

Catherine Opie: American Photographer

From Hatje Cantz

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From Hatje Cantz : Catherine Opie: American Photographer before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Catherine Opie: American Photographer:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A stunning book.By Gordon SmithI have to admit that I had not heard of this photographer until recently. However, now that I have this book in my hands, I have to say that I understand why Opie is so highly regarded. While it may be true that this book is a collection of many different projects, the quality of the work is readily apparent. I was so impressed with Opie's work that I ordered her Chicago book. I might add that I also like the size of the book, not too big but not too little either--just right for my bookshelf.0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Great to share with friendsBy Selma OpieLovely! Great to share with friends.1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. An Impressive Range of WorkBy Tom GroenfeldtCatherine Opie doesn't stay at home copying work by other photographers or hanging goldfish from the ceiling. She is engaged, and she is open to comments from her friends, which I found refreshing. Early reviews of her work at the Guggenheim in New York have focused, maybe obsessed, on her involvement with an SM scene in California, and indeed her pictures do have impact, including a self-portrait with 46 eight-gauge needles in her arms. Oh, did I mention she is wearing a leather hood and has "pervert" across her bare chest, written in the somewhat healed results of pinpricks. A lesbian, she writes about the way mainstream gays were pushing the fringe gays out of sight in their effort to attain respectability.In a later portrait she is nursing her son. Wear your preconceptions lightly. The daughter of a southern California real estate agent who wanted her to get a license, she has a great awareness of her surroundings. What I admire most about Obie is her range. Many photographers stick with one type of subject and one type of camera - 35 mm or large format, color or black and white, landscapes or street photography. Obie is all over the place and does it all extremely well. Portraits, large format Polaroids, panoramic color pictures of mini-malls on the edge of Korean neighborhoods, and some excellent work around the time she was a student of master plan communities in Valencia,

CA, showing exteriors, construction and essays on two families. See what results from growing up in a real estate family? She takes the new suburbs straight on with no one of the condescension that some photographers have shown in years past. Maybe, by now, artists, writers and photographers have realized that suburbs are not dangerous alien life forms. She also toured the country shooting lesbian couples in images of intense normalcy; one suspects their homes and yards are little different from others in their neighborhood. During a fellowship at the Walker in Minneapolis she went out and photographed the ice fishing houses that northern sportsmen haul out onto frozen lakes across Wisconsin, Michigan and Minnesota to fish, swap stories, drink beer and get out of the house. She also has photographed Lake Michigan at different times of the year, large format pictures where the view has to look carefully to find a horizon, and more panoramics, black and white, of the underside of Chicago bridges and elevated roadways at night. And there are California freeways devoid of vehicles and looking lovely and sculptural, and after friends said she was just shooting queers she did a series on surfers. Her work is a wonderful counter to the worries among some photographers and curators that there is nothing left to shoot but self-referential photographs about photography. She started with a close circle and images of herself, but she didn't stop there. The result is an enjoyable, provocative, and highly appealing body of work

This comprehensive new exhibition catalogue, published to accompany the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum's major mid-career survey of Catherine Opie's work, is the first to gather all of the artist's key projects to date in a single volume. Opie is best known for her subtle but potent portraits of people from the queer communities of Los Angeles and San Francisco. In this definitive volume, each of Opie's series--among them Portraits, Freeways, Domestic, Icehouses and In and Around Home--is reproduced in full color plates alongside works that were not displayed in the exhibition, allowing for the most complete overview of this important Los Angeles artist's work to date. In addition, this volume features a lead essay by exhibition curator Jennifer Blessing, which surveys Opie's artistic career and its historical contexts; a series of interviews with the artist by Russell Ferguson, Chair of the Department of Art at UCLA; and a brief personal reflection by internationally renowned novelist Dorothy Allison, whose work explores many concerns similar to Opie's. It also includes introductory essays on each of the artist's series by Nat Trotman, Assistant Curator at the Guggenheim, as well as a newly researched, exhaustive exhibition history and bibliography, making it the primary source for future research on Opie's work. Catherine Opie was born in Ohio in 1961 and is currently Professor of Photography at UCLA. Opie's work has been exhibited extensively throughout the United States, Europe and Japan. She has had solo exhibitions of her work at the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; St. Louis Art Museum; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, among many others.