



Harrell Fletcher, The American War, Billboard Project. La Cienega Boulevard between Venice and Washington Boulevards facing North.

*Courtesy of LA><ART. Photography by Lesley Moon.
PART OF LA><ART'S PUBLIC ART INITIATIVES*

Harrell Fletcher: The American War

LA><ART is pleased to present an exhibition with Portland-based artist Harrell Fletcher, opening on January 20th with a special event featuring speakers and presentations responding to ideas related to the exhibition and the Vietnam War.

The installation at LA><ART marks the first time a billboard has been produced in conjunction with the exhibition. For the billboard, Fletcher went to the Los Angeles Public Library and photographed books and videos including *Hearts and Minds*, *Winter Soldier*, *The War at Home* and *Regret to Inform*.

In June 2005, Harrell Fletcher visited Vietnam for a month as part of an international artists' retreat. While there, he made a visit to The War Remnants Museum in Ho Chi Minh City.

The War Remnants Museum is a memorial museum for what is referred to in Vietnam as the American War. The main museum contains a selection of about 100 documentary photographs starting at the beginning of the official timeline for US military involvement in 1965 and spanning until the end of the war in 1975 along with images of people affected by birth defects and war wounds long after the US military had pulled out of the region. The photos came from a variety of sources—Vietnamese documentary photos, US magazines and newspapers, and international organizations' archives involved in resolving the conflict and dealing with its after-effects.

On one of his last days in Vietnam Fletcher photographed all of the images and text descriptions from the main museum using a digital camera. Taking the shots hand-held and at oblique angles to avoid flash reflections, the images have an oddly casual quality yet represent the material shown at the museum.

Since returning to the US Fletcher has taken the re-created museum to various cities around the country: San Antonio, Richmond, Boston, New York, and Portland. At each venue, Fletcher organized a public program in dialogue with the restaging of the museum. For the exhibition at LA><ART, Fletcher has organized a "Come Together" event which will feature several presentations by local students and volunteers regarding The Vietnam War. The presentations will be 15 minutes each and the event begins at 2 pm and will continue until 7pm.



Ken Gonzales-Day: Momento Mori

Los Angeles based artist Ken Gonzales-Day produced a large-scale portrait in Gallery 2 with a concurrent billboard project on La Cienega Boulevard in Culver City for the month of February.

In 2006, Duke University Press published Gonzales-Day's *Lynching in the West: 1850-1935*. The book grew out of a six-year journey that also generated two photographic projects. Selections from these projects were included in *Lynching in the West*, and were exhibited at Cue Art Foundation, New York; Thomas Dane Gallery, London; and the Pomona College Museum of Art. In 2007, a selection of these works will be exhibited at the Generali Foundation in Vienna as part of the exhibition, "Exile of the Imaginary."

In his series "Searching for California's Hang Trees," Gonzales-Day set out with a 8 x 10 Deardorff camera to visit and photograph as many of California's historic lynch sites as he could find. In "Nightfall II," created for LA><ART, Gonzales-Day re-photographs a lone tree in Los Angeles. In Los Angeles County there are over 50 unmarked lynch sites. In reconceptualizing the photographic tradition of landscape photography, he also considers the influence of flash photography on lynching photography. "Nightfall II" combines natural beauty, the artifice of the photographic flash, into a meditation on California's nearly-forgotten history of Lynching and racial violence.

Within the gallery space, "Momento Mori" stands as a single monumental portrait of a young man addressing the viewer. This portrait gestures to questions and processes of remembrance regarding individuals and communities subjected to racial and ethnic violence. The project serves as a momento to erased histories and memories.

Ken Gonzales-Day billboard project will be mounted on La Cienega Boulevard between Venice and Washington during the month of February 2007.

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