

**JAMES  
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GALLERY**  
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## PRESS RELEASE



**Steve Davis:**

*Back to the Garden*

June 20 to August 3, 2013

Opening Reception:

Thursday, June 20<sup>th</sup>, 6 – 8pm

Gallery Hours are:

Wed. - Sat. 11:00am - 5:00pm

Tuesday by appointment

Additional images are available upon request

Left: *John, 37, Tattoo Artist, 2013*

Archival Inkjet Print, 62 3/4" x 49" Framed

James Harris Gallery is pleased to present our fourth exhibition of photographs by Steve Davis. Davis has returned to portraiture after five years of focusing on the landscape of the West. In previous work, Davis' investigated and often critiqued the way contemporary culture deals with people who reside at the margins, the so-called underbelly of our social classes; his series "Captured Youth" documented the incarceration of teenage youth and "The Rainier School" poignantly gave a visual record of Washington State Institution for the mentally ill. In this new series titled "Back to the Garden," Davis photographed and documented self-described modern "hippies," people adhering to a transformed vision of peace and love, who stand for freedom of expression often opposing of the cultural norms.

As Davis states, "my subjects are younger people who positively identify themselves as hippies. This was my sole criterion for selecting subjects. Several people I met and photographed do not visually reveal themselves as counter-cultural hippies in any noticeable way. But all of them are able to articulate their connections to the lifestyle, philosophies, or actions of contemporary hippie culture. A group that is a joke to many, and an anachronism to even more, is continually finding new members, more than 45 years after the Summer of Love."

Davis photographs his subjects against a white background, isolating the individuals to emphasize the pose, gaze, clothing, and accoutrements. The gestures captured range from contemplative to expressive. The portrait of "John, 37, Tattoo Artist" shows a shirtless man with dreadlocked hair looking down in thought. His inked torso provides a visual record of his craft yet also offers a glimpse into his persona. Another work, "Eleanor, 28, Student" depicts a smiling young woman framed by the vibrant colors and extensions of her hair. Her gaze is elevated and indicative of the freedoms and future she faces. Both subjects are captured through their nuance of physical expression.

Steve Davis is the Coordinator of Photography and Media Curator at The Evergreen State College in Olympia, WA. Davis was twice the recipient of the WA Arts Commission/Artist Trust Fellowship. His work has appeared in the *New York Times Magazine*, *Harper's*, and *Russian Esquire*. His photographs are in the collections of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, The Haggerty Museum of Art, George Eastman House, the Seattle Art Museum, the Tacoma Art Museum and the Musée de la Photographie in Belgium.