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Constructing Home:

Allegories of Labor in Larry Sultan's *Homeland* (2006-2009)

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts
in Art History

by

Olivian Ho Young Cha

2016

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Constructing Home:
Allegories of Labor in Larry Sultan's *Homeland* (2006-2009)

by

Olivian Ho Young Cha
Master of Arts in Art History
University of California, Los Angeles, 2016
Professor Miwon Kwon, Chair

This paper examines a series of photographs produced by American artist Larry Sultan (1946-2009) titled, *Homeland*. Made between 2006 and 2009—a financially tumultuous period when the collapse of the US housing market would precipitate what was known as the Great Recession—the images depict suburban landscapes populated by immigrant day laborers. In treating these sites as staged fictions, Sultan introduces visual and narrative ambiguities, which, I argue, reveal the complex underpinnings of suburbia's social and aesthetic construction. Focusing on *Creek, Santa Rosa* (2009) as an exemplary work from the series, the paper traces the narrative anomalies of the picture, alongside the technical specificities of the photograph's production, in order to present an allegorical framework through which the larger socio-economic conditions of labor and the fragile economies of home might newly be addressed.

The thesis of Olivian Ho Young Cha is approved.

George Thomas Baker
Lothar von Falkenhausen
Miwon Kwon, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2016

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Introduction

Between 2006 and 2009, contemporary artist Larry Sultan produced a series of photographs titled *Homeland*. For some, the word “homeland” may immediately evoke national security, geopolitics and ethnic identity, yet the project negotiates these subjects through the more domestic spaces of suburban America.¹ While the majority of these images present sweeping, idyllic landscapes, the artist identifies these spaces as the uninhabited and neglected areas situated at the fringes of middle-class residential developments. Recalling his adolescent upbringing in the San Fernando Valley area of Southern California, Sultan wrote that these sites represented “a small and vanishing patch of paradise that existed just outside of the boundaries of property and ownership.”² In Sultan’s interpretation, these “transitional” zones manifest as striking pictorial compositions; houses appear as contained and uniform geometries—as luminous forms gleaming tirelessly in the distance. Amidst rolling hills and lush fields, sometimes alongside crystalline bodies of water and picturesque skies.

By 2009, the economic realities of property and ownership—ideas at the heart of the American dream—would precipitate the country’s financial downfall. Sultan’s series would prove prescient. While the artist produced highly aestheticized images of suburbia, the collapse

¹ Sultan returns the word “homeland” to a more literal (and domestic) sense of *home* and *land*, recuperating it’s meaning from other post-9/11 “deployments”: as seen in American television shows of the same name and the more troubling state agency known as the Department of Homeland Security.

² “Larry Sultan | Homeland,” accessed December 28, 2015, <http://larrysultan.com/gallery/homeland/>.

of the housing market and the subprime mortgage crisis resulted in thousands of home foreclosures, millions in lost savings, and severe spikes in the nation's poverty and unemployment rates.³ Suburbia cast as idyll on the one hand, yet Sultan populated his scenes with figures whose precarious subsistence depended on the physical maintenance and preservation of the American home: immigrant day laborers. Hired from the parking lots of big box hardware stores, Sultan would pose these men in activities he identified as "routines and rituals related to place and domesticity," ones that evoked "the poignancy of displacement and the longing for home."⁴ But *whose* "home" does Sultan invoke? While some scenes suggest an archetypal picture of domestic life, Sultan's fictive visual narratives more pointedly illustrate how geography and real estate, engender broader conflicts of class and social alienation. In photographs like *Richmond Parkway* (2007) and *Canal District, San Rafael* (2008) from the *Homeland* series, cliché suburban activities such as hanging a string of lights on a tree or carrying food to a neighborhood potluck, are made strange by the locations in which they unfold: a desolate yard on the "wrong" side of a picket fence in the former, and a field of unruly weeds on the outskirts of a line of homes in the latter (Fig. 1 and Fig. 2). In such images, Sultan's story-bound characters and the immigrant day laborers portraying them attend to "routines and rituals related to place and domesticity," either as subjects of the artist's fictional projections or as men whose work typically involves tending to

³ Ben S. Bernanke, "Federal Reserve Bank: Speech--Bernanke, The Crisis and the Policy Response," January 13, 2009, <http://www.federalreserve.gov/newsevents/speech/bernanke20090113a.htm>.

⁴ "Larry Sultan | Homeland."

domestic spaces. This ontological doubling renders the external identities of these men inextricable from their staged roles, straining the boundaries of representation, and leaving us to question how one might disentangle photographic "truth" from fiction.

