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CATHERINE OPIE: PORTRAITS AND LANDSCAPES OPENS MAY 16
*NEW WORK BY THE SEMINAL AMERICAN PHOTOGRAPHER INCLUDES PORTRAITS
OF MATTHEW BARNEY, KARA WALKER, JOHN BALDESSARI, JONATHAN FRANZEN,
DIANA NYAD, AND MIRANDA JULY*

Columbus, OH—January 22, 2015 (updated April 30, 2015)—

Opening in May, the Wexner Center for the Arts will present [*Catherine Opie: Portraits and Landscapes*](#), an exhibition of approximately 50 recent works by the influential American photographer. Featuring formal portraits of Opie's family and friends and nearly abstract views of landscape, the series draws upon the traditions of classical painting and the artist's longstanding interest in American nature photography. Among the portraits' subjects—"friends and people that I admire," according to Opie—are visual artists **Kara Walker**, **Matthew Barney**, **John Baldessari**, **Glenn Ligon**, performers **Elizabeth Streb**, **Ron Athey**, **Miranda July**, Olympic athlete **Diana Nyad**, and writers **Hamza Walker**, **Hilton Als**, and **Jonathan Franzen**. Opie will also adapt one of the landscapes featured in the show so that it will fully cover the 30-foot-long wall adjacent to the Wexner Center's café.

Organized by Wexner Center Curator at Large Bill Horrigan, the exhibition unites various elements of Opie's practice, highlighting the particularities of portraiture along with the ethereal space of abstracted landscapes. The portraits, which employ classical compositions, theatrical lighting, and saturated color to render the faces and expressions of the subjects in intimate detail, hint at a tension between interior realities and external presentations.

In contrast to the personal quality of the portraits, the series' abstracted landscape photographs articulate space as a haze of blurred light and color. A marked departure from the Ohio-born artist's previous work in landscape photography—including her studies of American cities and of lake ice-houses, which strongly defined a sense of specific place—the new series denies any recognition of location. Emerging from Opie's diverse practice, which is widely renowned for delving fearlessly into nuanced political and personal subject matter, this new body of work plays with legibility of imagery and authenticity in artistic representation from two distinct angles.

Notes Horrigan, "The Wexner Center has shown Catherine's work in the context of group exhibitions, but we've wanted to present her work in more depth for a number of years now. Her most recent series of portraits and landscapes struck us as the perfect opportunity to do that—it's a bold bringing



Catherine Opie, *Mary*, 2012

Pigment print

33 x 25 in.

© Catherine Opie, Image Courtesy of
Regen Projects, Los Angeles

together of the two photographic traditions she's been faithful to throughout her career. This new series demonstrates how she's renewing those traditions in an audacious fashion."

Also on view May 16–August 2, 2015 is the exhibition [***Jack Whitten: Five Decades of Painting***](#), an exploration of the groundbreaking work of African American artist Jack Whitten in his first career-spanning retrospective, organized by the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego.

ABOUT CATHERINE OPIE

Born in 1961, Catherine Opie has been the subject of numerous exhibitions both here and abroad, including the Wexner Center for the Art's 2010 exhibition *Hard Targets* and *Visions from America: Photographs from the Whitney Museum of American Art*, which was on view at the Wexner Center Galleries at The Belmont Building in 2004, during the center's renovation. Opie was also one of the artists whose work was in the exhibition *More American Photographs*, organized by the CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, San Francisco and on view at the Wex in 2013. In 2008 she had a mid-career survey at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York. Additionally she has had solo exhibitions at the Long Beach Museum of Art, Long Beach; Institute for Contemporary Art, Boston; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; The Saint Louis Art Museum, St. Louis; Photographers' Gallery, London; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. A native of Sandusky, Ohio, Opie has been Professor of Fine Art at UCLA since 2001. She is represented by Regen Projects, Los Angeles, and Stephen Friedman Gallery, London.

EXHIBITION-RELATED EVENTS

Opie will share the stage for the first time with painter Jack Whitten in a [**free talk**](#) moderated by acclaimed art critic Tyler Green, host of the *Modern Art Notes Podcast*. This dynamic conversation takes place **Friday, May 15 at 5 pm**. After the talk, an [**exhibition preview**](#) will be held from 6 to 9 pm. [**Walk-in tours**](#), free with gallery admission, will be available throughout the run of the exhibitions beginning May 23.

VISITOR INFORMATION

Catherine Opie: Portraits and Landscapes will be on view **May 16–August 2, 2015** at the Wexner Center for the Arts, 1871 N. High St. (at 15th Avenue) on the campus of The Ohio State University in Columbus. Gallery hours are 11 am–6 pm Tuesday, Wednesday, and Sunday, and 11 am–8 pm Thursday–Saturday. Galleries are closed Mondays. Admission is \$8; free for Wexner Center members, college students, and visitors 18 and under; free Thursdays from 4 to 8 pm and the first Sunday of the month. Also on view is [***Jack Whitten: Five Decades of Painting***](#).

More info on bus routes, parking, and other visitor information:

[**http://wexarts.org/visit/location-and-directions**](http://wexarts.org/visit/location-and-directions) or (614) 292-3535.

EXHIBITION SUPPORT

Catherine Opie: Portraits and Landscapes is organized by the **Wexner Center for the Arts**.

Free and low-cost programs at the Wexner Center are presented with support from **Huntington Bank** and **Cardinal Health Foundation**.

The Wexner Center receives general operating support from the **Greater Columbus Arts Council**, **The Columbus Foundation**, **Nationwide Foundation**, and the **Ohio Arts Council**. Generous support is also provided by the **Corporate Annual Fund of the Wexner Center Foundation** and **Wexner Center members**.

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