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Dona Schwartz *On the Nest*

Texts by William A. Ewing, Dona Schwartz

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Englisch

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**Schwartz examines two defining moments in parents' lives – when the first child is born
and when the last child leaves home**

Dona Schwartz's environmental portraits examine two key transitions in life – becoming a first-time parent and adjusting to an empty nest when children have left home. In quotes accompanying the portraits, parents reveal their views on the changes awaiting them. *On the Nest* provides a poignant and often humorous look at these underexamined, yet defining moments that forever change our lives. The photographs reflect parents' hopes and expectations, as well as the struggle, anxiety and joy of child-rearing. They also reflect the diversity of American family life, by representing interracial couples, gay and lesbian couples, and single parents.

When I first saw Dona Schwartz's portraits (the word "portrait" doesn't quite do justice to the richness of these pictures), I didn't know whether to laugh or to cry. Eventually I decided that both responses were equally valid—life is always best appreciated with its contradictions. But I did wonder if other viewers shared my feelings. Perhaps parenthood is such a loaded issue that emotional ambivalence is destined to rule the day!

William A. Ewing

Exhibition

Stephen Bulger Gallery, Toronto, Canada

January 23 – February 27, 2016

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Dona Schwartz is an American photographer living in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. Her work has been internationally published and exhibited and is included in the collections of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, George Eastman House, the Musée de l'Elysée, Lausanne, Switzerland, the Harry Ransom Center, the Portland Art Museum, and the Kinsey Institute. She is currently on the faculty of the Department of Art at the University of Calgary. She has published several books, amongst others *In the Kitchen* (Kehrer 2009). Photographs from *On the Nest* have been included in three Photographic Portrait Prize exhibitions at the National Portrait Gallery, London, winning third prize in 2011.

William A. Ewing is a well-known curator and writer on photography. From 1977 to 1984 he was Director of Exhibitions at the International Center of Photography, New York, and between 1996 and 2010 he was Director of the Musée de l'Elysée, Lausanne. His exhibitions have been shown at many museums in America and Europe, including the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Centre Pompidou, Paris; the Hayward Gallery and the Serpentine Gallery, London; the Kunsthaus Zürich; and the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.

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Barbara Karpf, barbara.karpf@kehrerverlag.com or
Kathrin Szymikowski, kathrin.szymikowski@kehrerverlag.com
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