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ROE ETHRIDGE INNOCENCE II

Opening reception:
Thursday, September 21, 5–7PM
September 21–October 28, 2017

657 Howard Street
San Francisco, CA 94105

An image has to sing. It's not just something to decode and find the true meaning of. I have to feel its harmonies and disharmonies.

—Roe Ethridge

Gagosian is pleased to present “Innocence II,” new photographs and sculpture by Roe Ethridge. This is his first solo exhibition in San Francisco.

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In Ethridge's photographs the real is used to suggest, or disrupt, the ideal. Through commercial images of fashion models, products, and advertisements as well as intimate moments from his own daily life, he reveals the fine line between the generic and the personal, merging art-historical genres with the image culture of today.

"Innocence II" includes a new series of large-scale, layered photographs printed on brass. Multiple exposures and transparencies synthesize on the gleaming metallic surface, producing near-alchemical effects, as if each detail were made of light itself. Thus Ethridge echoes the very mechanics of photography, enhancing the medium's ability to evoke the passing of time. Seven of the brass works feature photographs of model Louise Parker, some of which also incorporate Looney Tunes characters, silhouetted objects, and brick walls. Though Parker appears throughout Ethridge's oeuvre, these photographs were the first he ever took with her. Repurposing his personal archive, he uses the past as source material from which to produce hybrid, even monstrous, portraits—misplaced eyes, smiles, and other features disrupt the integrity of the original photographs.

Smaller photographs on brass include a series of self-portraits of Ethridge at various ages and in different guises. In one, as a six-year old, he leans against a tree in a park, and in another, as an adult, he stands nude before a long mirror. These two works, plus *Skull on Brass* (2017)—which depicts a plastic replica of a human skull—correspond to the three ages of man, a common theme in Renaissance painting often represented as childhood innocence, mature manhood, and death. Ethridge counters the allegorical, meditative themes of the brass works with photographs that communicate topical and immediate sensations—from a scaled-up iPhone screenshot of Kellyanne Conway in mid-sentence; to red roses poking through a white picket fence; to scenes from his childhood neighborhood in the suburbs of Miami, (which he revisited, observing it as an outsider). Ethridge's sculptures also reveal how seemingly ordinary objects, depending on their presentation, can become cryptic symbols and biographical markers, as in several pedestal-like brass bins containing references to previous bodies of work, such as apples and cigarettes. Drawing upon the directness and ubiquity of photography, Ethridge endows his work with a musical quality: if the brass works are the slow, unfolding melody, then the flowers, bicycles, and signs that populate his images are the metronomes, keeping time.

Roe Ethridge was born in 1969 in Miami, Florida and currently lives and works in New York. Collections include MOCA Grand Avenue, Los Angeles, CA; Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston; Tate, London; and Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst (S.M.A.K.), Ghent. Recent institutional exhibitions include "Momentum 4: Roe Ethridge," Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston (2005); the 74th Whitney Biennial (2008); Le Consortium, Dijon, France (2012, traveled to M - Museum Leuven, Belgium); and "Roe Ethridge: Nearest Neighbor," the 3rd FotoFocus Biennial, Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati (2016).

Image: Roe Ethridge, *Childhood Home I* (detail), 2017, dye-sublimation print, diptych, 28 × 11 inches (71.1 × 27.9 cm).

For further inquiries please contact the gallery at sanfrancisco@gagosian.com or at +1.415.546.3990. All images are subject to copyright. Gallery approval must be granted prior to reproduction.

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