Indeed, *Homeland* was the first series in which Sultan's otherwise "straight" photography practice was replaced by a more directorial mode involving loosely scripted narratives, the staging of actors and props, and—most critically—the extensive use of image-editing software.⁵ All photographs in the series were potentially subject to an array of digital manipulations. Whether architecture, natural formation, or Tupperware-toting actor, all visual elements of these images were likely enhanced, cut, layered, and repositioned. They are more like collaged constructions rather than traditional photographs. Other elements that may have been physically present at the photographed scene but removed in the process of editing remain unseen, and thus unknown, orphaned in the process of removal—no explicit evidence indicates their presence or erasure. In this realm of technical possibilities, we not only encounter the paradigmatic tension between the medium's aesthetic and documentary functions but also familiar problems concerning photography's claim to physical indexicality.

⁵ While this specific turn to the digital signals a key moment in Sultan's practice, *Homeland* would not be the first instance in which the artist would employ digital technologies for the production of his art. In 1995 Sultan would collaborate with artist Mike Mandel on a public art project located at the entry of a civic pool in Defremery Park in Oakland, CA. Titled, *Pool*, the artists created two 18ft. tall mosaic murals depicting swimsuit-clad children suspended in pre-water plunges. These images were taken as analog photographs and then digitized so that each individual tile was directly translated from the individual pixels of the digital image. In Sultan's words: "From a distance it looks very photographic. From up close it just falls apart into kind of a digital noise." Drew Johnson and Larry Sultan, Oral History Transcript, Oakland Museum Oral History Project, Transcript, December 16, 2003, http://larrysultan.com/archives/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/OMCA_LARRY_SULTAN.pdf.

We might begin to imbricate the technological means and modes of *Homeland*'s production with the series' endless thematic ambiguities, dualities and inconsistencies. It is not only the displaced narratives and charged social motifs that lend Sultan's photographs a sense of dislocation and contingency. In another image from the series, *Creek, Santa Rosa* (2009), we are faced with a kind of perceptual displacement as well—a strangeness resulting from the process of digital compositing, which presents the spatiotemporal coordinates of multiple photographs into a single image (Fig. 3). The image locates us somewhere between grassy knoll, stony creek and built environment but with a perverse level of pictorial detail, from the vertiginous colors marking every blade of grass to the simultaneous impression of extreme depth and utter flatness. This surplus of optical information establishes a sense of clarity that is undermined by figures and narratives that, in contrast, evoke a kind of epistemological muddiness. What are the two men in this picture doing? And why? Is this rift between vision and meaning cause for alarm? For Sultan such disparities are not accidental; these moments of uncertainty are precisely what *Homeland* captures. One cannot be sure why three men wade in a marsh, or paddle their rowboats on an industrial inlet, yet the textures, colors and sheen of these spaces register with visual intensity—charging this ambiguity with the vim of fact.

We might situate this aesthetic effect—between what one sees within the image as visual data, and what can be *known* about the image as meaning—alongside certain digital “economies of editing,” and the

larger socio-economic conditions that *Homeland* implicitly frames.⁶ Unsurprisingly, it was the construction industry that proved to be the most severely affected by a financial crisis brought on by the broken real estate market. That Sultan hired figures whose jobs were most vulnerable at this juncture—men involved with varied forms of manual labor related to domestic construction (e.g. pouring foundation, installing windows and roofs, etc.); and were already disenfranchised by their immigrant, possibly undocumented and non-union working class status, elicits questions concerning the ethics of cultural production as it regards labor. Has Sultan's personal projection upon these workers displaced their capacity as social agents in their own photographic representations? What does it mean to evoke notions of "home," property and ownership through figures whose ownership of these ideas is tenuous? Is Sultan's employment of their labor substantively different than hiring these same men to conduct more "standard" forms of work such as painting walls, paving patios or moving furniture? What are the material and economic implications of these modes of "work" in our post-photographic present?⁷

⁶ I borrow the phrase "economies of editing" from artist Hito Steyerl, who employs the language of 'cuts' and 'cutting' as a metaphor across several registers of 'bodies': "a literal body, which is really or metaphorically cut, as well as a metaphorical body, which represents a national economy, a country, or indeed a corporation."—in order to pose economic narratives of both cultural production and political economy in tandem. Hito Steyerl and Franco Berardi, "Cut! Reproduction and Recombination," in *The Wretched of the Screen*, E-Flux Journal (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2012), 176-88.

