

## **Ecclesiastes on My Mind:**

This exhibition is the culmination of my decades long exploration of photography. In thinking about what works I wanted to exhibit publicly for the first time, it was important to me that the photographs reflect not only the aesthetics of my art, but the narrative behind the works and impetus for creating them as well. Ecclesiastes is a text that has influenced my thinking for much of my life. To me, it is a philosophical text that touches on some of life's most important guiding principles and speaks to universal truths that permeate across cultures. Similarly, my photographs are about capturing the essence of humanity through works that, while taken around the globe, transcend any one time or place, and capture the beauty and complexity the human spirit.

### **Q&A:**

**- Tell me a little about your exhibition. How did you select the works and the title?**

This is an exhibition that has come together over the past several decades. I have been taking photographs for more than forty years and this is the first body of work that I'm exhibiting publicly. The title, *Ecclesiastes on my Mind*, is drawn from a text that has inspired me for much of my life, and which I've returned to time and again, the book of Ecclesiastes. For me, it made sense to pair a body of work that I've spent so much time creating, with a text that has also permeated my thinking for much of my life. Ecclesiastes is an interesting text because unlike many religious texts, it is not judgmental or a call to worship. In my mind it is a philosophical text, a wisdom text on how to lead and live your day-to-day life.

Each photograph on view has both a title and a corresponding verse from Ecclesiastes. The works are all drawn from different times and geographies, and each tells a powerful narrative, but together they also serve as a parable for Ecclesiastes. The works themselves eschew any details that tie them to a particular time or place – there is no tell tale skyline or item of clothing that is particularly notable depicted in the works. Similarly, Ecclesiastes is a book of universal truth. It is a text that speaks to all cultures; it is a life affirming text about how important it is to live first and foremost in this lifetime, to enjoy the fruits of your labor, to have fun, to seek wisdom. These works reflect the beauty and the complexity of humanity, and encourage people to think more deeply about their purpose and the things that matter to them.

**- How long have you been working on these photographs? Where do they come from?**

I initially took an interest in photography while in high school. I went to a great public school that had a darkroom and a really doting and fabulous teacher who made it available to the kids all the time. I found it magical to work in the darkroom and have this image emerge. I took a year of studio art in college as well, and then continued to

pursue photography in my spare time, carving out days to go out and take pictures, bringing my camera along on work trips, dedicating time while on vacation to take photos, and capturing intimate moments with my family as well.

When starting to think about this exhibition I began combing through my database of photographs that I have accrued over the past thirty years, which now holds 250,000 images. Along with Andrea Meislin, we began selecting photographs that were not only captivating and beautiful, but also which related to the text of Ecclesiastes.

**- Can you tell me a little bit about some of the works on views? Which are your favorites, or the most important works to you?**

When you first walk into the show there are three images which all feature a close-up shot of a familiar object. But, because they are closely cropped, the everyday items – the coils of a bed, battery cables in the back of a truck, and a tangle of wire – all become unfamiliar. Each work corresponds to a verse that speaks to the basic idea that the future is nothingness, that objects have no inherent meaning. To me this is a reminder and a call to live your life now, which I find both refreshing and life affirming.

On an aesthetic level, these works also reflect the fact that I have been more influenced by painters in many ways than photographers. I am interested in catching the beauty of a place or an object, of framing something – even something mundane – to reveal its inherent beauty.

**- Can you tell me a little bit about your process?**

One of the most important aspects of my work is the process. My photos are taken with everything from an iPhone to a professional grade camera. I don't use a tripod, I don't have a studio, and I don't stage photos. It is essential to me that the photos are both in the moment and of the world that we live in. In addition to the story that I am trying to tell, I spend a lot of time thinking about the beauty of the image, the color, and the geometry – and I want that all to be drawn from life. I do not Photoshop new images into my existing works; my works all reflect the lived world.

While I grew up taking photographs on film, which had a fixed price tag associated with each photo, now that I'm using digital cameras, I still try to be intentional with my work. I spend a lot of time framing and cropping an image, waiting for the perfect moment to capture a scene, and making sure that the setting is both beautiful and interesting. One economy that is far more expensive in the digital world is your time. If you take wasteful images you aren't going to get your time back, and so I try to be very mindful of what I am shooting.

I have always been very interested in the construction of the image. I believe that while a lot of truth is subjective, beauty is not; There is a fundamental value to beauty. That desire to express beauty has always been a driving force for me. One of the things we see in art more and more these days is a lack of beauty, people have turned their

back on its essence. But to me, if the image is evocative, the geometry is good, and in addition it is beautiful, that is something that I can be proud of.

**- Your career has followed a very different trajectory from a traditional artist, how did you decide to pursue art?**

I came from a striving entrepreneurial family. My father never went to college, but I had a great public school education and I got to go to a fabulous college. It was an anathema to my family when I wanted to take art classes. Part of me knew I was destined to become an entrepreneur, but there was also a part of me that felt drawn to art. In the business world I got to express my creativity in many ways, but I also kept working on photography throughout as well. I would walk to work and take pictures or bring my camera on a business trip. There's so much to capture wherever you are that it is easy to continue to pursue photography, even if it's in tandem with a fulltime job.

**- How do you feel that you stand out from other photographers? What are you doing differently?**

One of the things that makes this body of work stand out is its relationship to the text. Each work is meaningful and reflects on the deepest truths about the human experience. Many artists become fascinated with a single aspect of an art form, which has been very important to the development of art history. For me, this exhibition is very much about the story and the message, and hopefully the beauty that I am trying to convey comes through as well.

**- What was your impetus for having an exhibition now?**

I have been taking photographs for more than forty years and it came to a point where my family saw the number of hours that I spent laboring over this work and started insisting that it was time for me to show it to someone. I started by installing a monitor in my living room that looped my images, and then I began reaching out to dealers.

**- Why do you think this exhibition is so timely right now?**

First and foremost I think that art is more important now than ever because we live in a world where all of a sudden the people in power are questioning truths. It is incredibly important that even as we recognize that history is written by the winners, we also acknowledge that beauty lives forever, and that element of humanity needs to be expressed. In this world there are permanent things, eternal things, and I hope that art can highlight and create conversation about the things that are most essential and true.

**- What do you hope people's take away from the exhibition will be?**

I would hope first and foremost that it causes visitors to have a conversation, that something in the show makes them think about their own life and that sparks their interest. I'm not looking to change the world but if we can live in a world that is more mindful, that's a great and very meaningful thing.

**- What do you hope is next for you?**

Another show! I hope this is just the beginning for me.