

Mitch Epstein  
*Recreation*  
 February 23 - April 8, 2023  
 Opening Reception: February 23, 6 - 8 PM

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For five decades, the photographer Mitch Epstein has taken the American scene as his subject. His iconic images of the nation at leisure in a pre-selfie, pre-digital era will be on view at Yancey Richardson from February 23 through April 8, 2023. Titled *Recreation*, the exhibition portrays American celebrations, rituals, competitions, travel and other pursuits from 1973 to 1988. With a wry and subtle wit, Epstein presents a late 20th century America seeking fun and relaxation in ways that are compelling, joyful, and sometimes questionable. The complete series of *Recreation* was recently published in a new updated edition (Steidl, 2022), which expands on the first edition published by Steidl in 2005.

Speaking recently about *Recreation*, Epstein noted, the work “came out of my excitement about pictures, being out in the world, in places where people were engaging with different kinds of leisure activities. The world itself was less self-conscious. It was pre-digital... There was something more free about it.”

Filled with a raw energy, the photographs in the exhibition offer an empathetic nod. In several highly complex compositions, Epstein squeezed an extraordinary amount of information into the frame. Veterans in uniform gather for a Vietnam war parade in New York City. Binocular-toting tourists study mountainous vistas in Glacier National Park. Jubilant partygoers squeeze into an elevator in Dallas. Acrobats launch through the air in Santa Monica. Half-naked bodies pack together on a Queens, NY beach. Each image documents a certain time and a place that no longer exists.

One of the few photographers working in color in the 1970s, Epstein reveled in a highly saturated palette, using color to emphasize the kinetic energy of the images. While a student at Cooper Union in New York City, Epstein’s professor, the influential photographer Garry Winogrand, told him, “Put color film in the camera. Forget about the fact that you have color.” Notes Epstein, “It became part of my language. The world is in color, so why not photograph in color. It was really that simple.”

Mitch Epstein (born 1952 in Holyoke, MA) has gained renown over the last 50 years for photographing the culture, landscape, and “American-ness” of the United States. He has won numerous awards including the Prix Pictet (2011), Berlin Prize (2008), and a Guggenheim Fellowship (2003). He was inducted into the National Academy of Design in 2020. His work has been exhibited and published widely in the United States and Europe. His 17 books include *Silver + Chrome* (Steidl, 2022), *Recreation* (Steidl, 2022 and 2005), *American Power* (Steidl, 2009) and *Family Business* (Steidl, 2003). His work is in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art; Metropolitan Museum of Art; Whitney Museum of American Art in New York; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles; and Tate Modern, London. In 2022, he exhibited his photographs and films (*Salaam Bombay!* and *India Cabaret*) at Les Rencontres d’Arles in the 12th century Abbey of Montmajour, Arles, France. He lives in New York City.

Founded in 1995, Yancey Richardson represents artists working in photography, film, and lens-based media. The gallery is committed to working with museums, private institutions, leading art collectors, and other galleries to advance the careers of the artists they represent. Their current program includes emerging photographers as well as critically recognized, mid-career artists such as Mitch Epstein, Ori Gersht, Anthony Hernandez, Laura Letinsky, Andrew Moore, Zanele Muholi, Mickalene Thomas and Hellen van Meene. Additionally, the gallery has presented

exhibitions of historically significant figures such as Lewis Baltz, William Eggleston, Ed Ruscha, August Sander, and Larry Sultan.

Gallery artists have been extensively collected and exhibited by museums worldwide including the Brooklyn Museum of Art, Getty Museum, Centre George Pompidou, Guggenheim Museum, Museum of Modern Art, National Gallery of Art, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Stedelijk Museum, Tate Museum and the Whitney Museum of American Art. Gallery artists have been widely published in artist monographs, prominent art journals, and critical texts and reviews of the gallery's exhibitions have appeared in many publications. Yancey Richardson is a member of the Art Dealers Association of America (ADAA) and the Association of International Photography Art Dealers (AIPAD).

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Image shown: *Cocoa Beach I, Florida*, from the series *Recreation*, 1983. Chromogenic print.