

Wallspace

John Divola

Trees for the Forest
May 6 - June 18, 2011

Wallspace is thrilled to announce an exhibition by Los Angeles-based artist John Divola. This will be Divola's first exhibition at the gallery and his first in New York since 2006. The show will run from the sixth of May through the 18th of June. An opening reception for the artist will be held on Friday May 6th from 6-8pm in conjunction with *New York Gallery Week*. The gallery will host extended hours on Sunday May 8th from 11am to 6pm.

The works on view span the last four decades, and provide an expansive yet necessarily incomplete picture of Divola's practice - a canny yet understated blend of documentary photography, conceptual art, performance and installation. The collection of works begins in 1971 with Divola's images of women watering their lawns in the San Fernando Valley, and includes his landmark *Vandalism* and *Zuma* series from the same decade. While the *San Fernando Valley* work assumes a more deadpan, observational approach to image making, Divola's *Vandalism* and *Zuma* Series invoke a theatrical tension that blurs the lines between authorship and documentation, sharing "a tradition with artists such as Bruce Nauman, whose photographs are considered to be performance or sculpture, and Robert Smithson, who used photography to investigate the built environment."¹ In these images, vacant, vandalized sites become the stage for Divola's own observation, documentation, and artistic interventions: walls are spray painted, found piles of detritus become sculptures, and the site itself is a work in situ.

The sway between a structured, observational approach to image making and the free-form, improvisational gestures of his interventions is very much at the crux of Divola's practice and can be traced from his earliest foundational work of the 1970's to more recent bodies of work such as *Dogs Chasing My Car in the Desert* (1996-2001), where Divola documents the dogs that chased his car while working in the Southern California desert; *As Far as I Could Get* (1996/1997), where Divola sets up a camera and runs away from it during a given exposure; and *Dark Star* (2008), where his melding of intervention and observation continues to be in the foreground in large-format, color work made during the last decade.

John Divola (b. 1949, Los Angeles) received a MFA from the University of California, Los Angeles in 1974. Since 1975 he has taught photography and art at numerous institutions including California Institute of the Arts (1978-1988), and since 1988 he has been Professor of Art at the University of California, Riverside. Divola's work has been featured in more than sixty solo and 200 group exhibitions in the United States and abroad, including "Mirrors and Windows," The Museum of Modern Art, New York, New York, 1978; "1981 Whitney Biennial," Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, New York, 1981; "Made in California: Art, Image, and Identity 1900-2000, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 2000; and "Los Angeles 1955-85," Centre Pompidou, Paris, 2006. He is the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship, four National Endowment for the Arts Fellowships, and a California Arts Council Individual Artist Grant, among other awards.

¹ Tumlrir, Jan. "John Divola: Three Acts," 144 pages, New York: Aperture, 2006.