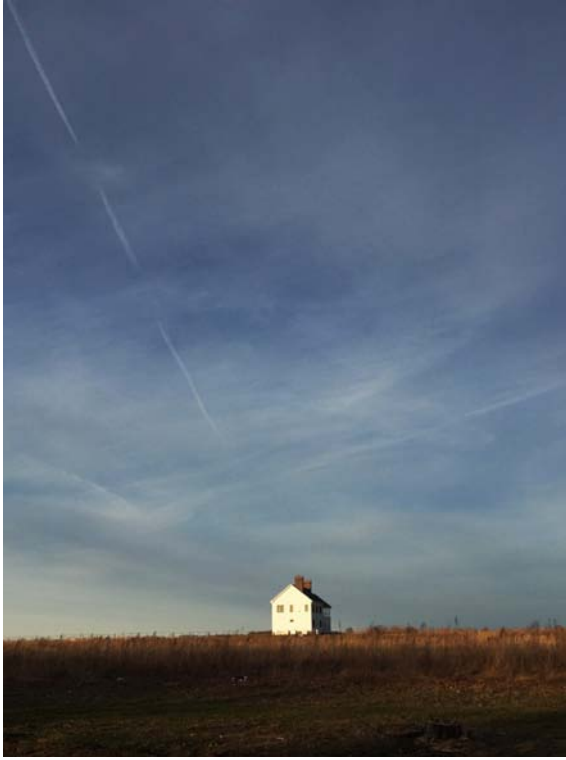


GAGOSIAN



ROE ETHRIDGE

Sanctuary

Opening reception: Thursday, January 24, 6–8pm

January 24–March 9, 2019

7/F Pedder Building, 12 Pedder Street, Central, Hong Kong

Roe Ethridge, *Midwest Long Island*, 2018, dye sublimation print on aluminum, 64 × 48 inches (162.6 × 121.9 cm),
edition of 5 + 2 AP

January 21, 2019

I don't have a script. I have an idea that I work around but don't necessarily solve.

—Roe Ethridge

Gagosian is pleased to present *Sanctuary*, new photographs by Roe Ethridge.

Ethridge's work embodies the heteroglossia of the photographic realm, where the languages of commercial photography, fine art, stock imagery, and social media constantly intertwine. And just as these different genres cohabit on magazine pages and computer screens, for Ethridge, an exhibition is an opportunity to bring together the divergent subjects and styles within his own practice—suggesting that a mixing of categories is not to be avoided but to be embraced, protected even.

In this exhibition, Ethridge moves between work and home, city and country, labor and leisure, switching codes as he goes. The images interrupt each other, like fragments of different stories coming together to form a single, ludic narrative. This bricolage often reveals unexpected relationships. In a self-portrait from 2017, Ethridge's face, covered in sunblock, peers over his

cellphone into a mirror. Then, his face appears again on the torso of model Maryel Sousa—as if her leotard has accidentally reflected the man behind the camera.

Several of the included photographs were taken at a cleaning facility in Brooklyn, New York, across the street from a photo studio where Ethridge often shoots for commissioned projects. Images of workers in their uniforms and the six-part work *Suds and Rugs at Megerian Rug Cleaners* (2018), which shows paintlike smears of soap over saturated carpets, contrast with photographs that were taken on the very same block, including a portrait of actor Lakeith Stanfield in a coiffed auburn wig. The staged and the real are thus placed on the same plane, making it difficult to determine which photographs are sincere, and whether notions of sincerity or truth are relevant at all.

Themes of domesticity run throughout the exhibition as well. A small white house, brightly illuminated by the sun, is perched on the horizon in *Midwest Long Island* (2018), while in *Mom with iPhone* (2018), Ethridge’s mother shows him something on a phone screen, which glows at the center of the photograph. A close-up of four red roses contrasts with *Mom and Dad’s Pill Bottles* (2018), in which an array of medications is set out on a speckled granite countertop—pitting a romantic garden image against the banal routines of suburban reality.

Like Ethridge’s photographs, the significance of the word “sanctuary” shifts drastically depending on its context, be it immigration debates, religious sites, or ecological preserves. This last context is referenced more literally in photographs of animals, including a duck in a pond, a fluffy white cat with a ball of yarn, a swimming dolphin, and a turtle on a bright orange ground, with “sanctuary” written over the image in shaky letters along the bottom edge of the turtle’s shell.

Roe Ethridge was born in 1969 in Miami and lives and works in New York. Collections include the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston; Tate, London; and Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst, Ghent, Belgium. Recent exhibitions include *Momentum 4: Roe Ethridge*, Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston (2005); the 2008 Whitney Biennial, New York; Le Consortium, Dijon, France (2012, traveled to M-Museum Leuven, Belgium); and *Nearest Neighbor*, the 3rd FotoFocus Biennial, Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati (2016).

#RoeEthridge

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