

ART DESIGNED TO INSPIRE TRANSFORMATIVE JOURNEYS

Meghan Boody holds summer book launch in East Hampton

BY JON WINKLER

There's something immediately striking about Meghan Boody's book, "We Are Gods in the Chrysalis." Aside from the cover art—a girl in a red dress, with a tail sticking out, eyeing herself in the mirror—there's that interesting title.

"Chrysalis' is another word for a cocoon. It's a symbol of transformation," Ms. Boody said.

While the term itself may refer to butterflies, Ms. Boody's book title refers to "We" as human beings.

"We all have a part in ourselves that is divine, and so the book is about getting access to that place of power and divinity in each one of us."

The chance to see how she captures those moments of getting that access will come Saturday, June 4, to Harper's Books in East Hampton as Ms. Boody celebrates her summer book launch.

Ms. Boody's book is a collection of her photo artwork, some

of which dates back to 1990. Her work has been featured at the Whitney Museum of American Art in Manhattan, the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art at Cornell University and the Museum of Old and New Art in Tasmania.

"[The book] is all about the trajectory of our individual paths of transformation: How do we flip that switch from being one type of person to the next?" Ms. Boody said. "There's a lot of stories in there that hone in on the idea of the character transforming quest and what is the nature of inner change. Why do so few people do it? And my belief is because it's so arduous and tricky and painful. So a lot of the work looks at that sticky, uncomfortable process of inner change."



Meghan Boody HARVEY WANG

Ms. Boody refers to her work as "composed photography," in which she photographs people posing in lavish costumes and then uses Photoshop to place these subjects in front of eye-catching backdrops and animals. She hopes that her work helps inspire people to go on transformative journeys of self-discovery.

"They're kind of mythic journeys," Ms. Boody said. "I want people to gain strength on their

own mission through the work."

She is known on the New York socialite scene but has a house in Southold and grew up in Bridgehampton. She would occasionally revisit Bridgehampton until eight years ago when she "flew the coop" for the North Fork.

"I felt inundated by too many people and I didn't feel like the vibe was very relaxing," Ms. Boody said. She also claims to have missed the atmosphere of nature instead of suburbia, and that woodland feel can be seen in much of her art.

Ms. Boody graduated from Georgetown University with a bachelor's degree in philosophy and French, but moved to France in 1986 to study fashion design at the Paris location of



From "Meghan Boody: We Are Gods in the Chrysalis."

Parsons School of Design. There, she took an introductory photography class and was hooked. She even finds a way to connect philosophy with photography.

"All of my studies of philosophy contributed to piecing together my own philosophy on how I tell these stories in my photography," she said. "Literature and philosophy, whether it's French or British or American, informs the work to a great level."

Ms. Boody thrives on using real people in her photographs as a way for individuals to connect to her work. It appears to be a way to compete with the current popular medium of visual connection: movies.

"I get very jealous of the emotional attachment and identification that people have toward watching a movie," Ms. Boody said. "I'm interested in creating these stories with characters that spring to life, that are very realistic and that—as the characters go through their own



From Meghan Boody's series "Psyche and the Beast."

difficult moments and challenges—I'm interested in people hopping aboard for the ride and experiencing this and gaining

some insight as to how they can apply this to their own lives." Meghan Boody will sign "We Are Gods in the Chrysalis" at

Harper's Books in East Hampton on Saturday, June 4, from 5 to 7 p.m. Call 631-324-1131 for more information.