

A PLACE IN THE SUN
PHOTOGRAPHS OF LOS ANGELES BY
JOHN HUMBLE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



John Humble (American, born 1944)
*Headwaters, The Los Angeles River, Confluence of Arroyo Calabasas
and Bell Creek, Canoga Park, 2001*
Chromogenic
2006.10.1
© John Humble, Courtesy of Jan Kesner Gallery

**NEW GETTY EXHIBITION EXPLORES THE WORK OF
LIVING ARTIST WHO HAS DOCUMENTED GREATER
LOS ANGELES FOR THREE DECADES**

***A Place in the Sun: Photographs of Los Angeles by John
Humble***

At the J. Paul Getty Museum, the Getty Center
March 27-July 8, 2007

LOS ANGELES— A compelling presentation of John Humble's body of work will be on view in ***A Place in the Sun: Photographs of Los Angeles by John Humble***, at the J. Paul Getty Museum, the Getty Center, March 27-July 8, 2007. This exhibition will feature approximately 40 color photographs, divided thematically between the urban landscape and the Los Angeles River.

Born in Washington, D.C. in 1944, Humble was raised in a military family. Drafted during the Vietnam War, Humble then went back to college, receiving his bachelor's degree from the University of Maryland in 1970. For a brief period, he worked as a photojournalist for the *Washington Post*, before enrolling at the San Francisco Art Institute (SFAI), where he received his MFA in 1973. He then traveled the world before settling in Los Angeles in the mid 1970s.

In 1979, Humble was one of eight photographers awarded a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to document Los Angeles on the occasion of its bicentennial. The mandate for the Los Angeles Documentary Project, as it was known, was "not to document Los Angeles stereotypes and clichés but to show the city that few had cared to photograph." Humble quietly recorded the Los Angeles cityscape, its streets, neighborhoods, and, particularly, the river that runs through its heart; these subjects have served as continuous themes throughout his lengthy career.

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Humble's images are both thoughtful and thought provoking and fall within a long tradition of artists working with the city as subject. Like Eugène Atget's Paris and Berenice Abbott's New York, Humble's Los Angeles offers views of the city that are instantly recognizable yet very often overlooked.

Humble's work suggests that Los Angeles is not simply "a place in the sun" (referring to its temperate year-round climate), but a complicated, and, at times, dark metropolis. Inspired by the architecture and its environment, his work often focuses on the incongruities and ironic juxtapositions of the Southern California landscape. In Humble's photographs, power lines cut across blue skies, freeways divide neighborhoods, and a river bisects the city.

Humble began charting the river's 51-mile course, from its headlands in Canoga Park to its mouth in Long Beach, in the late 1990s. Capitalizing on the chance to journey through what he termed the "sociological archaeology" of Los Angeles, Humble's work reveals the river as a cross-section of the city's demographics, from the homeless who seek shelter in its channels, to working-class immigrants and middle-class suburbanites who live along its largely concrete embankments.

Many of the works in this exhibition were acquired in January 2006 with the assistance of the Getty Museum's Photographs Council. The Council also underwrote the accompanying publication, the first to be issued on Humble's work. The presentation will complement the exhibition *The Old Order and the New: P.H. Emerson and Photography, 1885-1895*, also on view at the [J. Paul Getty Museum, the Getty Center, March 27-July 8, 2007](#).

Both exhibitions will be on view in the Getty Museum's new and expanded suite of galleries devoted to photographs, which opened in October 2006, reflecting the importance of the art form in the Getty's collection.

The exhibition is curated by Anne Lyden, associate curator, in the Department of Photographs.

OF RELATED INTEREST

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PANEL DISCUSSION

Looking at Los Angeles: John Humble and Phillip Rodriguez

John Humble and documentary filmmaker Phillip Rodriguez discuss their approaches to representing Los Angeles. Moderated by Madeleine Brand from NPR's *Morning Edition*.

Wednesday, April 11, 7:00 p.m.

Harold M. Williams Auditorium

PERFORMANCE

Friday Nights at the Getty: The Knitters

Reservations available beginning April 19 at 9:00 a.m.

Friday, May 18, 7:30 p.m.

Harold M. Williams Auditorium

CURATOR'S GALLERY TALK

Anne M. Lyden, associate curator, Department of Photographs, the J. Paul Getty Museum

Wednesday, April 4, 1:30 p.m.

RELATED PUBLICATION

A Place in the Sun: Photographs of Los Angeles by John Humble

With an essay by Gordon Baldwin

(Hardcover, \$39.95)

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MEDIA CONTACT:

Beth Brett
Getty Communications
310-440-6473
bbrett@getty.edu

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