

REGEN PROJECTS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:



Image: Catherine Opie, *Raven*, 1990, 1990/2024. Pigment Print
30 x 30 inches (76.2 x 76.2 cm)

CATHERINE OPIE *harmony is fraught* **JANUARY 11 - MARCH 3, 2024**

PRESS PREVIEW AND WALKTHROUGH WITH THE ARTIST:
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 10, 11:00 AM
OPENING RECEPTION: THURSDAY, JANUARY 11, 6:00 - 8:00 PM
GALLERY HOURS: TUESDAY - SATURDAY, 10:00 AM - 6:00 PM

Catherine Opie's eleventh exhibition with Regen Projects, *harmony is fraught* presents over sixty photographs never shown publicly before, drawn from over thirty years of making pictures in and of Los Angeles. We see a deeply singular diary of Opie's world—especially her early years as an emerging artist in the 1990s—intertwined with the complex public life of the city she made her home, from its signature freeways and landmarks, like the Hollywood sign, to scenes of activism and surfers at the beach. Together, they collectively trace a profoundly personal story, as well as the evolving drama and common grandeur of Los Angeles itself, a singular assembly of constructions, conflicts, and communities.

Installed in carefully considered constellations, photographs of freeways and bridges connect and encircle images of more private destinations, portraits of intimates, and telling interiors. Opie likens the literal, tender, resilient human body to the great corpus of the mutable city, always growing, aging, breaking, standing firm—another body with its own queer logic. Curiously, despite the quarter of a century or more that separates us from the moment of their making, many of these images seem to proffer the same city we know now. Likewise, we see subjects yearning for many of the same suspended desires or imperiled freedoms we seek today, evidencing a constancy (or stasis) that can be both touching and deeply unsettling.

Noting faces familiar from prior bodies of work, as in *Pig Pen*, 1994, *Trash*, 1994, *Being and Having Gang*, 1990/2024, *Idexa and Denix*, 2002, or *Oliver with Turkey*, 2004/2024, we see people beloved and exposed, humbly clothed, and radically embellished. Friends, lovers, and children gaze back at us. Some remain close to this day. Others have been lost, attenuated by the distance occasioned by the shifts of life and passing time. There they are: shaving, sleeping, pondering, protesting; posing, reposing; dancing, basking. Meanwhile, the city is burning, building, parking, driving; floating, hovering, waiting.

The exhibition also features a never-before-seen video of *Self-Portrait/Cutting*, 1993 in the making as well as a monumental nighttime exterior shot of The Palms, one of the longest running lesbian bars in Los Angeles (which closed in West Hollywood in 2013). Printed to match the scale of the lost landmark and installed along the gallery's longest interior wall, it is visible from and converses with the real street beside it. Underscoring a recurring meditation, it dramatizes how our experiences of a place—even one as vast as LA—derives as much from a patchwork of memories, of the handful of highly specific places and people we returned to more times than we can count, as (if not more than) the structures that survive. *harmony is fraught* plots a kind of ghost map of sites and personae that arise before us here like a splendid mirage, an oasis of queer pasts made present, flirting with the future.

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Catherine Opie (b. 1961 Sandusky, Ohio) received a BFA from the San Francisco Art Institute and an MFA from California Institute of the Arts. She is Professor Emerita and former Lynda and Stewart Resnick Endowed Chair in Art at the University of California, Los Angeles, where she was a professor of photography from 2001 to 2023.

For over thirty years, Catherine Opie has captured both iconic and often overlooked aspects of contemporary American life and culture. One of the most important photographers of her generation, her photographic subjects have included early portraits of the LGBTQ+ community, the architecture of Los Angeles's freeway system, mansions in Beverly Hills, Midwestern icehouses, high school football players, California surfers, abstract landscapes of National Parks, and the Bel-Air residence of Elizabeth Taylor, among others. In 2018 Opie debuted her first film, *The Modernist*, a dystopic view of Los Angeles, a city that has figured prominently in her work over the years. Her complex and diverse body of work is political, personal, and highly aesthetic, keeping questions of form, concept, and the documentary in constant dynamic interplay.

Opie will be the subject of a major presentation at the Museum of Art São Paulo Assis Chateaubriand in 2024. Her work has been exhibited extensively at institutions worldwide including the Heide Museum of Modern Art, Bulleen (2023); Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland (2019); Henie Onstad Kunstsenter, Oslo (2017); Los Angeles County Museum of Art (2016 and 2010); Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2016); MOCA Pacific Design Center, Los Angeles (2016); Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus (2015); Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (2014); Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston (2011); Portland Art Museum (2010); Guggenheim Museum, New York (2008); Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago (2006); Saint Louis Art Museum (2000); The Photographers' Gallery, London (2000); Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (1997); among others. In 2016 she completed a monumental commission for the new Los Angeles Federal Courthouse.

Opie has received numerous honors and awards including a Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden *New York Gala Honoree* (2019); John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation *Guggenheim Fellowship* (2019); Smithsonian *Archives of American Art Medal* (2016); Julius Shulman Institute *Excellence in Photography Award* (2013); Women's Caucus for Art *President's Award for Lifetime Achievement* (2009); *United States Artists Fellowship* (2006); *Larry Aldrich Award* (2004); *Washington University Freund Fellowship* (1999); and the Citibank Private Bank *Emerging Artist Award* (1997).

Her work is included in the permanent collections of many museums worldwide, including the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Guggenheim Museum, New York; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Tate Modern, London; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Royal Academy of Arts, London; Israel Museum, Jerusalem; and Centro Cultural Arte Contemporáneo, Mexico City; among others.

She lives and works in Los Angeles.

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