

**Ken Gonzales-Day**  
Curated by Bruce Yonemoto

September 7 – October 14, 2006  
(Opening Reception: Thursday, September 7, 6-8pm)

“Gonzales-Day’s pictures act as sophisticated filters which scrutinize information that has long been suppressed. His erasures reconfigure shadowed memories at once beautiful, genuine and scary.”

—Bruce Yonemoto

Ken Gonzales-Day is fascinated with ways you can employ photographic techniques to change the perception of an image based on its context. His imagery abounds in sudden shifts in perspective, in order to reveal new ways of capturing the experience of time, place, and identity.

The photographs selected for this exhibition represent an unprecedented examination into a largely hidden chapter of frontier justice in America. While most published accounts of lynching have primarily focused on acts of arbitrary mob violence committed against African Americans in the South, 352 instances of lynching took place in California from 1850-1935, the majority of which were committed against Latinos.



*Der Wild West*, 2005  
Chromogenic print, 3.7" x 6"  
Edition of 6

While originally researching the omission of Latinos within the published histories of California, Gonzales-Day discovered a large number of Latino names cited among the historical records related to lynching. Upon studying the first-hand accounts provided by newspapers, periodicals, court records, historical photographs, and souvenir postcards, he began to trace back reports to sites throughout California in which these acts took place. The experience and images produced by visits to these sites serve as a catalyst for the exhibition on view and for his upcoming book, *Lynching in the West: 1850-1935*.



*At Daylight the Miserable Man Was Carried to an Oak*, 2002, 60" x 75"  
Chromogenic print, Unique print

The installation on view is comprised of a grouping of roughly 15 framed, digitally altered historical postcards, two digitally enlarged images of oak trees taken from visited lynching sites, and a site-specific, digitally reassembled, full-scale historic lynching image. By choosing to remove the subject in select imagery, Gonzales-Day blurs the boundaries between the known and unknown, real and unreal, and taps into our innermost insecurities concerning perceptions and depiction of racial violence in America. All the while, redefining how photography is created

In referencing the lynching event itself, its documentation, and re-recording, the works on view mirror the artist’s own journey by placing the viewer squarely within the site of historical erasure. When presented with a wall of lynching postcards, the viewer assumes the photographer’s viewing position and is confronted with the complicity thereby implied. Without aid of subject, what resonates is the macabre sense of spectacle heightened by the festive mood of the audience, who is happy to endorse such extraordinary brutality in the name of community values. Juxtaposed against the period postcards and imagery, contemporary landscape portraits of giant oaks powerfully serve as metaphors for the artist’s search for evidence and consequence.

(Cont’d)

Under the photographer's guise and within their anthropomorphic forms, they exhibit traces of suffering, entombment, and renewal.

The passing of time, the changing contexts of the photographs, and our own subjectivity affects how we perceive the imagery presented. By relocating history in the present, this re-viewing of violence strives for reflection rather than spectacle, for vision rather than voyeurism, for study rather than exposure, in order to foster greater dialogue concerning issues surrounding race and racism in America. Bearing witness to the communal nature in which racism and injustice thrive, Gonzales-Day's work suggests that we can no longer rationalize, marginalize, nor continue to ignore acts of racial violence as unfortunate chapters in our collective history.

*Catalogue available with Essay by Juli Carson.*

**ARTIST'S BIO:** Ken Gonzales-Day is an artist and writer living in Los Angeles. He received his MFA from UC Irvine, CA, and his MA in Art History from Hunter College, NY. He was a fellow in the Whitney Museum of American Art's Independent Study Program. Other fellowships include the Rockefeller Foundation Study and Conference Center in Bellagio, Italy and the Smithsonian Institution's American Art Museum and National Portrait Gallery where Gonzales-Day was a Senior Fellow in Latino Studies. His writing has appeared in various arts publications and journals including: *Art & Text*, *Artissues*, *Art Journal*, *Art Papers*, *Aztlán*, *Exposure*, *Poliester*, *ArtPress* and *NYQ*. Exhibitions of his photographs and installations include: *Log Cabin*, Artists Space, New York, NY; *Picarte*, Heard Museum, Phoenix, AZ; *Made in California*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, CA; *Cyborg Manifesto*, Laguna Art Museum, CA; *Beyond Boundaries: Contemporary Photography in California*, Ansel Adams Center for Photography, San Francisco, CA; and *Reimagining the West: A New History*, SF Camerawork, San Francisco, CA. Gonzales-Day is an Associate Professor of Art and Chair of the Department of Art at Scripps College.

**PUBLIC PROGRAM:**

Friday, September 8th, 7:00-8:30pm

An informal discussion with Artist Ken Gonzales-Day and Exhibition Curator Bruce Yonemoto regarding the works on view.



This talk is part of Celebrate México Now, a citywide festival of contemporary Mexican art and culture produced by CN Management. [www.mexiconowfestival.org](http://www.mexiconowfestival.org)

**RELATED PUBLICATION:**

*Lynching in the West, 1850-1935*

by Ken Gonzales-Day

Published by Duke University Press, publication date: October 2006

288 pages, 16 color images

**ABOUT CUE:** CUE Art Foundation, a 501 (c)(3) non-profit arts organization, is dedicated to providing a comprehensive creative forum for contemporary art by supporting under-recognized artists via a multi-faceted mission spanning the realms of gallery exhibitions, public programming, professional development programs and arts-in-education.

CUE Art Foundation was established in June of 2002 with the aim of providing educational programs for young artists and aspiring art professionals in New York and from around the country. These programs draw on the unique community of artists, critics, and educators brought together by the Foundation's season of exhibitions, public lectures, workshops, and its studio residency program: all are designed to be of lasting practical benefit to aspiring and under-recognized artists. The entire CUE identity is characterized by artistic quality, independent judgment and the discovery of genuine talent, and provides long-term benefits both for creative individuals associated with CUE and the larger art marketplace. Located in New York's Chelsea gallery district, CUE's 4,500 square feet of gallery, studio and office space serves as the nexus for educational programs and exhibitions conducted by CUE.

CUE Art Foundation's operations and programs are made possible with the generous support of foundations, corporations, government agencies, individuals and its membership. Support for exhibitions is provided by Accademia Charitable Foundation, Ltd., Holland & Knight Charitable Foundation, Inc., Viking Foundation, The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, and with public funds from the City of New York Department of Cultural Affairs and the New York State Council on the Arts through the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council and the Experimental Television Center.

For additional information, please contact Kara Smith, Programs Assistant, CUE Art Foundation, 212-206-3583, or email [kara.smith@cueartfoundation.org](mailto:kara.smith@cueartfoundation.org). Gallery hours: Tues.-Sat., 10am-6pm.