

GAGOSIAN GALLERY

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PRESS RELEASE

GAGOSIAN GALLERY

456 NORTH CAMDEN DRIVE
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HOURS:

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Tue–Sat 10:00am–6:00pm



WILLIAM EGGLESTON: *Los Alamos*

Thursday, September 27–Saturday, November 10, 2012

Opening reception for the artist: Thursday, September 27th, from 6:00 to 8:00 pm

I just wait until [my subject] appears, which is often where I happen to be. Might be something right across the street. Might be something on down the road. And I'm usually very pleased when I get the image back. It's usually exactly what I saw. I don't have any favorites. Every picture is equal but different.

—William Eggleston

Gagosian Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of photographs from William Eggleston's *Los Alamos* series. This will be Eggleston's first solo exhibition in Los Angeles since 2004.

A Memphis native, Eggleston carved his distinct oeuvre from the immediate world around him, incorporating all shades of life into his vivid photographs and thus pioneering an approach that derives its power from a refined form of spontaneous observation. A modern-day *flâneur*, he captures compelling fragments, events, and personalities of the ordinary world on the streets and in the parlors of small-town America. His subject matter, such as parked cars, billboards and abandoned storefronts, are seemingly banal, yet the idiosyncratic manner in which he orders his observations creates a world of enigma and unexpected beauty, unflinching in its veracity.

This exhibition comprises twenty-eight large-scale pigment images from the *Los Alamos* series, printed from vintage negatives. Some images were first printed in the early 2000s as dye transfers. Others have never been seen before. Eggleston shot them on the road between 1966 and 1974 in the Mississippi Delta, New Orleans, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Los Alamos, and other locations across the United States, naming the *Los Alamos* series after the laboratory where atomic weapons were developed. In the intimate portraiture and stark landscapes, the profound influence of his aesthetic on contemporary image-making is plain. His self-professed "democratic camera" seeks out spontaneous moments of aesthetic exception—a neon light glowing piercingly in a darkened motel room; the back of a smooth, perfectly arranged grey updo; a collection of dolls; a gawky young man pumping gas. Tightly cropped and condensed, each object or subject assumes a narrative life of its own, charged with mystery and possibility. Geographically non-specific and seemingly timeless, the freedom and congeniality of these loosely framed portraits is a hallmark of Eggleston's working style—emanations of a steadfastly egalitarian vision and a poetic eye.

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Eggleston is largely credited with legitimizing color photography as a fine art form. More than a century after the advent of color film and a decade after popular media fused with contemporary art, his first museum exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, New York in 1976, was also the first fine-art exhibition of color photography. Some thirty-five years after this historic moment, he continues to innovate in the photographic medium. The vibrant and exquisite dye-transfer process, that became a hallmark of his oeuvre, has limitations predicated on the size of available photographic paper. In recent years, advances in digital printing have allowed Eggleston to create his images on a much larger scale—44 x 60 inches—while equaling and even surpassing the quality of color saturation previously available only to the dye-transfer process.

William Eggleston was born in 1939 in Memphis, Tennessee and raised in Sumner, Mississippi. He studied at Vanderbilt University, Delta State College and the University of Mississippi. His work has been the subject of numerous solo and group exhibitions worldwide including "William Eggleston and the Color Tradition," the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles (1999); "William Eggleston," Fondation Cartier, Paris (2001, traveled to Hayward Gallery, London); Documenta 11, Kassel, Germany (2002); "William Eggleston: Los Alamos," Museum Ludwig, Cologne, Germany (2002, traveled to Museu de Arte Contemporanea de Serravles, Portugal; National Museum for Contemporary Art, Oslo, Norway; Louisiana Museum of Art, Humlebaek, Denmark; Albertina, Vienna, Austria; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, California; Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, Texas through 2005); and "William Eggleston: Democratic Camera, Photographs and Video 1961–2008," Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2008, traveled to the Haus de Kunst, Munich; the Corcoran Gallery, Washington, D.C.; and the Art Institute of Chicago through 2010).

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