⁷ "Post-photography" is a term artist Martha Rosler discusses in great detail in a 1997 essay that responds to the increased critique of "portrait" and street photography that were appearing in galleries and museums during this time. Rosler does not so much tackle the intricacies of image-editing software as much as argue that our relationship to photographic "objectivity," and further issues regarding the ethical dimensions of photographic representation during this historical juncture, continue to recast the potentially activist and political registers that social documentary once signaled. Within her account of photography's capacity for "truth" she argues that questions concerning digital manipulation only re-affirm that photography's evidential claim to "truth" were always dubious. When examining the issues at stake for *Homeland*, the framework of post-photography marks a useful starting point for reconsidering the political and aesthetic capacities for contemporary photography, and locating *Homeland* firmly within methodologies of social art history. Rosler further writes, "Perhaps a radical documentary can be

In pursuing this line of inquiry, I will argue that *Homeland* engages with suburbia not only as place but also as a social construction with complex cultural, political and economic underpinnings. Using the photograph, *Creek, Santa Rosa* (2009) as my central example, I will trace how Sultan's work discloses the political economies surrounding mythologies of suburbia and "home," particularly through the lens of labor. This analysis will consist of two parts: a close reading of the ambivalence and ambiguity exhibited within Sultan's photograph, and an examination of the modes of production that produced it. In approaching the operations of digital image compositing as an allegory, the fluid activities of digital manipulation, migration, and erasure are posed against the larger contingent conditions of day labor, as well as the tenuous state of domestic belonging—that is, of the concept of homeland—in our globalized and post-industrial present. While the infrastructures of financial security and home underwent a simultaneous crisis, *Homeland* ultimately destabilizes ideological ballasts that situate "home" within the capitalist schema of property and ownership. Sultan transposes these myths in the recessional valleys of photography's discursive spaces.⁸

brought into existence. But the common acceptance of the idea that documentary precedes, supplants, transcends, or cures full, substantive social activism is an indicator that we do not yet have a real documentary." Martha Rosler, "Post-Documentary, Post-Photography?," in *Decoys and Disruptions: Selected Writings, 1975-2001* (October Books, 2004).

⁸ I borrow this term from Rosalind Krauss and employ a similar theoretical approach for thinking through *Homeland*—a model that considers the diverse social operations and manifestations of photography alongside its modes of reception (and production). Ultimately, Krauss suggests a nuanced and rigorous assessment of the language and always shifting contexts surrounding photography. Rosalind Krauss, "Photography's Discursive Spaces: Landscape/View," *Art Journal* 42, no. 4 (1982): 311-19, doi:10.2307/776691.

Deconstructing Home

When asked about his artistic influences Larry Sultan was reluctant to invoke histories of photography, calling on a diverse range of painterly precedents from the late 19th century works of the American Hudson River School to the 21st century pastiche of the “painter of light™” Thomas Kinkade.⁹ While the formal aspects of *Homeland*'s landscapes may share the romantic textures and pastoral compositions of painters like Frederic Edwin Church—particularly in the attention to pictorial details and qualities of color and light—Sultan's interest in the latter more notably elucidates the intricate dimensions of his investigations into the psychical space of suburban America. While Kinkade's standardized aesthetic vocabulary speaks to how a larger public might derive meaning from “Art” (particularly, through its “picturesque” qualities). In images like *Rose Gate* (1995), we are presented with a winding cobblestone path amidst lush gardens with a quaint home residing at its end (Fig. 4). A brief introduction to Kinkade's series: “Every gate featured in a Thomas Kinkade painting possesses its own unique style and distinct personality, making each one of them a splendid subject for painting. The gates in Thom's scenes seem to beckon us to come inside.” Paintings such as this are sold in multiple sizes and forms and are narrated for the potential buyer in his gallery, which are often located in suburban malls across America.

⁹ In a 2015 exhibition of Larry Sultan's works at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, a section titled “Study Hall” displayed materials tracing Sultan's diverse interests including: found images, notebook pages, documentation from location shoots including images of the works of Thomas Kinkade and Gustave Courbet's *The Stonebreakers* (1859). Author interview with Kelly Sultan, February 29, 2016.

Kinkade's commercial success reveals the multifarious workings of how art's symbolic value erupts as mass-market commodities. A much-maligned figure known for hierarchically produced paintings that hang on the walls of many American suburban homes, Kinkade signals the extremes of capitalism's inversion of populist art. In reimagining historical avant-garde endeavors as an "art for everyone" mode of production that derives from both factory production and the post-industrial labor of sales and customer service, perhaps Kinkade's enterprise is not far from the pre-fabricated, cookie-cutter tract homes of contemporary residential developments that one imagines when conjuring visions of suburbia.¹⁰ In this way, the wide-ranging popularity of Kinkade's art forms a useful preamble to Sultan's study of the more intricate emotional dimensions involved in the construction and perpetuation of cultural mythologies and clichés. For Sultan these investigations were not poised for ironic critique, but rather motivated by a desire to render suburbia a "richer field, something that isn't filled with the assumption of generic lives."¹¹ Perhaps this is why Sultan's projects (and the wider socio-economic themes underlying them) always begin with the profoundly personal.

