

KOPEIKIN GALLERY

Press Release
Kopeikin Gallery, Los Angeles

Alejandro Cartagena
The Collective Memory of the Worst Place to Live in the World Today If You Are Not White

September 9 – October 21, 2017

Kopeikin Gallery is pleased to present *The Collective Memory of the Worst Place to Live in the World If you are Not White* by Alejandro Cartagena as part of PST LA/LA. On September 9th, a reception with the curator and book signing will take place from 6-8pm and is open to the public.



"Ultimately, that's what art like this does. It screams loudly, Hey, you fools, look at this. Your world is a tinderbox, and if you don't get wise quick, it will all turn to ashes in a flash."
Excerpt from Santa Barbara Shame on US Jonathan Blaustein

In his newest body of work, *The Collective Memory of the Worst Place to Live in the World Today if You are Not White* Mexican photographer Cartagena continues his examination of social, urban and environmental issues but now has micro-trained his lens onto the city of Santa Barbara, California. Cartagena peels away at the immediate beauty and presents new impressions of this coastal community as a metaphor to comment on the current state of the cultural and political landscape of the United States of America.

During a residency in Santa Barbara, Cartagena was interested in how the perception of Santa Barbara had been previously constructed in the mind of the outsider. Was this city a college town and site of school shootings? Or a Hollywood haven for Oprah Winfrey and other stars?

Though on the exterior this small tourist town seemed the picture-perfect American-Mediterranean escape, just under the façade seemed to lay something uneasy. Santa Barbara is Cartagena's explorations of a narrative that can only be felt from the outside. A clear statement of a broken paradise where things look nice but feel wrong on the inside.

Alejandro Cartagena lives and works in Monterrey, Mexico. His projects employ landscape and portraiture as a means to examine social, urban and environmental issues. His work has been exhibited internationally and is in the collections of several museums including the SFMOMA, the Museum of Contemporary Photography in Chicago, the Museum of Fine arts Houston, the Portland Museum of Art, the Museo de Arte Moderno in Rio, Brazil, the Fototeca de Nuevo Leon, Mexico and the Fototeca Nacional in Pachuca, Mexico.

Alejandro's work has been published internationally in magazines such as Newsweek, the New York Times, the Guardian, le Monde, Stern, PDN, the New Yorker, the Independent, Monocle and Wallpaper among others. He has published and self-published several books including Suburbia Mexicana (2012 Photolucida/Daylight), Carpoolers 2014, Before the War 2015, Rivers of Power 2016 and Santa Barbara return Jobs to US with Skinnerbook 2016

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