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DANA LIXENBERG

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Imperial Courts 1993—2015

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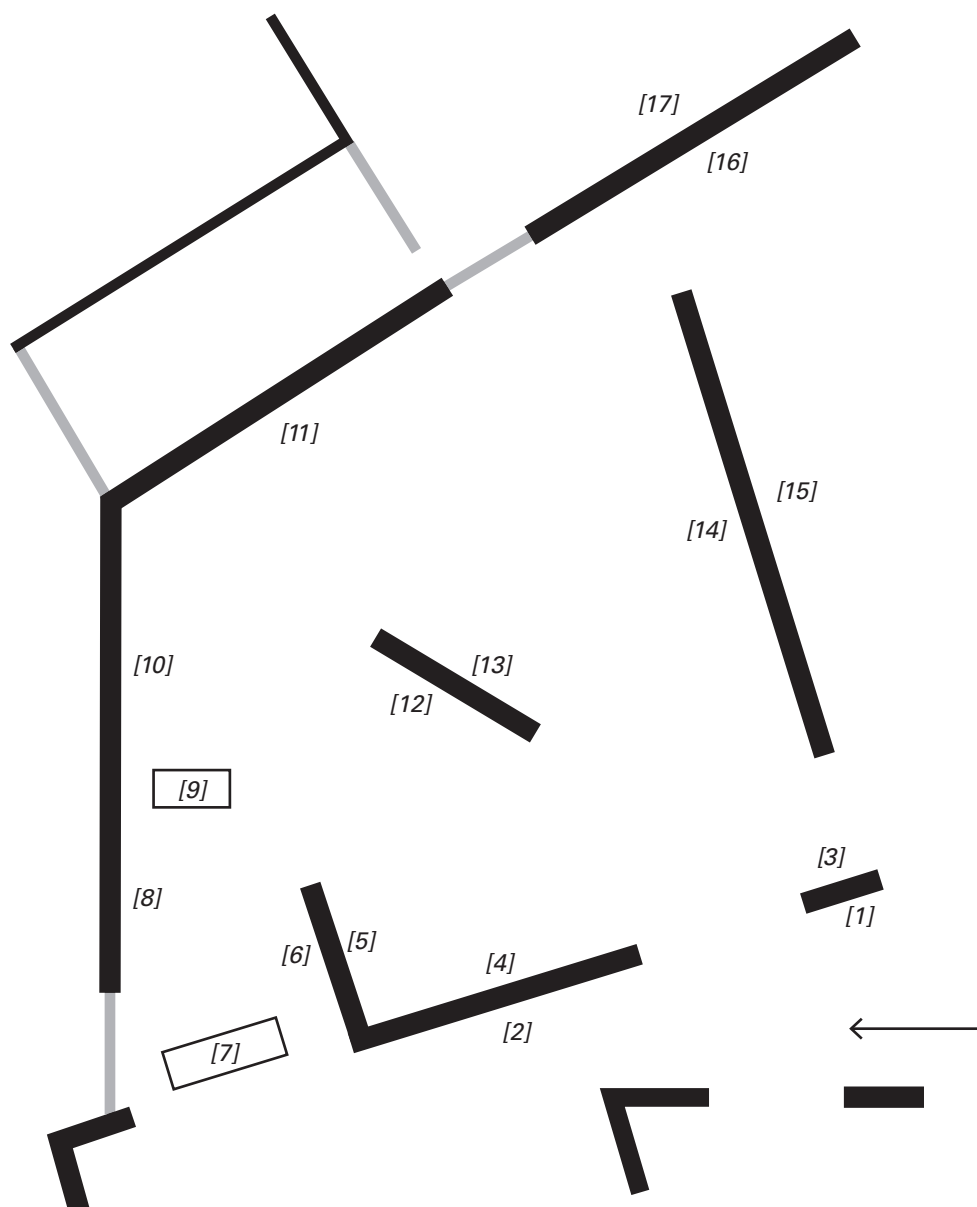
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Im Zentrum von Imperial Courts 1993-2015 stehen die Bewohner von Watts, einem Stadtteil im, durch soziale Probleme gezeichneten Süden von Los Angeles. Anstoss für Dana Lixenbergs Langzeit-Porträtstudie waren die Ausschreitungen des Jahres 1992, die als Reaktion auf die öffentliche Misshandlung des Afroamerikaners Rodney King durch vier weiße Polizisten und deren Freispruch weite Teile von Los Angeles erschütterten. Dana Lixenberg hatte im Auftrag eines holländischen Magazins die Unruhen dokumentiert und sich so für die Menschen in den betroffenen Gebiete zu interessieren begonnen. Ab 1993 porträtierte sie in großformatigen Aufnahmen die Einwohner der Imperial Courts. In klassischem Schwarzweiss und unter freiem Himmel aufgenommen, sind ihre Bilder durchdrungen von gegenseitigem Respekt. Sie vermögen es, die Abgebildeten als selbstbewußte und gleichzeitig verletzbare Individuen zu zeigen und große Nähe und Intimität zu erzeugen. Im Laufe des von Dana Lixenberg abgebildeten Zeitraums veränderte sich naturgemäß nicht nur die äussere Erscheinung der Porträtierten, sondern auch die sie umgebenden, räumlichen Gegebenheiten. Zahlreiche Protagonisten wurden zu Opfern von Gewalt, andere wohl zu Tätern. Wieder andere verschwanden ganz einfach aus dem Blickfeld der Künstlerin. Die Präsentation der Arbeit wird zudem durch Video- und Audioaufzeichnungen ergänzt, welche einen weiteren Einblick in dieses vielschichtige, soziale Dokument geben. Imperial Courts wurde durch den holländischen Mondriaan Fund unterstützt.

