

Now Representing: Catherine Wagner



Image— *Minnie Mouse's Kitchen II*, Anaheim, CA, 1995.

Jessica Silverman is delighted to announce representation of Catherine Wagner, an award-winning artist, whose ambitious photographic practice spans four decades. Wagner grew up in the Bay Area, the child of a German expat and a Filipina, who immigrated to the USA shortly after World War II. After studying abroad and coming out as gay, Wagner began exploring the systemic intricacies of American power and culture.

The gallery will host a thematic retrospective show of Wagner's work, tentatively titled "The Body Politic," in late April. We will also be showcasing two bodies of vintage work at Art Basel Miami Beach, OVR, opening December 2. Both series, outlined below, investigate the visual style and psycho-social impact of monolithic fictions or "master narratives" around gender, place and American history.

In the mid-1990s, Wagner gained access to all four Disney theme park locations – Paris, Tokyo, Anaheim, CA, and Orlando, FL. In a range of interior and exterior pictures, she captures the nuances of the deceptively and conspicuously fake, transforming an escapist entertainment into something quaintly claustrophobic. With *Minnie Mouse's Kitchen II*, 1995, the frills and flowers of femininity are faithfully rendered in all their plastic glory. The deadpan picture reveals Wagner's critical eye and magnanimous sense of humor.

A decade earlier, Wagner went behind the scenes at the Louisiana World Exposition. These black and white photographs present thought-provoking juxtapositions of real urbanity with ersatz display. Laden with patriotism and pent-up sentiment, the images teeter on the brink of ideological collapse. In *Louisiana Exhibit Under Construction*, 1984, the façade of a colonial mansion is held up with strings, suggestive of the politics of puppet theater and the fragility of public appearances.

As Adam Weinberg, director of the Whitney Museum, asserts: "The success of Wagner's work is in the human activity that is implied or anticipated, but not present in the image."

Catherine Wagner (b. 1953, San Francisco, CA) is the recipient of the Artadia Award, Dorothea Lange Award and Rome Prize from the American Academy in Rome, among many other accolades. Her visual arts fellowships include grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, Aaron Siskind Foundation, and Weizmann Institute, Israel. Wagner's work is in the permanent collections of MOMA, NY; the Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY; Whitney Museum of American Art, NY; Library of Congress, Washington DC; Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC; Tate Modern, London; Victoria & Albert Museum, London; Bibliothèque National de Paris; Museum Folkwang, Essen; Museum of Modern Art, Bologna; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; LACMA, Los Angeles; SFMOMA and De Young Museum, San Francisco. Wagner's work is commemorated in monographs, including *American Classroom*, *Home and Other Stories*, *Art & Science: Investigating Matter*, *Cross Sections*, *In Situ: Traces of Morandi*, and *Place, History and the Archive*.



Image— Louisiana Exhibit Under Construction, detail, 1984

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