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**EXHIBITION INFORMATION**

selections from **American Bond**

George Lawson Gallery

8564 Washington Blvd.

Culver City, CA 90232

Exhibition Dates: October 19 – November 19, 2011

Opening Reception: Saturday, October 22nd, 5:30 – 7:30 PM

Gallery Hours: Wednesday through Saturday 11:00 AM – 6:00 PM and by appointment

Gallery phone number and email: 310.837.6900

[www.georgelawsongallery.com](http://www.georgelawsongallery.com); [info@georgelawsongallery.com](mailto:info@georgelawsongallery.com)



**PHOTOGRAPHER SUSAN MIKULA TO PRESENT**

**Selections from American Bond  
at GEORGE LAWSON GALLERY,  
LOS ANGELES, CA**

Susan Mikula will present solo showings of new work on both coasts during the month of October, 2011. On the West Coast she will be presenting selections from **American Bond**, her third show at George Lawson Gallery and her first at their new location in Culver City in Los Angeles. On the East Coast, *desidero* will be her first solo show at William Baczek Fine Arts in Northampton, Massachusetts.

Susan Mikula's creative roots rest deep in the aesthetic legacies of painting and photography, so it's no surprise that her art is sometimes taken for painting — but it is photography. Shooting exclusively with Polaroid cameras for over a decade and — of necessity — expired Polaroid film, she works only with available light, manually controlling exposures to exploit the quirks of the cameras and the volatility and decay of salvaged film to create painterly, almost impressionistic imagery.

Mikula has developed an expert understanding and instinct for how to turn the inelegant degradation of the film stock into a powerful ally in her creative process. The resulting images are neither cropped nor retouched as they travel from camera to final print.

Not content to simply 'print and frame' as a photographer, Mikula is also known for her involvement with the materiality and presentation of her work, getting as involved in making selections for the printing, mounting, framing and hanging as with the original image creation. While certain elements of her aesthetics reach back to the 19th century, these other facets of her creative process put her very much in sync with contemporary practice. The result is work of depth and enduring impact.

Critics have described her work as as "alluring," "full of ominous beauty," "complex" and "arresting."

Mikula lives and works in New York City and Western Massachusetts with her partner, MSNBC political commentator Rachel Maddow.

**American Bond** is Susan Mikula's three-part series of industrial landscapes – vital but liminal, built-up American vistas. The first part presents images of the oil refineries along the Texas gulf coast and the vast port of Los Angeles for **American Device**; the second, **American Vale**, is focused on the industrial facilities of the General Electric Corporation in Pittsfield, Massachusetts; and the third part, **American Breakbulk**, explores the cargo-handling environs of Camden, New Jersey.

Like much of Mikula's work, the highly abstracted imagery in **American Bond** is about mood and tone and feeling. This series, though, is also about the edges of American physical space -- life on the edge of the country, the edge of our everyday awareness, on the edge of change. Not documentary in any conventional sense (though things do get documented) and not photo-journalistic, Mikula's landscapes are nevertheless clear: un-maudlin, un-romanticized living industry.

Although people themselves are never seen in these images, they are fundamentally about our human presence among the machines, the way we live today among and alongside our grand manmade physical inheritance. For Mikula, the work, the loss, the lines, the light, the promise of these spaces is beautiful. Uncomplicatedly beautiful.

The Polaroid images in the **American Bond** series are printed at large scale (40"x41" and 28"x29") using archival, pigment-based inks on archival paper made by Crane & Co. of Dalton, MA, mounted on anodized aluminum with an integrated brace/cleat system on the back that allows the work to hang flat, yet "float" about an inch off the wall.

Some images from both **American Device** and **American Vale** were exhibited previously at George Lawson Gallery at their San Francisco location. This show marks the first display of the photos that constitute **American Breakbulk** and the first time any of the photos from the **American Bond** series have been shown in Los Angeles.

In tandem with the show, George Lawson Gallery will be publishing a 145-page catalog titled **American Bond**, featuring the photos from the series and accompanying text by noted poet Jill McDonough, who is the author of "Habeas Corpus" (Salt Publishing) and is featured in "The Best American Poetry 2011."

George Lawson Gallery, opened in San Francisco in October of 2008 and relocated to Los Angeles in the summer of 2011. George Lawson represents an international group of emerging and mid-career artists, with a primary focus on contemporary painting.