

William Eggleston

2¼

12 April–1 June 2019
24 Grafton Street, London

Private view: Thursday 11 April, 6–8 PM



William Eggleston, *Untitled*, c. 1977
Courtesy Eggleston Artistic Trust and David Zwirner
© Eggleston Artistic Trust

David Zwirner is pleased to present *2¼*, a series of square-format colour photographs from the 1970s by American photographer William Eggleston. On view at 24 Grafton Street in London, the show marks the artist's first presentation at the gallery's UK location and his second solo exhibition with David Zwirner since joining the gallery, in 2016.

Over the course of nearly six decades, Eggleston has established a singular pictorial style that deftly combines vernacular subject matter with an innate and sophisticated understanding of colour, form, and composition. His vividly saturated photographs transform the ordinary into distinctive, poetic images that eschew fixed meaning. A pioneer of colour photography, Eggleston helped elevate the medium to the art form that it is recognised to be today. He took the *2¼* photographs in California and throughout the American South following his groundbreaking solo show *Color Photography by William Eggleston* at The Museum of Modern Art, New York, in 1976. Curated by John Szarkowski, this exhibition would come to herald the medium's acceptance within the art-historical canon.

The works in the *2¼* series are notable within Eggleston's oeuvre for their distinct format. He shot the photographs using a two-and-one-quarter-inch medium-format camera, resulting in images that exist between the registers of portraiture and landscape, dissolving the boundaries between the two. The individuals, cars, parking lots, and local stores and businesses that the artist depicts in the series speak to the uniformity of postwar material culture while revealing the distinct character and idiosyncrasies of the people and places that populate the American landscape. Through Eggleston's lens, a rusted-over Cadillac dealer's sign becomes both a potent emblem of industrial decline and a lushly toned formalist colourscape of rich blues and bronzes. Vermeer-like, Eggleston exhibits a sensitivity to the powerful yet diffuse light that permeates these spaces. Several images from the series capture cars parked in litter-strewn lots, immersed within this special saturated glow. As Agnès Sire notes, 'The light of the South is explosive, despite being treated [by Eggleston] in a very uncommon manner, as if cleansed of expressionistic shadows.'¹

Many of the images in *2¼* were first published as a monograph of the same title by Twin Palms in 1999. Several were also included in *Cadillac*, a portfolio of thirteen chromogenic prints that Eggleston produced the same year. The exhibition at David Zwirner follows recent presentations of the artist's work in the

¹ Agnès Sire, 'The Invention of Language', in *William Eggleston: From Black and White to Color*. Exh. cat. (Göttingen: Steidl, 2014), p. 14.

David Zwirner

UK, including *William Eggleston: Portraits* at the National Portrait Gallery, London, in 2016, and *William Eggleston* at Tate Modern, London, in 2013.

William Eggleston was born in 1939 in Memphis, Tennessee, where he lives today. *William Eggleston: The Democratic Forest*, an exhibition of works drawn from the artist's encyclopaedic project, marked his first solo show at David Zwirner New York in 2016.

Since the 1970s, Eggleston's work has been the subject of solo exhibitions at prominent institutions worldwide. Important solo presentations were held at the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, in 1990; Barbican Gallery, London, in 1992 (travelled to Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk, Denmark; Museum Folkwang, Essen; and Fotomuseum Winterthur); documenta IX, Kassel, in 2002; and Museum Ludwig, Cologne, in 2003 (travelled to Museu Serralves, Porto; Nasjonalmuseet – Museet for samtidskunst, Oslo; Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk, Denmark; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Albertina, Vienna; and Dallas Museum of Art). In 2008, a major career-spanning survey, *William Eggleston: Democratic Camera, Photographs and Videos 1961–2008*, was organised by the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York and Haus der Kunst in Munich; it subsequently travelled to the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, DC; Art Institute of Chicago; and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, among others.

More recent solo exhibitions have included those held at Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain, Paris, in 2009 (travelled to Hara Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo, and Hasselblad Foundation, Gothenburg, Sweden); The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, in 2013; and Foam Fotografiemuseum, Amsterdam, in 2017. In 2018, The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York presented *William Eggleston: Los Alamos*, a solo exhibition featuring a landmark gift to the museum by Jade Lau of the artist's notable portfolio, *Los Alamos*.

Eggleston received a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship in 1975 and has been the recipient of numerous notable awards, including the International Center of Photography Infinity Award for Lifetime Achievement (2004) and the Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres, Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication, République Française (Order of Arts and Letters of the French Republic) (2016), among others. The Aperture Foundation honoured Eggleston in October 2016. Work by the artist is held in major international museum collections.

Founded in 1992, the Eggleston Artistic Trust is dedicated to the representation and preservation of the work of William Eggleston and is directed by his sons, Winston Eggleston and William Eggleston III.

For all press enquiries, contact

Sara Chan +44 20 3538 3165 sara@davidzwirner.com