct, light, and photograph miniature, staged vignettes in my studio to address the questions and contradictions of life. Despite the fact that I never depict actual humans in my photographs, the human psyche is undeniably at the center of my work.

In this series, I cast lone characters into noir-ish nighttime scenarios, heavy with mystery and tension. The settings are distinctly suburban: cul-de-sacs, dark and empty roads, the small-town bar, private basements, and bedrooms – all offering an impression of seclusion, ripe for clandestine schemes. We get to squirm with the sense of being voyeurs. As witnesses, are we implicated? What assumptions do we make? Do the characters know one another? How are they entwined? What are their motives? Are they heroes or villains, or a muddy concoction of each?

Upon reflection, I can see that these images are inspired not only from the television and film mysteries and spy stories of my childhood, but also from the sense I had of shadowy adult dramas around me. This was the 60's and parenting was decidedly different than now. The grown-ups I witnessed occupied a detached adult reality and seemed to harbor secrets - they smoked cigarettes, drank highballs, contemplated divorce, and led lives both dark and exotic to my mind. I was the silent observer, attempting to decode their mysterious world. Although I felt drawn to understand, and even live its sophistication, I knew it was not an open and welcoming place. I was left to my own imagination to decipher what I observed and invent my own accounts.

The world presents more questions than answers. There are no absolute truths. My props and characters may come from a child's world, but these are adult stories.