

TOWNSEND

YOU ARE YOU, TOO

LINDSAY MORRIS

An Online Exhibition
June 25 until August 31, 2021



Image: Lindsay Morris, from *You Are You*

Townsend is proud to announce a solo exhibition by artist Lindsay Morris that brings together images and text from *You Are You* with portraits from *Old Friends and New Bonds* and launches at www.Townsend-Gallery.com on Friday, June 25, 2021. *You Are You, Too* is Morris' second exhibition with Townsend and represents the artist's deeply personal engagement with gender studies, an inquiry which started with her adolescent son's reflection on his identity. This exploration began their participation at Camp I Am, a summer camp for gender-creative children and their families that offered a temporary safe haven – a refuge where children could freely express *their* interpretations of gender alongside their parents and siblings.

The origins of *You Are You* date back to 2007 when Morris began to document the annual weekend and became the de facto photographer of the close-knit Camp I Am community. In 2012, it was with a great deal of courage that camp parents and children agreed to have select images from Morris' vast

catalogue of Camp I Am photographs published for the New York Times Magazine's cover story "What's Wrong With a Boy Who Wants to Wear a Dress?" This started what they all agreed was a very important dialogue in a public forum. Since then this story has been published in 13 countries, translated into 10 languages, and developed into a feature-length documentary – this widespread engagement demonstrated a global interest in the predicament of gender independent youth.

Morris' intention was to reach beyond the confines of Camp I Am to contribute to a discourse about the crucial role that support plays in the lives of gender-creative children. In 2015 a new phase of the project was realized when Morris' extraordinary photo-essay was published as a hard cover monograph entitled *You Are You*. Morris' vibrant publication contains 83 color photographs; a Doctor's Forward by internationally recognized American pediatric endocrinologist Dr. Norman Spack; a touching short memoir by American author and transgender advocate Professor Jennifer Finney Boylan; a directory of helpful resources for gender-creatives and their families; and personal stories by camp parents.

Camp I Am's popularity established the need for a support network focused on gender independent youth and their families. Eventually, with grassroots efforts led by camp parents, Camp I Am began to branch out into small, local campsites; regular, year-round gatherings; and regional groups. After more than a decade of service to its community Camp I Am phased out, its purpose now successfully decentralized and far-reaching. Still Morris builds on the project through the relationships forged at camp and new connections she continues to form.



Image: Lindsay Morris, from *Old Friends and New Bonds*

Many of these allies appear in Morris' follow up installments such as *Old Friends and New Bonds*, an ongoing series that documents these gender-creatives, occasionally into their teen years and adulthood. Those pictured in *Old Friends and New Bonds* have either attended Camp I Am or Gender Conference East (an annual conference in support and celebration of their gender nonconformity), with some who have participated in both. Morris' photographs – images captured in a makeshift studio the artist builds at the event sites – are carefully considered compositions with rudimentary aesthetics that belie the subjects' inherent complexities, the stark formality of the jet-black backgrounds call to mind Renaissance portraits which historically memorialized the rich and powerful.

You Are You, Too comes while Morris continues to elaborate on the broader *You Are You* project, subject matter that continues to generate interest. With *You Are You*, Morris has firmly established herself as an artist engaged with the people and communities that surround her – especially those that are overlooked, marginalized, ostracized, forgotten, and even discarded. Through her work, difficult stories are presented with care and dignity as Morris gives voice to the voiceless, her empathetic approach invariably confers a sense of value and humanity to her subjects – and by extension to us all.

Townsend extends gratitude to Lindsay Morris, her family, the campers, and conference participants for the opportunity to present their stories and images. Further, Townsend is grateful to Dr. Spack and Professor Boylan for allowing the inclusion of their essays in *You Are You, Too*.

You Are You, Too is the first in a series of exhibitions by Townsend to highlight gender and sexuality in a global context. Forthcoming in this program are presentations by Gabon born photographer Yannis Davy Guibinga and Thai artist Parinot Kunakornwong.

About / Lindsay Morris

Lindsay Morris was born in Detroit, Michigan in 1966 and received her BFA from the University of Michigan School of Art, Ann Arbor, Michigan. She also studied at The School for International Training, Nairobi, Kenya, and The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois. Morris has recently mounted two solo exhibitions: one at the Arts Center at Duck Creek, and one at Guild Hall, both in East Hampton, New York. She has been included in numerous group exhibitions at venues including ICP, NY; Newport Art Museum, Newport, Rhode Island; and, the Parrish Art Museum, Water Mill, New York. Morris' work has been published widely in magazines such as Marie Claire International, Vanity Fair Italia, New York Magazine, TIME Magazine + TIME Lightbox, and The New York Times Magazine. Morris resides in Sag Harbor, New York.

About / Townsend

Townsend is a curatorial initiative that showcases the work of a global roster of artists of all media.

Townsend-Gallery.com • info@townsend-gallery.com

 [@townsend_gallery](https://www.instagram.com/townsend_gallery)    [@TownsendGallery](https://www.facebook.com/TownsendGallery)

PO Box 905 • Water Mill, NY 11976 • +1 917 686 8776

Press Contact: Christopher Milne c_milne@townsend-gallery.com