

Golden West Service

I always felt relatively isolated growing up in the Valley here and I think that shows in the work. Even though I was born and raised here, my parents are East Coast transplants who never quite lost their New York City edge, which just really doesn't fit with the vibe here. When I did photograph people for this series it was more as part of a landscape that I look out onto, rather than actively participate in. You see evidence of people everywhere in the work. Most of the photos are of cars, architecture, farms, etc. But I'm more interested in how the people affect the land rather than engaging with them personally. They are sort of like anthropological specimens I am trying to understand through their artifacts.

You could say the majority of my childhood was spent looking out the window of a car. We lived in Davis but I went to school about 30 minutes east in Sacramento so I would have at least an hour in the car just to and from school every day. Also my parents had a bakery so I spent hours driving around the whole area with them making deliveries to restaurants. I remember just wondering what was going on out there. When I started doing photography here I started by driving around to the places I remembered seeing from childhood and getting a little bit closer to see what they all were exactly.

My process really mimics my car-oriented childhood. I drive around, or am frequently driven around by my dad, all over the freeways and back roads and we reminisce about places we used to know and we go see if they're still there. Sometimes I'll see something out the window on the way that sparks some interest and we will loop around and try to get to it. Sometimes I'll just shoot straight out the window of the car, because that is how a lot of things are seen here.

I honestly wasn't sure what I was trying to say with this series at first- it was just something I was doing somewhat compulsively. The more I continued to do the work and the more I was asked to explain what I was doing the reasons started to surface. I don't really want to say what it is about absolutely, because it might mean different things to different people. For me it's about showing this place as it is now. I feel that the Central Valley is frequently overlooked- especially by photographers.

I don't expect to be doing anything particularly "new" or to revolutionize photographic practice or anything with this work. There is a great tradition of American documentary photography that began in the 1930s with Evans

and Lange and their FSA cohorts through to Ruscha, Eggleston, Shore and Adams. I just love the work of those photographers and I want to continue in that same tradition. I love straight photography. I see the world in a certain way and I want to capture it on film. So I do. It's that simple.

-- Gillian Alexandra Kalisky