In 1993, after a magazine assignment to photograph the areas of Los Angeles affected by the 'Rodney King riots' of 1992, Lixenberg was inspired to return and start her own project which soon led her to the Imperial Courts housing project located in Watts, Los Angeles. In contrast to the often one dimensional, sensationalized media coverage of the riots and their aftermath, Lixenberg employed a controlled and collaborative photographic approach. Using the communal areas of Imperial Courts as her studio, she started making pared-down black and white portraits of the residents with a large-format camera in natural light. These photographs taken at a pivotal time in the community's history, created the foundations of her largest body of work to date. In the following years, Lixenberg stayed in touch with the community and in 2008 she decided to return to Imperial Courts to capture the changing trajectories of different individuals' stories. Over the years, lives had been lost, people had disappeared or gone to jail, and children of early photographs had grown up and had families of their own. Lixenberg's photographs became valued mementos for those she photographed and for the community as a whole. Spanning 22 years (1993-2015), the Imperial Courts project subtly addresses issues of inequality and injustice while avoiding stereotypical representation. Using multiple platforms, from silver gelatin prints in the exhibition, a carefully edited publication, an immersive video installation, audio recordings and a web project, Imperial Courts constitutes an evocative record of the passage of time in an underserved community.

The project and this exhibition have been generously supported by MONDRIAAN FUND, the Netherlands. All works are courtesy of Defares Collection, the artist and GRIMM, Amsterdam / New York

GALLERY PLAN



WORK LIST

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|---|---|
| <p>[1] <i>Sharon, 1993</i>
Gelatin Silver Print, 50x40 cm</p> | <p>[6] <i>Thru Dutch Eyes</i>
Zeppers Film, 1999 (excerpt)
Video, 14 min, (loop)</p> |
| <p>[2] <i>Untitled (birthday party), 2009</i>
Gelatin Silver Print, 75x100 cm</p> | <p><i>Untitled II, 2009</i>
Gelatin Silver Print, 50x40 cm</p> |
| <p>[3] <i>Untitled V, 2008</i>
Gelatin Silver Print, 50x40 cm</p> | <p><i>Book Launch</i>
Imperial Courts, Los Angeles, Oct. 2015
Video, 6 min 44 sec (loop)</p> |
| <p>[4] <i>J 50, 1993</i>
Gelatin Silver Print, 100x78 cm</p> | <p>[7] <i>Contacts and Notebooks</i>
to keep the residents informed of the
project's progression over the years</p> |
| <p><i>J 50, 2008</i>
Gelatin Silver Print, 100x78 cm</p> | <p><i>Community edition</i>
Imperial Courts 1993-2015
Roma publications, the Netherlands</p> |
| <p><i>J 50, 2013</i>
Gelatin Silver Print, 100x78 cm</p> | |
| <p>[5] <i>Ramona, 1993</i>
Gelatin Silver Print, 125x97 cm</p> | |

- [8] *Tony's Memorial, 2010*
Gelatin Silver Print, 100x78 cm
- Tony, 1993*
Gelatin Silver Print, 100x78 cm
- [9] *Audio recordings*
of residents' response to the
photographs 2009-2015
Audio, 97 min (loop)
- [10] *Antloc and Mastermind, 1993*
Gelatin Silver Print, 50x40 cm
- Romeo, 2013*
son of Keisha, grandson of China
Gelatin Silver Print, 50x40 cm
- Keisha, 2010*
daughter of China
Gelatin Silver Print, 50x40 cm
- Tye, 2008*
daughter of China
Gelatin Silver Print, 50x40 cm
- China, 1993*
Gelatin Silver Print, 100x78 cm
- [11] *Elaine, 1993*
Gelatin Silver Print, 50x40 cm
- Elaine, 2012*
Gelatin Silver Print, 50x40 cm
- Fancy, 2013*
daughter of Elaine
Gelatin Silver Print, 50x40 cm
- Trouble, 2009*
Gelatin Silver Print, 125x97 cm
- Leslie and Ashley, 2013*
Gelatin Silver Print, 50x40 cm
- [12] *Man Man, 2013*
Son of Elaine
Gelatin Silver Print, 125x97 cm
- [13] *Chin with his daughter Dee Dee, 1993*
Gelatin Silver Print, 50x40 cm
- Dee Dee with her son Emir, 2013*
Gelatin Silver Print, 100x125 cm
- [14] *Wilteysha, 1993*
Gelatin Silver Print, 125x97 cm
- DJ, 1993*
Gelatin Silver Print, 125x97 cm
- Miyong with her son Anthony, 1993*
Gelatin Silver Print, 125x97 cm
- Spider, 1993*
Gelatin Silver Print, 125x97 cm
- Coco, 1993*
Gelatin Silver Print, 125x97 cm
- [15] *Tanya K, 1993*
Gelatin Silver Print, 50x40 cm
- Buddy, 2009*
Gelatin Silver Print, 125x97 cm
- [16] *Infant Wedo, 2012*
Gelatin Silver Print 100x78 cm
- Untitled VIII, 2010*
Gelatin Silver Print, 50x40 cm
- Fresh, Real, Flave and 4Doe, 2008*
Gelatin Silver Print, 50x40 cm
- Untitled V, 2013*
Gelatin Silver Print, 125x97 cm
- [17] *Sa'Marra, 2012*
daughter of Selena
Gelatin Silver Print, 100x78 cm
- Selena, 1993*
Gelatin Silver Print, 100x78 cm
- Toussaint, 1993*
Gelatin Silver Print, 100x78 cm
- Tyrone with his son De'Anthony, 2013*
son and grandson of Toussaint
Gelatin Silver Print, 100x78 cm
- Toussaint, 2008*
Gelatin Silver Print, 100x78 cm



China, 1993