This is nowhere more apparent than in *Pictures from Home*—a series of photographs taken by Sultan between 1983 and 1992.

¹⁰ While Kinkade's artworks manifest as paintings, lithographs and strange hybrid photographs-paintings, which are all priced differently according to their proximity or resemblance to the artist's original paintings. The latter forms were first conceived to make his images available to a larger public at reasonable prices—so that his art could, in his words, "engulf as many hearts as possible with art." His commercial enterprise extends to many other licensed products with functional roles: from lamps to rugs to La-Z-Boys. Susan Orlean, "Art for Everbody," *The New Yorker*, October 15, 2001.

¹¹ "Words," *Larry Sultan*, accessed March 24, 2016, <http://larrysultan.com/words/>.

Documenting his parents in his childhood home in the San Fernando Valley and a Palm Springs gated retirement community where they subsequently relocated; the images portray insipid interiors and pruned exteriors through the lens of nostalgia and the particularities of Sultan's paternal relationships.¹² Ultimately manifesting as a photo book, the project tempers the banalities of green shag carpet, macramé hangings, and plasticized 1970's décor with intimate texts excerpted from interviews Sultan conducted with his parents during the 9-year period, as well as stills from old family movies. The nuances of these scenes might be attributed to Sultan's occasional staging of the photos. His parents were sometimes posed and objects were repositioned.¹³ Vivid, sun-drenched spaces evince a strange and disturbing kind of middle-class anomie: a desk cluttered with receipts and bills, interiors of outdated furniture and appliances, or domestic quarrels, as in *Argument in the Hallway* (1986) (Fig. 5). Sultan writes, "These were the Reagan years, when the image and the institution of the family were being used as an inspirational symbol by resurgent conservatives. I wanted to puncture this mythology of the family and to show what happens when we are driven by images of success."¹⁴ For Sultan images are tied to myth making, just as middle-class aspirations for designed communities, planned leisure and the nuclear

¹² It is worth mentioning that their subsequent move and selling of their property were induced by financial instability: Sultan's father would lose his sales job while his mother would begin to work in real estate. Larry Sultan and San Jose Museum of Art, *Pictures from Home* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1992).

¹³ Sultan wrote of this project: "My pictures were a blend of staged and documentary work, again trying to collapse the differences. Johnson and Sultan, Oral History Transcript, Oakland Museum Oral History Project.

¹⁴ Larry Sultan, *Pictures from Home* (New York: Abrams, 1992).

family unit—in other words suburbia and home—are also myths made manifest in images. Images are also products of both cultural construction and personal projection. Sultan's insistence on the latter becomes crucial to his work. He further says of his subtle posing of scenes and subjects, "To me the truth is about performance, how we perform, how we project and the truth can be staged and it can be found. I don't think there is such a division between the two."¹⁵ An anecdote from the artist on *Pictures from Home* articulates this slightly differently in his father's words:

...my father is very philosophical and he said to me, there is a picture of him sitting on a bed all dressed up, and he said: "look I am really happy to help you with this work but I really want you to know that I already know that that's you sitting on the bed, that this is a self portrait. I know who I am, you know who you are, your values are part of this work, but let's just make it very explicit, that is you sitting on the bed."¹⁶

For both Sultan and his father, the personal is fundamentally cleaved to the social spaces of photographic representation.

Moving from Sultan's sublimated site of origin to one of transitory rental, *The Valley* (2004) supplants paternal intimacy with detached voyeurism. Here, a pornographic film contextualizes "home"; its architectural scaffolding is a leased house located in the San Fernando Valley—a well-known hub for California's thriving adult film industry. If *Pictures from Home* offers a self-critical "documentary" project tempered with signs of photographic staging, *The Valley* marks a further progression towards the purely fabricated and fictional

¹⁵ Johnson and Sultan, Oral History Transcript, Oakland Museum Oral History Project.

