

FRAENKEL

49 GEARY STREET SAN FRANCISCO 94108 415 981 2661

For immediate release:



RICHARD MISRACH: REWIND

October 30 – December 20, 2025

With *Richard Misrach: Rewind*, Fraenkel Gallery presents a retrospective look at the artist's career, spanning more than five decades. Organized in reverse chronological order, the exhibition ranges from *Cargo*, Misrach's newest series exploring the impact of global trade, to *Telegraph 3 A.M.*, his earliest project, documenting street culture in Berkeley, California in the early 1970s. Highlighting ideas and themes that have consistently driven his work, the exhibition presents photographs made with an array of materials and techniques. Using everything from 35mm film to large-scale digital prints, the show traces Misrach's development across the forefront of the medium. Fraenkel Gallery has shown Misrach's work since 1985; this will be his seventeenth exhibition with the gallery. A public reception and book signing with the artist will take place on Saturday, November 1, from 2-4pm.

Whether photographing subjects as disparate as environmental disasters or cloud studies, Misrach has always pursued beauty. "I've come to believe that beauty can be a very powerful conveyor of difficult ideas," says Misrach. "It engages people when they might otherwise look away." The exhibition begins with a 2025 sunrise view of a freighter ship in the San Francisco Bay, printed at more than 5' x 6'. Composed in vivid shades of pink, blue, and violet, the image from *Cargo* addresses the complex economic systems that shape modern life, and their far-reaching consequences. Other seductive but charged images document the U.S.-Mexico border wall, from the series *Border Cantos*; Louisiana's highly polluted Cancer Alley, from *Petrochemical America*; and the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, from a series shown here for the first time, 20 years after the storm. Several photographs come from *Desert Cantos*, Misrach's long-running series examining humans' multifaceted relationship with the landscape of the American West.

Since the start of his career, Misrach has moved seamlessly between social concerns and more philosophical, experimental questions. "My work...has been about navigating these two extremes—the political and the aesthetic,"

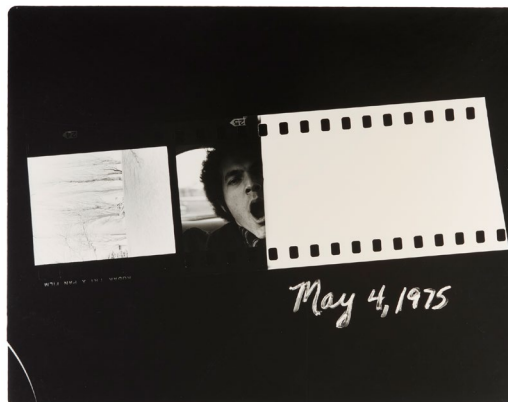
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Misrach writes. His first series *Telegraph 3 A.M.* used a medium format camera on a tripod. Working during the day and at night, Misrach made portraits recording the effects of drugs and poverty in the wake of the Berkeley counterculture movement. In the series that followed, Misrach began photographing in the desert, shooting at night but using a strobe to reveal the otherworldly shapes of cacti and sagebrush. The richly black, split-toned prints he made depict a near-mystical landscape visible only to the camera.

Later series push further into sublime encounters between nature and the camera. Starting in the 1990s, Misrach photographed the Golden Gate Bridge, capturing variations in atmosphere and color that border on abstraction. Working from a single vantage point, Misrach waited for the light and composition to align in front of his camera, an approach he returned to with *On the Beach*, his study of the ocean's infinite surface, and most recently with *Cargo*. Abstraction in nature is also at the center of the series *Notations*, exploring the surreal hues found in color photographic negatives, digitally rendered. In these images, Misrach inverts the tonalities of clouds or desert scrub brush, creating delicate studies of texture and form.

Richard Misrach (born 1949) has been photographing the American West for more than 50 years. His work has been the subject of solo exhibitions at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; Art Institute of Chicago; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; and Centre Pompidou, Paris, among others. *Border Cantos*, a collaboration with the composer Guillermo Galindo, opened at the San Jose Museum of Art in California in 2016 and continues to travel throughout the U.S. His work has been featured in more than a dozen books, including *Telegraph 3 A.M.*, *Bravo 20: The Bombing of the American West*, *Crimes and Splendors: The Desert Cantos of Richard Misrach*, *On the Beach*, *Destroy This Memory*, *Petrochemical America*, *Border Cantos*, *Blind Spot Folios 001: Nancy Holt & Richard Misrach*, *On Landscape and Meaning*, *Notations*, and most recently, *Cargo*. His photographs are held in the collections of major institutions including the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, among others. He is the recipient of numerous awards including four National Endowment for the Arts Fellowships and a Guggenheim Fellowship.



Images from top: Richard Misrach, *Cargo Ships* (January 8, 2025, 7:13 am), 2025

Richard Misrach, *Self-Portrait*, 1975

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