

Press release

William Eggleston - Before Color

February 4 - March 24, 2012

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Peder Lund is delighted to present the exhibition *William Eggleston – Before Color*, showing 37 of Eggleston's black-and-white photographs from the 1960s.

Until recently, Eggleston's black-and-white photographs from this period have received little attention. With the travelling retrospective *William Eggleston: Democratic Camera, Photographs and Videos 1961-2008*, and the exhibition catalogue published under the same title, a number of Eggleston's black-and-white photographs have been presented. The exhibition opened in 2008 at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York and later travelled to Haus der Kunst in Munich, Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington DC, the Art Institute of Chicago and the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art. In 2010 Steidl published the book *William Eggleston – Before Color* devoted exclusively to his black-and-white photographs from the 1960s.

William Eggleston (1939) was born in Memphis, Tennessee. As a young student, he discovered Henry-Cartier-Bresson's photographs through the monograph *The Decisive Moment*, which led to his interest in photography. It was particularly Cartier-Bresson's choice of motifs and angles that fascinated Eggleston. It was not classical American landscape photography that inspired him, but immediate surroundings and everyday objects. These became his motifs, represented with a degree of fortuity, which comes to light by his choice of perspectives and the coarse-grained snapshot aesthetic that characterizes his early works.

Parallel to his engagement with black-and-white photography in the 1960s, Eggleston experimented with color photography. He began to work on what was to become the series *Los Alamos* in 1966, consisting of 2200 color photographs when completed in 1974. It was primarily through color photography that Eggleston created his characteristic expression, which set the stage for the institutional recognition of the discipline. The exhibition of Eggleston's color photographs at Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1976 was the museum's first solo exhibition exclusively devoted to color photography. The book *William Eggleston's Guide*, written by the curator John Szarkowski, accompanied the exhibition.

Eggleston's use of the printing technique *dye transfer* has been important for the development of the photographic expression he is known for today. His intense colors and saturated depiction of everyday scenes has been his characteristic feature.

The exhibition *William Eggleston – Before Color* at Peder Lund reveals how Eggleston as early as in the 1960s had found his range of motifs. His working method and contextual depictions have been referred to as the *democratic camera*. With motifs that describe tendencies in the southern states of the US in the 1960s, Eggleston presents small glimpses of everyday objects, including people performing their daily tasks, objects, and houses in societies that are simultaneously recognizable and singular when represented through Eggleston's camera lens.

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