¹⁶ Ibid.

image in terms of production. The façade of staged sets congeals with the façade of domesticity and the separation between staged props and extant furnishings is indistinguishable. Furthermore, we see partial views of bodies in erotic narratives alongside behind-the-scenes views of bodies at rest—when off-camera actors, actresses and production hands are merely laborers, whose work is paid by the day. Notably, this series would most directly metabolize Sultan's mode of artistic production with his commercial one.¹⁷ In turn, the artist would become more familiar with the presence of movable backdrops, staged lighting and other technical equipment, which would allow him to take better photographs. "It's not about porn. It's about furniture," the artist would write on the back of one of the photographs.¹⁸ However, the built-in uncertainty of what unraveled within the closed system of a pornographic film is what remained central to his project. In the project that follows, Sultan would fully embrace these staged and technically controlled means of production while also insisting on the extremely personal valences and projection exhibited in *Pictures from Home*.

Real Estate and Unreal States

The fifteen color photographs comprising *Homeland* do not form a uniform series. Subtle discordances can be found within the titles,

¹⁷ Between 1993-2009, Sultan worked on over 160 editorial assignments for publications such as: *The New York Times*, *Details*, *Vanity Fair* and *W* magazine. The influence of the artist's commercial work on his fine art practice forms a compelling line of inquiry but will not be addressed in full here. Philip Gefter et al., *Larry Sultan: Here and Home / Organized by Rebecca Morse; Essays by Philip Gefter, Sandra S. Phillips; Artist's Writings and Quotes by Larry Sultan*. (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Munich; London; New York, 2014).

¹⁸ Larry Sultan et al., *Larry Sultan* (Bielefeld: Kerber, 2015), 94.

locations, styles, and pictorial compositions of each image.¹⁹

Shifting to picturesque views of suburbia as seen from *outside* the home, domestic architecture no longer provides a structural frame that encloses the image, but acts as a kind of iconographic ornament, not unlike decorative art that “matches the sofa.” At first the works seem to coalesce under the genre of landscape—pastoral scenes that exhibit clear horizon lines and precise configurations of land and sky. Many of the individual titles point to natural forms, and presumably depict the geographic locations named: *Corte Madera Marsh* (2009), shows three men knee-deep in a grassy fen with a highly reflective surface inverting cloudy skies and distant bodies with remarkable exactitude (Fig. 6). In *Simi Valley* (2009), dry brush and sedimentary hills are cast in a parched, gold light that conjures the desert topographies of southern California (Fig. 7). In both of these images, as well as the majority of others, figures are seen from a distance, often anonymous and appropriately scaled to the august scenes on view. They are often walking away from the camera forming triangular or zigzagging configurations through their placement. In other images bodies are barely discernable, mere specks lying under sylvan shadows. Unlike *Pictures from Home* and *The Valley*, the camera here is mostly situated further from its subjects, who are positioned in “marginal” spaces, as Sultan has said, but ones that remain decisively public in the artist’s constructions, somewhat vulnerable in their shelter-less visibility. The spatial and psychological distance between the viewer and these men is a critical component in Sultan’s compositions. Some

of his strategic arrangements seem to test our vision by eliciting a kind of cat and mouse game whose ultimate goal is a kind of geographical identification. The political implications of such diversions are obvious enough: identifying difference is also to identify what is "wrong," or out of place. In such a challenge how do the racial and class identities of these men figure in? But Sultan's distances are not consistent. In *Batting Cage* (2007), the viewer confronts four men quietly posed within a space of recreation (Fig. 8). Sweeping landscape and distinct horizon line are obscured by a chain link fence enclosure that fractures the picture into oblique grids and undulating planes of metal. They are positioned relatively close to the camera, albeit in subtle variations of proximity. One man's back is to us, others gaze quietly outside the frame with blank, inscrutable expressions; while their bodies remain close they remain in a state of distant contemplation. Perhaps we might identify with these men, if only they were not looking away.

Sultan's men do not occupy every image. In *Welcome, Bienvenidos* (2008) we are presented with a desolate road that appears to lead nowhere. Surrounded by dry brush, grassy hills, and a tree-lined green horizon that fringes on blue sky, the concrete path is feebly cut off by a string of colored flags. Alongside two chairs, a megaphone and water pitcher sit atop a folding table, which supports a sign whose handwritten block letters suggest pep rallies and lemonade stands, "Welcome Bienvenidos" it reads (Fig. 9). Whom does this message address? It is the only title that does not point to a specific location, either by way of geography or function, referring instead to

