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JOHN CHIARA

Lands End: California at Larkin

November 2 – December 23, 2017

Opening Reception: Thursday, November 2, 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm

Haines Gallery is pleased to present ***Lands End: California at Larkin***, a solo exhibition by San Francisco-based photographer **John Chiara**. This is Chiara's third exhibition with the gallery, coinciding with the release of *John Chiara: California*, the first monographic publication dedicated to his work.

Lands End: California at Larkin continues Chiara's exploration of the Bay Area's built and natural environments, featuring new photographs taken in downtown San Francisco and along the Northern California coastline. The exhibition's title refers respectively to the National Park in northwestern San Francisco, where land meets sea; and to the intersection of California Street and Larkin Street, where the Tenderloin meets Nob Hill. Combining these locales, the title calls to mind a diverse terrain—equally foggy beaches and steep urban hills, wind-battered trees and Edwardian inspired utilitarian architecture—that is distinctly San Francisco.

Chiara describes his process as “part photography, part sculpture, and part event.” He uses hand-built, large-format cameras to print directly onto photographic paper, hauling his equipment from site to site on the back of a flatbed trailer. Uneven hand-cut edges and subtle chemical streaking in each work are visible vestiges of the physical and chemical aspects of their creation. These are a defining characteristic of Chiara's practice, which is as much about the act of photography and the materiality of the photograph, as it is about the subject of the image itself.

In his landscape works, Chiara's processes result in lush, lucid images. *Lands End: California at Larkin* features a series of photographs that traverse the Northern California coast. In these scenic waterfront vistas, the misty horizon and shimmering, sun-dappled ocean evoke a dream-like quality, each luminous landscape imbued with the water's constant motion. Elsewhere, Chiara inverts light and shadow, tones and color by photographing directly onto negative Fujiflex paper, transforming familiar sites into alien landscapes. In



Rockaway Beach Avenue at San Marlo Way, Pacifica, Variation 1, 2017
Camera Obscura Ilfochrome Photograph, Unique
39 x 29 inches



Dr. Tom Waddell Place at Polk Street, 2017
Camera Obscura Fujiflex Photograph, Unique
Diptych, 49 x 70 inches overall

works such as *Simmonds Road at Bunker Road West* (2017), taken at the Marin Headlands, the daytime sky appears slate black, while trees and grass are a vivid, luminous orange. Here, Chiara's inventive techniques push landscape photography beyond its conventional confines and towards abstraction, offering proof of the medium's continued evolution.

The exhibition also debuts a series of otherworldly urban vignettes: downtown San Francisco, primarily its Tenderloin and Financial Districts, captured in the same acid oranges and fiery reds. Chiara's unique vantage point and process produces one-of-a-kind prints that reveal a cityscape at once familiar and startlingly new. With his deliberate staging and framing, structures such as the century-old McAllister Hotel and the Bill Graham Civic Auditorium loom over each composition, offering a remarkable clarity of detail in architectural features. The Civic Auditorium, captured from its lesser-known side view in the image *Dr. Tom Waddell Place at Polk Street* (2017), imparts an angular, imposing monumentality. Within these new works, San Francisco appears ominous and sometimes apocalyptic, giving a darker view of Chiara's landscape works. Without editorializing, Chiara's new body of work in *Lands End: California at Larkin* allows viewers to intuit shifts and changes in the Bay Area land- and cityscapes, and what that may mean for its inhabitants.

Complimenting the exhibition, Chiara's new monograph, *California*, features images of Chiara's home state taken over the course of 18 years, and includes reproductions of several of the works on view. Jointly published by Aperture and Pier 24 Photography, this landmark publication includes text by Virginia Heckert, Curator of Photography, J. Paul Getty Museum.

John Chiara (b. 1971, San Francisco; lives and works in San Francisco) received his BFA in Photography from the University of Utah in Salt Lake City; and his MFA from San Francisco's California College of the Arts. His work has been widely exhibited in group and solo exhibitions, including institutions such as the George Eastman Museum, Rochester, NY (2016); Museum of Photographic Arts, San Diego, CA (2016, 2013); J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, CA (2015); San Jose Museum of Art, CA (2014); Pier 24 Photography, San Francisco, CA (2013, 2011); and Museum Bärengasse, Zurich, Switzerland (2013). He is included in the collections of the J. Paul Getty Museum; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, CA; Museum of Photographic Arts; National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.; Pilara Foundation and Collection, Pier 24 Photography; San Jose Museum of Art; and the Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, CT.