



communication angle

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EXHIBITION INFORMATION

American Device: Recent Photographs, by Susan Mikula

George Lawson Gallery, room for painting room for paper

49 Geary, 2nd Floor

San Francisco, CA 94108

Exhibition Dates: February 25 – March 27, 2010

Opening Reception: Thursday, February 25th, 5:30 - 7:30 PM

Gallery Hours: Tuesday – Saturday 11:00 AM - 5:30 PM

Gallery phone number and email: 415.772.0977; www.georgelawsongallery.com; gallery@rfprfp.com



PHOTOGRAPHER SUSAN MIKULA TO PRESENT **American Device: Recent Photographs** at **GEORGE LAWSON GALLERY, SAN FRANCISCO, CA**

SAN FRANCISCO, CA - Artist Susan Mikula will be exhibiting **American Device: Recent Photographs**, the debut showing of her photographic work in San Francisco, California at the George Lawson Gallery, room for painting room for paper, 49 Geary Street, 2nd Floor, from February 25th - March 27th, 2010. The gallery will be hosting an opening reception for the work on Thursday, February 25th, 5:30-7:30 PM.

In 1911, hundreds of acres of mudflats southwest of Los Angeles were forged into the huge Port of Long Beach – today the second busiest port in the nation, moving more than a hundred billion dollars worth of give-and-take every year. A decade earlier, in 1901 and 1903, major oil refineries that still exist today were first commissioned for Port Arthur, Texas. Mikula's photographs of industry at the edge of the country, at the port and those refineries, and on the great stretch of industrialized land between Galveston Bay and the Gulf of Mexico known as the Bolivar Peninsula make up **American Device: Recent Photographs**.

Highly abstracted, and in her characteristically tight chromatic range, the images in **American Device: Recent Photographs** nevertheless put form more front-and-center than in Mikula's earlier work. Gantry cranes and

shipping containers and catwalked refinery towers are strong figural forms in the foreground. There is a heat-mirage quality to the secondary forms beyond, and to the visible heft of the air, and the sky.

"I'm so drawn to the beauty of these places" says Mikula. "There's an almost mystical ends-of-the-earth, end-of-time feeling about them - and the light, just off the water, coming from the south and the west, especially in the high heat of summer - there's nothing else quite like it." "These places, they're hidden, almost secret. Either we've pushed them out into the no-man's lands on the fringes of our country, or hidden them behind layers of security. So we start to forget about them, think of them, if at all, as relics, or maybe part of a romantic, industrial past. But for me, they're so American, so physical and muscular and so vividly still a part of who and what we are as a nation today. For all of our great high-tech industries, places like this still make jobs and products - are still a part of the lifeblood of our country and our culture. But there's also no denying that in many ways they're increasingly at odds with our modern times. And that conflict is part of the poignancy that makes them so beautiful to me."

Mikula shot the images in the summer of 2009 in temperatures over 95 degrees, working with vintage 1970s-era Polaroid cameras and expired, soon-to-be-extinct SX-70 film. The images are printed using archival, pigment-based inks on American-made archival paper. They are 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.

Prior to **American Device: Recent Photographs**, Mikula exhibited *bearings* in Fall 2009 at the TJ Walton Gallery in Provincetown, MA and seven of her *sic transit* images and four of the *Pier 40* series in the show titled *sic transit* at the CHC Gallery in Chelsea, New York City in December 2008/January 2009. In conjunction with the show, Luxxus Press published "Susan Mikula, Photographs, 2008" - a monograph of recent work.

Mikula has also received acclaim for her landscapes, female nudes and super-sized diptychs. Critics have described her photographic art as "alluring," "full of ominous beauty," "complex" and "arresting." Not content to simply 'print and frame' as a photographer, Mikula's display of work has incorporated industrial materials (nylon mesh), household objects (Melamine dinner plates) and handmade wax and resin finishes.

In summer, 2007, Mikula's disquieting photographic installation of fifty Polaroid original photographs—landscapes, portraits, abstract images, and scary mean little animals—printed on Melamine plastic dinner plates, titled *omnivore*, was on view at the Boston State House. September 2006, saw the opening of **9 Portraits**, her unique installation of nine color Polaroid portraits printed on nine-foot-tall swathes of industrial mesh.

Other solo shows include "still, moving pictures" (2005), "Civil Twilight" (2003), "New Beauty" (2002), "After Reprimand" (2001) and "Lux in Tenebris" (1998). She curated "Viva! Polaroid" (2004), a group show featuring the experimentation and innovation of eleven New England photographers. Her work has also been shown at the Armory Art Center in West Palm Beach, Florida; the San Diego Art Institute; St. Mark's Church-in-the-Bowery in New York City; and State of the Arts '98 in Oregon. Her work has been selected for national juried exhibitions, and she is the recipient of three artist grants from The Northampton Cultural Council, part of the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

Future exhibitions of her work include a July 2010 show in the Berkshires at the Ferrin Gallery in Pittsfield, Massachusetts and a return exhibition at CHC Gallery in New York City in the Fall 2010/2011 season.

Mikula lives in rural Western Massachusetts and New York City with her partner, Rachel Maddow.

For more information about Susan Mikula and images of work, please go to susanmikula.com

George Lawson Gallery, room for painting room for paper was launched in October of 2008. The gallery has two exhibition spaces, one dedicated to showing contemporary painting, and one for works on paper. George Lawson

directs the program, along with the gallery manager Rafael Cuevas. They represent an international selection of mid-career artists. Their focus on painting emphasizes works that could not be experienced in any other medium. Works on paper include drawing, photography and collage.

NOTE TO EDITORS: Hi-resolution images from American Device: Recent Photographs are available to accompany editorial and may be downloaded at susanmikula.com.