distinctions in language, reminding us how subtle textual signifiers might impose spatial boundaries and meaning. *New Homes, Inland Empire* (2008) presents neither landscape nor figure, but an entire picture filled with precipitous gray clouds poised for rain. A single red advertising balloon floats in the center of the frame; its cherry-hue rupturing the dreary surface to deliver a portentous message, "NEW HOMES," helps to momentarily distract us from the tiny sliver of "home" that barely enters the corner of the photograph (Fig.10). When photographs are emptied of their figures, the effects of vacancy cast a very different tint—one that speaks most directly to external states of foreclosure, the haunting terrain of abandoned homes. The immeasurable effects of financial devastation synthesized here as an image depicting something like the aftermath of a neighborhood party. In *Cul-de-Sac, Antioch* (2008), a nicely pruned distribution of domestic architecture and tree-lined streets presents an idealized snapshot of suburban "scrawl" that includes the perfect combination of rural hillside and built landscape (Fig. 11). Yet Sultan troubles this panoramic scene with a scarcely detectable figure located in the small clearing of a cul-de-sac positioned in the center of the picture who appears to be running towards an idling car with its passenger side door ajar. We cannot be certain. Moreover, the mini plotline I describe is precisely that—miniature in scale, occupying only a small fraction of the otherwise abounding suburban landscape.

Ultimately Sultan's hired day laborers instill a visual ambivalence. When they are proximally close, they remain unyielding in their emotional states of detachment. When they are distant specks far

from the camera, they still appear strangely close to the surface of the image. While we confront their activities en media res, whatever their movement or distance they register an inexplicable stillness. Perhaps in their present, yet decidedly absent, comportment we are better able to confront our own negotiations of what Sultan identified as his desire and longing for home. Sultan makes clear that this personal and self-reflexive projection is an inevitable social process inherent to the nature of photographic meaning. In the transitory spaces of *Homeland*, one's vacillating interpretations and projections begin to cast the images as reflective surfaces—their individual parts vibrate with contingency.

The second half of my paper will address the specificities of these transitory spaces in greater detail using *Creek, Santa Rosa* as an example of how the nature of Sultan's pictorial ambiguities point to the specificities of the image's production, which ultimately form an allegory for the contemporary conditions of contingent day labor. To ask Again: *Whose* homeland does Sultan invoke? And further, what is "home" or "land" under the variable, and amorphous conditions of globalization?²⁰

Creek, Santa Rosa

At almost 6 ft. high and 5 ft. wide, *Creek, Santa Rosa* is the only vertically oriented photograph in the series. Taking up most of

²⁰ While the vast meanings assigned to "globalization" (notwithstanding its implications and causes) are not possible to synthesize within the scope of this paper, my use of the term here is informed by the following definition: "globalization refers to fundamental changes in the spatial and temporal contours of social existence, according to which the significance of space or territory undergoes shifts in the face of a no less dramatic acceleration in the temporal structure of crucial forms of human activity." William Scheuerman, "Globalization," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, Summer 2014, 2014, <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2014/entries/globalization/>.

the picture plane is a dense field of lushly variegated green and yellow grass, yet we are far from the bucolic landscape its title might suggest: Sultan's "creek" manifests as little more than a reflective puddle in the bottom right corner of the frame, suggesting irrigation run off more than natural streams of water—alongside the dark, chicken wire and faux-stone retaining wall the scene in the foreground forms a stark contrast to flawless blue skies and bright white houses in the horizon. Three stone-filled, plastic buckets pepper the picture plane and attempt to establish a vanishing point, yet the photograph presents the entire visual field in sharp focus, creating a shallow plane that betrays the perspectival arrangement. By now we are familiar with some of Homeland's formal strategies, yet the scene still strikes us as odd—the horizontal landscape comprises expresses a steep verticality. Three-dimensional forms do not evoke recessionary space but function more like illustrative lines, compacted within a single surface. A knobby black tree appears in the upper section of the picture, its scale suggests its proximity is close, it does not feel any nearer or further from us than the line of tract homes and sky behind it. Here, the photograph is not so much a snapshot or "window," as much as a stratified plane of colors.

The two figures at the center of this scene appear to be collecting and transporting stones from the adjacent creek to the picturesque homes in the horizon. One man squats at the water's edge, he has paused his stone collecting work in a moment of deep reflection. Again, his gaze drifts past the frame. His darkly colored clothing and shaved head contrast starkly with the vibrating hues

surrounding him. He appears almost as an outlined cutout, adhered to the surface of the image. A second figure is walking up towards the houses in the distance. His back is to us and he would barely register if not for the blackness of hair, his urban attire and the subtle path of flattened grass behind him. What we can see of their expressions, dress and bodily stance only amplifies our confusion and inability to identify their feelings or intentions. We are now familiar with some of the directorial strategies that Sultan employs in his images yet we remain perplexed by the scene's narrative. Are we to view these men as "dignified" and "beautiful" as some curators have suggested?²¹ Or perhaps the rocks they are wielding cast a more threatening and sinister picture? Have they been cast as visual blemishes on an otherwise scenic picture?

