

ED TEMPLETON
The Sprawl
28 November 2024 - 25 January 2025



Tim Van Laere Gallery is pleased to present *The Sprawl*, the fourth solo exhibition of Ed Templeton in the gallery. In this exhibition Templeton presents a new series of paintings, alongside photographs, drawings, and sculptures.

The word “sprawl” is often coupled with the word “urban” or “suburban”, as in “suburban sprawl” which refers to the spreading of houses, apartments, office buildings and shopping centers on undeveloped land surrounding a densely populated city. Essentially, it is unrestricted growth over large expanses of land, with little concern for urban planning. Ed Templeton lives in one of these suburbs, Huntington Beach, which is part of the urban sprawl surrounding the cities of Long Beach and Los Angeles. As Templeton explains: “It takes one hour of driving from LA to my house and it’s non-stop cement and asphalt—continuous development.” Part of what drove this expansion in the 1950s and 1960s was called “white flight”—a term used to describe the mass migration of white people from cities to more distant suburbs as a response to the growing racial and ethnic diversity in urban areas post-desegregation. This is a sub-narrative setting a contextual framework for the specific mixture of modern beach culture and suburban sprawl that Templeton depicts in his work. The beach and the pier are popular places and bring together religious zealots, surfers, and tourists alike. The endless blocks of tract housing surrounded by walls are ubiquitous in this area. These walls act like a theater backdrop in these new paintings. Templeton: “My work over the last decade has been in direct dialogue with the people, the environment, and the architecture of the place where I live.”

Ed Templeton is an American artist whose work reflects human behavior with emphasis on youth subcultures, religious affiliations, and suburban conventions using a *cinéma vérité* approach, embracing chance encounters. Templeton’s work cannot easily be categorized. He was brought up in Orange County, a suburb of Los Angeles, and spent his youth in a world of skateboarding and punk music. In 1990, he became a professional skateboarder, going on to become a two-time world champion in 1990 and 1993. Templeton founded *Toy Machine Bloodsucking Skateboard Company* in 1993, for which he does all the artwork and advertising. From an early age he was passionate about drawing and painting, and has been inspired by the work of Egon Schiele, Balthus, Otto Dix, Georg Grosz and David Hockney. In 1994 Templeton started to photograph his environment, friends and skate adventures, which developed into an extensive oeuvre that explores themes such as triumphs, disasters, boredom, self-medication, toxic masculinity and sacrifice. His photos surpass the autobiographical and depict skateboarding from 1995 to around 2012 as a unique subculture. Now, more than 25 years on and with many exhibitions to his name in galleries and museums all over the world, Templeton has become a street photography legend. Although his work focuses on his own life and those of the people around him, they transcend the autobiographical and expose social and societal phenomena unhesitatingly but without pointing a finger. Templeton uses photography, archival materials, painting and drawing to explore the ugliness, banality and beauty of the familiar everyday world, oftentimes attaching a deep, subjective emotional expression to his portraits.

Ed Templeton (b. 1972, California) lives and works in Los Angeles, United States. Templeton has exhibited worldwide, and his works are part of the permanent collections at Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York, NY; Bonnefanten Museum, Maastricht, Netherlands; S.M.A.K., Ghent, Belgium; Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens, Deurle, Belgium; Museum Het Domein, Sittard, Netherlands; LACMA, Los Angeles, United States; Orange County Museum of Art, Santa Ana, CA; Sammlung Goetz, Munich, Germany; and the Zabłudowicz Collection, London, United Kingdom.

He has exhibited extensively, including at the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA), Los Angeles, CA; the Bonnefanten Museum, Maastricht; the S.M.A.K., Ghent; the Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France; the Museo Universitario del Chopo, Mexico City, Mexico; the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, Spain; the International Center of Photography, New York, NY; the ARKEN Museum of Modern Art, Copenhagen, Denmark; the Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki, Finland; the Contemporary Museum, Baltimore, MD; the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco, CA; and the Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia, PA, among others.