

# GALERIE LELONG

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## **Rosemary Laing** ***a dozen useless actions for grieving blondes***

**May 7 – June 20, 2009**  
**opening reception: Thursday, May 7, 6 to 8 pm**

In her newest photographic series, *a dozen useless actions for grieving blondes*, Australian artist Rosemary Laing takes issue with concerns both political and personal and makes them universal through cathartic displays of grief. The viewer is confronted with 12 images of emotionally exposed women in various stages of sorrow: some weep, some clutch at hands, some cry out in a convulsive state of agony. Framed tightly, the photographs read as windows into the women's grief and, moreover, into the grief of a collective people. *a dozen useless actions for grieving blondes* opens to the public on Thursday, May 7, from 6 to 8 pm.

The connection between one's place of belonging and memory, a singular female subject, and reactions within cultural and political shifts have been focuses throughout Laing's career and each have a strong presence in *a dozen useless actions for grieving blondes*. Behind the subjects of the series is a cinematic, streaked pink background, almost racing from edge to edge. There is an ambiguous physical relationship between the subjects and the background; the women seem to be disengaged from any discernable context. Displayed with this Brechtian sense of high drama and heightened awareness of artificiality, the women's pain feels both immediate and distant.

The works originated from a period in Australia, where the government elected in 2007 issued a formal apology for governments past. In her latest series, Laing explores the emotions relating to what can't be undone. In addition to their pale white skin and blonde hair, what bonds these women is that their intense emotional responses are useless—they grieve for something lost, for events acknowledged but for which can never fully be atoned. The tension, frustration, and instability that overwhelm these women are palpable and universal. The viewer empathizes deeply with their grief, which is real but without any tangible effect.

Laing has presented solo exhibitions at numerous museums, including the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney; Frist Center for the Visual Arts; and National Museum of Art, Osaka. The Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia; National Gallery of Victoria; Kunstmuseum Luzern; Nasher Museum of Art; Museum of Contemporary Art, Cleveland; and Kunsthalle Fridericianum are among the museums that have featured her work in group exhibitions. Laing has participated in several biennials, including the Sydney Biennial (2008), Venice Biennale (2007), Busan Biennale (2004), and Istanbul Biennial (1995). Her work is currently featured in *Trouble in Paradise: Examining Discord between Nature and Society* at the Tucson Museum of Art and will be seen at the Kunstmuseum Bonn in *Remote Proximity: Nature in Contemporary Art*, opening in September.

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Hours: Tuesday – Saturday, 10 am - 6 pm  
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Forthcoming exhibitions: summer group exhibition–June/July | Jaime Plensa–Sept/Oct | Sean Scully–Nov/Dec