In this imagery of stones and marginalized figures, precariously posed between "natural" and built environments, we might recall earlier European avant-garde movements that addressed the social and political landscape through varying painterly interpretations of rural labor. Sultan's art historical propensities for mid-19th century painting did indeed extend to Gustave Courbet and the iconography of the seminal Realist painting, *The Stonebreakers* (1849-50; now lost) (Fig. 12). The public reception of this work, which was subsequently destroyed during World War II, has been thoroughly studied by art historians who claim that the work's aesthetic and avant-garde inscrutability—alongside, its casual treatment of sub-proletariat workers rendered without "anecdote or pathos"—caused controversy and

²¹ Gefter et al., *Larry Sultan*.

bewilderment.²² According to TJ Clark, it was the difficulty of locating their humanity that induced a kind of anxiety and repression for the critics and public who could not resolve a picture of rural labor outside the context of more classical, humanist aesthetics.²³

To be clear, this argument is not suggesting that the social and aesthetic particularities involved with the expectations of, and subsequent response to, *The Stonebreakers* of 1849 are similar to those of *Creek, Santa Rosa*. Rather, I am proposing that the uncertainties once evoked by Courbet's depiction of labor are what Sultan wanted *Creek, Santa Rosa* to similarly convey. For the artist, ambiguity and ambivalence are the very conditions that engender meaning:

You see something, you're fascinated, you're a bit repulsed, you don't know exactly what it is, you don't have enough information yet to file it away. And before one can file it into the known, there are these moments in which you get to see without knowing what it is yet. I think those are the rare moments of seeing. Before one is completely protected or anointed by what we have already experienced.²⁴

Here is where we might locate Sultan's pensive men. It is also where we find ourselves as spectators.

In this evocation of Courbet's stonebreakers, Sultan seems to be telling us that the activity he depicts is indeed *labor*, what kind of work is being presented here? What necessitates the strange activity

²² *The Stonebreakers* has been described by Linda Nochlin as, "the basis of a whole movement which encompassed Europe from the middle of the nineteenth century on, attempting to create a dignified, accurate, serious and sympathetic image of rural labor." However, it was precisely Courbet's un-sympathetic, rough aesthetic treatment of what was considered to be the very epitome of meaningless labor that made the painting so singularly contentious at the time. Linda Nochlin, *Realism, Style and Civilization* A1305 (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971).

²³ Clark further writes that Courbet rendered his stonebreakers without "anecdote or pathos," these subjects convey, not feelings or emotions but the very act of labor—removed from any notion of heroism, idealism or beauty. T. J. Clark, *Image of the People: Gustave Courbet and the 1848 Revolution* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1973).

²⁴ Johnson and Sultan, Oral History Transcript, Oakland Museum Oral History Project.

of mobilizing stones within the perfectly composed pastoral setting of *Creek, Santa Rosa*?

Again, the artist's subjects were found in the parking lots of big-box hardware stores—sites that suggest a general spectrum of physical work that nonetheless remains tacit until the precise moment that one is “hired” and assigned a specific task. In such a context, the day laborer waits in a state of anticipation for jobs that are inconsistent, poorly paid and “on demand.” They are what the US Department of Labor categorizes as the “contingent worker,” in other words, persons from the most “vulnerable sectors of the workforce” who “do not expect their jobs to last.”²⁵ Yet, this work is contingent in another way—it is also reliant upon a kind of versatility. Skills and knowledge related to any number of tasks tied to the spaces of domesticity: construction certainly, and other physically taxing or menial activities such as gardening, painting and so forth. However, in the case of *Homeland* this work enters the field of cultural production as well. In this sense, their usual conditions of physical *precariousness* are transposed against states of economic *precarity*.²⁶

²⁵ United States Department of Labor, <http://www.dol.gov/sec/media/reports/dunlop/section5.htm>

²⁶ For Rosalind Gill and Andy Pratt the term “precarity,” as it relates to labor, extends from the precarious conditions of “all forms of insecure, contingent, flexible work - from illegalized, casualized and temporary employment, to homeworking, piecework and freelancing.” However, conditions of globalization have enabled a new stage of capitalism and states of *precarity* that also enable “new forms of political struggle and solidarity that reach beyond the traditional models of the political party or trade union,” furthermore, “offering the potential for new subjectivities, new socialities and new kinds of politics.” These new libratory possibilities have been associated with “immaterial” modes of labor. Rosalind Gill and Andy Pratt, “In the Social Factory? Immaterial Labour, Precariousness and Cultural Work,” *Theory, Culture & Society* 25, no. 7-8 (December 1, 2008): 1-30, doi:10.1177/0263276408097794.

