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Homes 1999 – 2005

Homes is an ongoing project that I started in 1999. It currently consists of about (35) 30" x 30" color photographs of the interiors of homes in various states of use. Some are totally abandoned and have been for many years. Some have no permanent residents, but are frequented by animals, or teenagers looking for a place to party. Some are seasonal homes, and some might be lived in year-round.

Owning a house is a fulfillment of the American Dream. It necessitates money, which implies financial success and in general, stability. So what happens when good luck runs out? When fate, good fortune or the actions of other humans predominate, things fall apart. Lives change. We adapt and reassess. It is this aftermath of loss, misfortune and unpredictability that is the subject of my photographs.

I began taking photographs of abandoned homes during my first cross-country drive. I was amazed at the number of structures left to rot in the rural areas of the United States. As I explored these sites further I became incredulous with the degree to which Americans consume, then abandon their appliances, tires, paper, cars and homes.

As I continued to travel over the next several years, I began entering homes that possessed a more palpable human presence. I found letters, photographs, toys, yearbooks and religious mementos that reminded me of my childhood. These homes were places with a history that paralleled my own. When I speculate on the families that used to inhabit these homes, I imagine reasons for why they had to leave so suddenly. Or rather, when I examine and meditate on the objects and detritus left behind, I unconsciously channel my own past and the emotions associated with abrupt change and shifting home environments. My reaction remains mixed: I am frustrated with the amount of waste, but I feel a strong emotional attachment to these spaces.

Visually, I am attracted to the faded and outdated décor in these spaces. The color schemes, audacious wallpaper patterns, pastel painted walls, and earth-toned upholstery and carpets appeal to my aesthetic. They arouse a sense of nostalgia that contributes to the intended pathos found in these photographs.