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Juergen Teller at Lehmann Maupin
through Jul 7 (see Soho).

BY REENA JANA

If the renowned German photographer August Sander were reborn in today's fashion world, he would be Juergen Teller. Indeed, Teller's "Go-Sees" series—which features photo after photo of supermodel wanna-bes who have been sent by agencies to his studio seems to be a sexy, more glamorous version of Sander's famous photographic typology of '20s Weimar society, *Citizens of the Twentieth Century*. Teller similarly composes informal portraits of his subjects in their everyday clothes, and he invites viewers to draw their own conclusions about human nature, based on the artist's deliberately repetitive approach to his subject.

So what do we learn from these images of nubile girls in tight clothing, which Teller mounts en masse on plain white boards? Sure, we're reminded of what's being considered sexy today. But eventually, we see past the generic long hair and long legs, and notice the Goth girl in *Go-Sees: April*, with her black-nailed hands clasped in prayer and the Josephine Baker look-alike in *Go-Sees: May*. We appreciate the ghostly pale, androgynous girl of *Go-Sees: November*, who pulls her hair back and smirks sarcastically instead of pouting. We grow sad when, after thinking we've seen the same bleached-blond contortionist appear in *Go-Sees: September*, *Go-Sees: June* and *Go-Sees: May*, we realize that the images actually feature three different clone-like, desperate girls.

Also on view are Teller's large, close-up shots of international beauty queens which have not only the deadpan feel of Sander's work, but also the wow-look-at-all-those-pores effect of Chuck Close paintings. Especially striking are the tarantulalike eyelashes of each girl, a result of overdone mascara, not to mention the glassy eyes and forced smiles that give the models the creepy aura of Stepford wives. Undercutting the airbrush tradition of fashion shoots, the photos show the pimples on Miss France's chest and the messy lipstick and copious facial hair of Miss Canada. Teller somehow manages to capture not only the vulgarity but the humanity of these women and, as a result, evokes a poignant sense of pathos instead of bathos.