

GREY ART NYU GALLERY

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Renegade American photographer subject of retrospective

John Wood: On the Edge of Clear Meaning
on view at NYU's Grey Art Gallery from May 12 to July 18, 2009

New York City, March 29, 2009—New York University's Grey Art Gallery is pleased to announce the first retrospective of the American photographer John Wood. *John Wood: On the Edge of Clear Meaning*, on view at the Grey Art Gallery from May 12 through July 18, 2009, is the most comprehensive exhibition of the artist's work to date. Featuring the full range of his career from the 1960s to the present, the show includes over 150 photographs, mixed-media works, and artists' books. A selection of Wood's photomontages, *Quiet Protest*, will be on view concurrently at the International Center of Photography.

Born in California in 1922, John Wood has consistently challenged traditional photography, often incorporating painting, drawing, and collage as well as cliché verre, solarization, and offset lithography. The artist emphasizes the role of drawing in his work: "Mark making, calligraphy, the kinetic motion of the movement of the hand, are very important to me; probably more important than anything else." Transgressing the boundaries of straight photography, Wood's practice helped usher in an alternative approach to the medium. His diaristic, multi-media compositions revel in their combinations of text and imagery, anticipating today's digital era with its delight in manipulation.

His early childhood was marked by the Depression, and his family moved frequently. After serving in the Army Air Corps as a B-17 pilot during World War II, he enrolled at the Institute of Design in Chicago. Wood trained as a visual designer and photographer, studying with Harry

Callahan and Art Sinsabaugh to hone both conceptual and formal issues in his work. He left Chicago to teach photography and printmaking at the School of Art and Design at Alfred University in Alfred, New York, where he would live for thirty-five years. He now resides in Baltimore, Maryland with his wife, Laurie Snyder, who teaches photography at the Maryland Institute College of Art. They migrate each summer to their home and studio in Ithaca, New York.

In keeping with the Grey Art Gallery's tradition of presenting the work of under-represented artists, this exhibition introduces John Wood as a master of various multi-media processes and testifies to his insatiable curiosity about new materials and repeated use of favorite sources. Through disciplined but lively investigation of different media, the artist eroded traditional definitions of photography and produced work that is both powerful and subtle. As Lynn Gumpert, Director of the Grey, notes, "John Wood has been a life-long teacher, inspiring and training numerous students, artists, and arts professionals. We are honored to bring the breadth of his work to New York City, home to many art schools, colleges, and universities."

John Wood: On the Edge of Clear Meaning was coordinated by Nathan Lyons, Director Emeritus of the Visual Studies Workshop in collaboration with Marie Via, Director of Exhibitions, Memorial Art Gallery, and Alison Nordstrom, Curator of Photography, George Eastman House. The exhibition was on view at all three locations in fall 2008. The presentation of *John Wood: On the Edge of Clear Meaning* at the Grey Art Gallery is made possible in part by the Abby Weed Grey Trust, Ruth Davidson Abrams Endowment, and the Grey's Director's Circle, Inter/National Council, and Friends.

Accompanying the exhibition is a 174-page book that includes 140 illustrations in black-and-white and color, along with an essay assessing Wood's work by David Levi Strauss, a complete biography and bibliography compiled by William S. Johnson, and a study of his role as an educator by Ezra Shales. Complementing the book is a DVD showing Wood at work and incorporating a page-turning program of Wood's book works.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Grey Art Gallery, New York University, 100 Washington Square East, New York, NY 10003
Tel: 212/998-6780, fax: 212/995-4024
E-mail: greycastle@nyu.edu
Web site: <http://www.nyu.edu/greycastle>

Hours:

Tuesday, Thursday, Friday: 11am–6 pm

OPEN LATE Wednesday: 11 am–8 pm

Saturday: 11 am–5 pm

Sunday, Monday and major holidays: Closed

Admission: Suggested donation: \$3; NYU students, faculty, and staff: free of charge

About the Grey Art Gallery:

The Grey Art Gallery is New York University's fine-arts museum, located on historic Washington Square Park in New York City's Greenwich Village. The Grey offers the NYU community and the general public a dynamic roster of engaging and thought-provoking exhibitions, all of them enriched by public programs. With its emphasis on experimentation and interpretation, and its focus on exploring art in its historical, cultural, and social contexts, the Grey serves as a museum-laboratory for the exploration of art's environment and its contributions to civilization.

Exhibitions organized by the Grey have encompassed all the visual arts: painting, sculpture, drawing and printmaking, photography, architecture and decorative arts, video, film, and performance. In addition to producing its own exhibitions, which often travel to other venues in the United States and abroad, the Gallery hosts traveling shows that might otherwise not be seen in New York and produces scholarly publications, many of which are distributed worldwide.

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