

## **Golden State**

**Curated by Drew Sawyer**

**March 29 - April 27, 2017**

Marianne Boesky Gallery is pleased to present *Golden State*, an exhibition that explores the diversity of urban and suburban experience in California, predominantly from the 1970s through the present day. Curated by Drew Sawyer, William J. and Sarah Ross Soter Associate Curator of Photography at the Columbus Museum of Art in Ohio, the exhibition features the work of seven American photographers, whose meticulously staged and documentary style images capture distinctions of class and economy and speak to individual and communal aspirations. On view March 29 through April 27, 2017 at 507 W. 24th Street, *Golden State* connects to issues at the very core of today's political tumult, through depictions of a state that has at once emerged at the forefront of the progressive movement and encapsulates the growing disparities between economic classes.

Among the artists featured in the exhibition are John Divola, Buck Ellison, Christina Fernandez, Anthony Hernandez, Catherine Opie, and Larry Sultan, all of whom have been based in California throughout their careers. While artists like Fernandez, Hernandez, and Ellison are well known and acclaimed on the West Coast, they have received less recognition nationally. *Golden State* offers a dynamic opportunity to introduce the work of these California photographers to East Coast audiences, and to position them within a broader artistic and socio-political dialogue.

The exhibition will also include several photographs from Dorothea Lange's series on Japanese-American internment in 1942, which were originally censored by the U.S. government. The inclusion of these images, which feel eerily immediate and contemporary, demarcate California's position at two important junctures in American history—first, as complicit in government-sanctioned racism and paranoia during World War II, and now in direct and forceful opposition to the same political forces.

The Lange prints are being produced in collaboration with Tim Chambers, founder of Anchor Editions, which creates limited edition archival-quality prints of images in the public domain. All of the proceeds from the sale of these prints will go to support the ACLU.

"In recent years, California has appeared to be more golden than ever. It has emerged as not only a major center for contemporary art, but also the wealthiest and most socially progressive state in the country. Yet, it continues to have the highest rates of poverty and homelessness. Continuing in the tradition of Dorothea Lange, the artists in this exhibition examine the social and economic life of California with critical and exacting eyes," said Sawyer. "One senses in these photographs what Joan Didion once observed of her native state: 'California is a place in which a boom mentality and a sense of Chekhovian loss meet in uneasy suspension; in which the mind is troubled by some buried but ineradicable suspicion that things better work here, because here, beneath the immense bleached sky, is where we run out of continent.'"

For the exhibition, Sawyer selected works from each of the artist's wide-ranging series to provide a rich visual narrative on lifestyle and how we define the American dream. Some of the exhibition highlights include:

- Photographs from **Christina Fernandez's** 2002 series *Lavanderia*, which explore the intersections of public and private life among Latinos living in eastern Los Angeles through documentary style photographs of laundromat windows at night;

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- Black-and-white photographs by **Anthony Hernandez** of public transit areas around Los Angeles, shot in 1979, and his color images of scenes from Rodeo Drive in the 1980s;
- **John Divola's** images of suburbanites in the San Fernando Valley in the early 1970s. Shown in groups, with subjects identically posed, the series highlights the uniformity of suburban developments and behaviors;
- Selections from **Larry Sultan's** 2006–09 *Homeland* series, in which the artist hired day laborers to act within landscapes that sit at the outskirts of suburban developments in Marin County. The images encapsulate at once the desolation of being just outside a community and the freedom that being the "other" can offer;
- **Buck Ellison's** vividly colored photographs of teen girls munching on hummus, organic vegetable gardens at elite prep schools, and men cooking in their kitchens that confront idealized, pre-packaged socially and environmentally conscious lifestyles;
- A selection from **Catherine Opie's** *Domestic* series (1995–98), in which the artist photographed lesbian couples and families in their homes and environments. The large-scale color portraits document the construction of communities.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a publication with an essay on the subject by Sawyer, along with images of featured works.

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Drew Sawyer is the William J. and Sarah Ross Soter Associate Curator of Photography at the Columbus Museum of Art and the Arts Editor at Document Journal. His recent exhibitions include Allan Sekula: *Aerospace Folktales and Other Stories* (2017); *Gathered: Snapshots from the Peter J. Cohen Gift and Works by Carmen Winant and Luke Stettner* (2016); *The Sun Placed in the Abyss* (2016), Lucy Raven: *Low Relief* (2016), Zoe Leonard: *Analogue* (2015), *From Bauhaus to Buenos Aires: Grete Stern and Horacio Coppola* (2015), and Robert Heinecken: *Object Matter* (2014). He has also recently hosted talks with artists Lucy Raven, Lisa Oppenheim, David Horvitz, Mary Lucier, John Divola, and Cameron Rowland, among others. He holds a Ph.D. in Art History and Archaeology from Columbia University, where he also served as a lecturer. He has held curatorial positions at The Museum of Modern Art, New York, the Guggenheim Museum, and the Chazen Museum of Art.

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