

# CIVILIAN

ART PROJECTS

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Cynthia Connolly** *Letters on Top of Buildings*

**Exhibition on view:**  
May 11-June 16, 2012

**Opening Reception:**  
Friday, May 11, 7-9pm

**Artist's Talk:**  
Saturday, June 16<sup>th</sup>, 4pm with  
Paul Roth, Senior Curator and  
Director, Photography and Media  
Arts, Corcoran Gallery of Art

Civilian Art Projects presents Cynthia Connolly: *Letters on Top of Buildings*, an exhibition of new work by the well-known DC-based photographer. The exhibition opens to the public on Friday, May 11 and will be on view through Saturday, June 16, 2012.

The twelve photographs comprising the series "Letters on Top of Buildings" have been a work in progress since the artist was a child. She remembers riding in the backseat of her mother's car and feeling like "a flying bird" on the elevated freeways of the L.A. She enjoyed the solitude and focus of sitting in the back seat, looking at the neon letters on old buildings in Hollywood and downtown L.A. She recollects "Jesus Saves," "Hotel Roosevelt," and the "Fontenoy," buildings and signs she never went back to photograph, but still plans to do so. The series is a life-long work in progress.

Since the mid 1990's, Connolly has been searching to find buildings that reminded her of that landscape. The signage, scale, and light have to be just right. Traveling as far west as Tucson, AZ, the work is from buildings in New Orleans, LA; Virginia, including Arlington, McKinney, Staunton, Richmond; Brooklyn, New York; Washington, D.C.; and Prince, West Virginia.

According to the artist, "these buildings and signs are beautiful typographic sculptures that rejoice an era of quality construction and pride of the institution it boasts. The buildings stand tall, their crowns embellished with steel lettering in the city center. They are treasures found, and as more often than not, we neglect to look up and find them, especially now, because many are on top of abandoned buildings where the signs are no longer lit and the attention of the viewer remains at street level."

Cynthia's work is a catalogue of memory. Her black and white photography has a particular way of capturing the feel of both the open road and the expansiveness of the American West. Traveling across the country, she photographically collects groupings of images such as ice machines, telephone booths, "Incas" or x's on the ground, bodies of water and more.

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Her work is also about the iconic and historic nature of black and white photography. She shoots film and prints the work in her home darkroom using a glass negative carrier and the last of the Forte fiber-based photographic paper. This is, perhaps, a dying art; still beloved by those trained in its practice and familiar with the depth, richness, and contrast of silver-gelatin exposures and fiber-based photographs.

Accompanying the photographs will be the second in her "grab-bag" series, presented as a "souvenir" of the show. Made of 8x10" prints of 9 images from the show in a letter-pressed envelope, each is unique: The photograph was contained within the envelope at printing, and as a result has the printed indentation of the type. The concept of the "souvenir" is an important part of her work, as it reminds us of the surprise of finding things as we pass by them, like the "Letters on Top of Buildings."

Cynthia Connolly was born in Los Angeles and grew up in Washington, DC, where she attended the Corcoran School of Art, receiving her BFA in Graphic Design in 1985. In 2003 she received a certificate from Auburn University's design/build architecture program, The Rural Studio, where she extensively photographed the land and its people. Internationally exhibited and a prolific artist, she is known for works in the internationally touring *Beautiful Losers* exhibit; the book *Banned in DC*; her post cards; and curatorial work at DC Space, the Ellipse Arts Center, and Artisphere in Arlington, VA. Her photography is in many publications and private collections, as well as the Smithsonian Museum of American History and the Corcoran Gallery of Art. This is Cynthia's first exhibition with Civilian Art Projects.

Please contact the gallery for additional information or images.