



Silver Eye Center for Photography
1015 East Carson Street
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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David Graham's American Perspective on View at Silver Eye Center for Photography

(Pittsburgh, PA) Silver Eye Center for Photography proudly presents ***In Search of America: Photographs by David Graham*** on view **February 13 – April 12, 2008**. Tirelessly traveling the United States, **David Graham** captures the colorful, sometimes surreal, and often bizarre, in the thoroughly American landscape. **New Gallery Hours:** Wednesday, Noon – 6:00 p.m., Thursday, Noon – 8:00 p.m., Friday, Noon – 6:00 p.m., Saturday, 11:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. or by appointment.

Graham seeks out subjects which celebrate our singular freedom of expression in colorful roadside attractions and general oddities: the painted stone marker that encourages tourists to “Bring The Camera” (*Approaching the Grand Canyon, AZ, 1986*); idiosyncratic sculptures like the California dentist’s mammoth Amazon warriors (*Sculptures by Kenneth Fox DDS, Auburn, CA 1992*); and eccentric scenes such as the Dallas hamburger stand that features a life size statue of Lenin (*Lenin at Goff’s Hamburgers, Lovers Lane, Dallas, TX, 1997*). Chronicling the American scene with his unique sensibility and acknowledging popular forms of American photography — the snapshot, the family portrait and vacation pictures — Graham brings relevance to the creativity and dreams of the common man. Silver Eye Center for Photography is honored to present these prints by acclaimed artist, David Graham, in Pittsburgh.

An **Artist Talk with David Graham and Closing Reception** will take place on Saturday, April 12 at 3:00 p.m. at Silver Eye Center for Photography, 1015 East Carson Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15203. Reception will begin immediately following David Graham’s talk. Members and students, free; Non-members, \$5.00. Refreshments will be served.

Graham’s delightful color photographs entertain audiences of all ages and backgrounds due to the broad range of relatable subjects. This survey exhibition presents both landscapes and individuals that represent the uniqueness of the colorful quality of this nation. Graham depicts the American portrait whether that is a kitschy roadside attraction out west, a George Washington look-alike or a *trompe l’oeil* sign at the MGM Grand Hotel in Las Vegas. Somehow he shows us that this fabricated America is actually very authentic. The impersonators are genuine when they stand in their living rooms as are the larger than life cows and the Stalin sculpture at the hamburger joint. Graham is able to document what is familiar, humorous, approachable and very American.

Silver Eye’s executive director, Linda Benedict-Jones notes, “It would be a treat for us to present the work of David Graham at any time but somehow it seems particularly fitting right now in that we are in an important election year in the United States. So many critical issues are being discussed by the presidential candidates and yet through the work of David Graham we are reminded of what a unique and colorful population we have in this melting pot country of ours which is unlike any other country on earth.”

David Graham previously photographed exclusively with an 8x10 Deardorff large format view camera. Some of the prints in the exhibition are from these jumbo negatives, which as the name suggests measure 8x10 inches. Now that Graham tends to fly and has less time he uses medium format cameras, either a Hasselblad, a Mamiya 6 or a Pentax 6x7. Large and medium format cameras are often used for landscape photography because of the very high quality of the prints produced from such large negatives. David Graham prints all of his photographs himself.

Writer and National Public Radio commentator, Andrei Codrescu, wrote of Graham's work in the book *Land of the Free: What Makes Americans Different* (Aperture Foundation, Inc., 1999, New York). He observes, "What makes Americans different is their fierce sense that they are free. When they exercise that freedom they fall exuberantly into the arms of a vast commercial culture full of images and clichés. It is in that embrace that David's camera finds them. They allow him to photograph that *jouissance* because they are proud of it. What is freedom without practice? However, one should not underestimate the raw energy of these Americans' playfulness. One ought to, and I do, praise popular culture for giving it a million outlets."

In Search of America: Photographs by David Graham is an exhibition that highlights the vast stretch of the United States and all of the remarkable people and places that give this country its character.

About David Graham

David Graham was born 1952 in Abington, Pennsylvania. Graham is a noted photographer who got his start at the Philadelphia College of Art, now The University of the Arts. He found his true calling in color photography with an 8 x 10 camera at the Tyler School of Art. After graduating from Tyler with his MFA in photography, Graham began to make a series of cross-country trips using a large format view camera and color film. In 1987, a book resulted from these trips, *American Beauty*, published by Aperture. Later, another book was published by Alfred A. Knopf, entitled *Only in America* (1991) to be followed by many subsequent books based on this American theme. He began a second career as a magazine photographer, working for such publications as *Details*, *Fortune*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, *The New York Times Magazine*, among others. In addition, Graham found an artistic companion in writer Andrei Codrescu, completing two books together: *Road Scholar* (Hyperion, 1993) and, *Ay, Cuba!* (St. Martin's Press, 1999). After ten years of magazine work, Graham took a position as a professor at The University of the Arts in Philadelphia where he still teaches. His photographs are included in the collections of the New York's Museum of Modern Art, Philadelphia Art Museum, Art Institute of Chicago, and San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. He lives in Bucks County, Pennsylvania.

To request an interview with David Graham or to request a CD with images, please contact Amanda Bloomfield at abloomfield@silvereye.org or call 412/431.1810, ext. 12.

Public programming in conjunction with this exhibition includes retro Americana themes such as **Your Pix from Route 66 with Sylvia Ehler** on February 21, 6:30 – 8:00 p.m., **Toy**

Cameras with Bob Kubiak on April 2, 7:00 – 8:30 p.m., and a **Photographic Safari of Pittsburgh's South Side with David Graham** on April 12, 10:00 a.m. – Noon.

This exhibition is made possible by a generous grant from The Heinz Endowments. Broadcast media sponsorship is kindly provided by WYEP/91.3 FM.

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The mission of Silver Eye Center for Photography is to serve the public through exposure to a wide range of work by locally, nationally and internationally recognized photographers. A Pittsburgh institution since 1985, Silver Eye Center for Photography is the oldest non-profit organization in Western Pennsylvania dedicated solely to the understanding, appreciation, education, and promotion of photography as an art form and as an expressive form of visual communication.

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Admission is free.

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