

YANCEY RICHARDSON

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

ANTHONY HERNANDEZ
September 15 – October 21, 2017



Public Transit Areas #10, 1980



Landscapes for the Homeless #54, 1989

Yancey Richardson Gallery is pleased to present its first exhibition of Los Angeles native Anthony Hernandez (b.1947), opening Friday, September 15 from 6 to 8. Since the late 1960s, Hernandez's photographs have revealed with formal integrity and bleak beauty, the harsh realities of his native Los Angeles. The exhibition is comprised of two of his most critically acclaimed series which have never previously shown in New York: *Landscapes for the Homeless* and *Public Transit*. On view September 15 through October 20, *Anthony Hernandez* coincides with the opening of the artist's eponymous career retrospective at the Milwaukee Art Museum which originated in Fall 2016 at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.

Throughout his career, Hernandez has pursued a nuanced view of the physical and social landscape of Los Angeles. In *Public Transit*, 1979-80, Hernandez switched from a handheld 35mm to a 5 x 7" large format camera and tripod to create a new kind of street photography. Made at bus stops throughout the city, the large-scale black and white photographs capture the isolation of the urban metropolis through formally composed and carefully detailed views of desolate boulevards disappearing into the horizon, peopled only by the Los Angeles underclass waiting for the next bus. Jeff Wall, in his essay for the 2009 monographic exhibition he curated on Hernandez at the Vancouver Art Museum, relates the new approach of the *Public Transit* work to that of emerging Americans Stephen Shore and Robert Adams and the Germans Thomas Struth and Andreas Gursky.

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Y A N C E Y R I C H A R D S O N

Landscapes for the Homeless, a series of color photographs made between 1988 and 1991, details with precision and restraint the empty encampments of the homeless, sheltered beneath the concrete freeway overpasses and in the brush of vacant lots found at the edge of downtown Los Angeles. Hernandez's unsparing views investigate the environments and materials adapted to provide a modicum of privacy or comfort. A crude chair made of sheetrock, pants hung inside out on tree branches, a wall built of plywood and cardboard all stand in for their absent owners. The artist's detailed tableaus balance a rigorous formal approach with a devastating social critique. Speaking of his homeless work, Hernandez says that he "puts you in his place. I'm right here. I'm looking at what he's looking at". When the photographs were made, the homeless population of the city was estimated at some 30,000 and declared a crisis. According to a recent Cornell University Study, it now stands at 60,000.

In recognition of the series, Robert Adams named Hernandez the 1995 recipient of the DG Bank-Förderpreis Fotografie, which awarded him a solo show at the Sprengel Museum, Hannover, Germany. The accompanying monograph contains a conversation between the artist and his longtime colleague Lewis Baltz that relates the *Landscapes for the Homeless* imagery to Hernandez's two-year tour as a medic in the Vietnam War and the dystopic movie *Blade Runner*. In response to Baltz's declaration "L.A.'s destiny is to become *Blade Runner*", Hernandez responds "This ground you talk about is ground zero...The people on the ground are the forgotten, and the ground is a human wasteland." Subsequently, he adds, "The hardest pictures I ever made were the homeless pictures. I wasn't in a war zone but it was as if I were."

Hernandez has had numerous solo exhibitions including a traveling retrospective originated by the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (2016) and presented as the first solo exhibition in their new Pritzker Center of Photography; the Amon Carter Museum (2016), the Vancouver Art Gallery (2009), the Seattle Art Museum (2002), the Laguna Art Museum (2001), the Corcoran Gallery of Art (1976), the Sprengel Museum, Hannover, Germany (1995), the Maison Europeene de la Photographie and the Centre Nationale de la Photographie, Paris (1997). He is a recipient of the 1999 Rome Prize and has been named a United States Artists Fellow (2009). Monographs include *Anthony Hernandez* (SFMOMA), *Waiting, Sitting, Fishing and Some Automobiles* (Loosestrife Editions), *Everything* (Nazraeli Press), *Pictures for Rome* (Smart Art Press), *Sons of Adam: Landscapes for the Homeless II* (Musee de L'Elysee and Centre National de la Photographie), *Landscapes for the Homeless* (Sprengel Museum) and *Anthony Hernandez* (Vancouver Art Museum).

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