

APR 26 EXHIBITION REVIEW: JOHN DIVOLA: SWIMMING DRUNK

REVIEWS (/CULTURE/CATEGORY/REVIEWS)



©John Divola, Zuma #33, 1978, Archival pigment print, Edition of 3, Image: 40 x 50 inches, Paper: 44 x 54 inches

Written by Megan May Walsh

Edited by Jana Massoud

Swimming Drunk, John Divola's exhibition at Yancey Richardson, includes two photographic exhibitions titled *Zuma Series* (1977-1978) and *Daybreak* (2015-2020) representing the breadth of his 40-year career. In the series, John Divola

photographs ruined architecture marked by mother nature and the impressionable touch of time. Drawn to abandoned property, Divola hoped to capture the evolution of time and the spatial storytelling of architecture. Stumbling upon an abandoned building repeatedly burned by a fire department's practice drills on Zuma Beach in Southern California in the late seventies, Divola began a yearlong project documenting the property culminating into the *Zuma Series*. *Daybreak* is a photographic compilation of an abandoned housing complex at the decommissioned George Air Force Base in Victorville, California. Fascinated by the architecture, the labor and design behind the structure, and the remnants of the building's past occupants, Divola captures the chaos of lingering memories, vibrant creativity, and the warping effects of time built into the bones of architecture.



©John Divola, Zuma #52, 1977, Archival pigment print, Edition of 3, Image: 40 x 50 inches, Paper: 44 x 54 inches

Houses can be alluring. The spaces they occupy, the stories and memories they hold, and the people that pass through them—a building can tell a story. The walls hear laughter and cries, they carry whispers and secrets, and they witness the evolution of lives. The chaos of all that is absorbed in the bones of homes is revealed through Divola's lens.



©John Divola, George Air Force Base, Daybreak, 1_2016_06, 2016, AZO gelatin silver contact print, Edition of 5, 8 x 10 inches

Both series are a result of Divola's fascination with transforming a situation through photography - through yearlong documentation of abandoned properties covered in Divola's additions to the preexisting vandalism, the erosion of elements, and the passage of time. Experimenting with the storytelling power of these structures, Divola mixes ruined architecture amidst a wild raging beach, and splashes of vibrant color, or the complete devoid of color. The artist embraces the messiness and multiplicity of photographic storytelling with his series. The particulars of the lives and memories that once inhabited the architecture are lost, but their presence is nonetheless written into the images.





©John Divola, Zuma #3, 1977, Archival pigment print, Edition of 3, Image: 40 x 50 inches, Paper: 44 x 54 inches

John Divola's *Swimming Drunk* is a portal into the messiness and chaos that exists behind the closed doors of homes throughout the evolution of time. Houses witness trauma, love, laughter, dreams and loss. Houses carry chaos. They carry stories. They monumentalize memories. And all of this, as everything, is warped by time.



(HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/SHARER/SHARER.PHP?U=HTTPS%3A%2F%2FMUSEEMMAGAZINE.COM%2FCULTURE%2F2022%2F4%2F25%2FEXHIBITION-REV11
(HTTPS://TWITTER.COM/INTENT/TWEET?URL=HTTPS%3A%2F%2FMUSEEMMAGAZINE.COM%2FCULTURE%2F2022%2F4%2F25%2FEXHIBITION-REVIEW-JOHN-DIV
(HTTPS://WWW.TUMBLR.COM/SHARE/LINK?URL=HTTPS%3A%2F%2FMUSEEMMAGAZINE.COM%2FCULTURE%2F2022%2F4%2F25%2FEXHIBITION-REVIEW-JOHN-D
(HTTPS://WWW.PINTEREST.COM/PIN/CREATE/LINK/?DESCRIPTION=&MEDIA=HTTPS://IMAGES.SQUARESPACE-CDN.COM/CONTENT/V1/5702AB9D746FB9634791