

For Immediate Release

Jeff Brouws
Typologies

April 21 – May 27, 2011

Opening Reception: Thursday, April 21, 2011

Gallery hours: Tuesday – Saturday, 10am – 6pm



Over the past three decades Jeff Brouws has pursued a body of work that examines visual manifestations of the evolving American cultural geography. Taking inspiration from the “anonymous sculpture” studies of the Bechers and the deadpan artist books of Ed Ruscha, Brouws produces archives and essays of material that forge his own photographic territory. Yancey Richardson Gallery will present three groupings from a series of ongoing typological projects in which Brouws collects imagery of a particular architectural phenomenon: this

presentation includes abandoned drive-in movie theaters, derelict signage, and cheaply constructed commercial storage units.

Without romanticizing their subject matter, the photographs ask us to consider the forces that have conspired to enact their construction, or alternatively, their subsequent abandonment. Installed in grids this representational structure makes each photograph equivalent and invites comparative contemplation. This play between identity and difference on the level of form is equally at work in terms of each typology's subject matter. Working in the mode of a visual anthropologist, Brouws seems to ask: why this expression of the built environment here and now, there and then? The drive-ins and storage units each represent low-cost revenue generators for landowners content to hold property until surrounding land values facilitate more lucrative development. Conversely, the signs devoid of information register the evacuation of such capital investment. Displaced to other places and other people, their own significance seemingly their *anachronism*—their being out of time. Drawing attention to these aspects of the everyday, Brouws considers how space is organized socially, economically and historically.

Jeff Brouws has produced four monographs, including the 1992 homage to Ed Ruscha entitled *Twenty-Six Abandoned Gasoline Stations*. His most recent book is *Approaching Nowhere* published by W.W. Norton in 2006. His work is found in numerous museum collections including The Whitney Museum of American Art, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Harvard's Fogg Museum, the Princeton University Art Museum and the Getty Museum. The photographs in this exhibition appear courtesy of the Robert Mann Gallery.

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