By employing these men and subsequently supplanting their "standard" modes of work with the task of indirectly aestheticizing their own disenfranchised conditions, Sultan seems to further complicate the uncertainties and anxieties that his images engender. On the one hand, they remain within their usual spectrum of work: *physical* labor that is paid by the day, and the more abstract, general conditions of this kind of work: the contingency and uncertainty described above. On the other, Sultan's projected narratives are not quite fiction and involve an aesthetic and authorial intention that shifts the standard, anonymous work of the day laborer to a job that is explicitly contingent upon the external, disenfranchised status of the worker in question. This is not only about their immigrant, working class status and personal displacement from home, but essentially articulating, or visualizing, these states. Sultan has not hired professional actors to *portray* immigrant day laborers, he has hired *actual* immigrant day laborers to act in curious stories that challenge the boundaries between fiction and "reality" by confusing the categories of work these men usually conduct. In this way, *Creek, Santa Rosa* forms an allegory of labor that simultaneously acknowledges (as photograph), the otherwise invisible conditions of cultural production, which the image itself enacts.

Furthermore, the product manifests and circulates within a decidedly public context: as a photographic commodity within the market economies of contemporary art and the virtual economies of the Internet. Ultimately, Sultan's ontological choreography has left us wondering how the differences between such modes of labor might

actually shift the "realities" of their work, and furthermore, the ethical registers of Sultan's artistic production?

Brett Neilson and Ned Rossiter write that the complexity of labor relationships in the wake of globalization and new information technologies has led to the impossibility of tracing the boundaries of work and its varying embodiments. The challenges of categorization in what has been called the new information economy have, perhaps tellingly, led to a multitude, or excess, of classifications.²⁷ Neilson and Rossiter write: "Creative labour, network labour, cognitive labour, service labour, affective labour, linguistic labour, immaterial labour. These categories often substitute for each other, but in their very multiplication they point to diverse qualities of experience that are not simply reducible to each other."²⁸

While an exhaustive analysis of these taxonomies is beyond the scope of my paper, I introduce these terms to emphasize Sultan's unique positioning of *work* against the larger socio-economic conditions of labor that I believe *Homeland* reflects. That is, his compositing of labor: the *actual*, standard modes of their manual labor (construction, painting, etc.) and the cultural modes of labor (acting, "affective" work, etc.) posed by *Homeland's* production, ultimately frames the complex boundaries between the material and

²⁷ In criticizing the wider socio-economic impulse by economists, media, and private and state interests to categorize our present as an "information economy," Schiller suggests the crude historical narrative of labor's progression—from agriculture to manufacturing to information, has inherently ideological stakes and social implications. Dan Schiller, "Labor and Digital Capitalism," in *The Routledge Companion to Labor and Media* (Routledge, 2016).

²⁸ Brett Neilson and Ned Rossiter, "FCJ-022 From Precarity to Precariousness and Back Again: Labour, Life and Unstable Networks," accessed March 26, 2016, <http://five.fibrejournal.org/fcj-022-from-precarity-to-precariousness-and-back-again-labour-life-and-unstable-networks/>.

"immaterial" conditions of work in our present landscape. Such distinctions have been evoked in discussions surrounding the conditions of post-industrial and post-Fordist labor. While these terms often describe cultural and service economies, the conversations center on the blurred boundaries the activity of work and life outside it.²⁹

Furthermore, Neill and Rossiter again:

On the one hand these labour practices are the oppressive face of post-Fordist capitalism, yet they also contain potentialities that spring from workers' own refusal of labour and subjective demands for flexibility - demands that in many ways precipitate capital's own accession to interminable restructuring and rescaling, and in so doing condition capital's own techniques and regimes of control.³⁰

The duality presented here: between the "oppressive" vs. potentially liberatory "potentialities" for new modes of labor under the reign of globalization, is treated differently according to the particular political agendas. However, we might begin to bridge these thoughts with the photographs presented here.

Perhaps the labor of *Homeland* suggests that these categorical distinctions might be recast more simply as a set of questions—ones first relayed with syntactic elegance by Clark while thinking through the questions faced by Courbet's bewildered mid-19th century public:

²⁹ Immaterial labor is defined here through both Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri as labor that "produces immaterial goods such as a service, a cultural product, knowledge or communication," and by and Maurizio Lazzarato as "the activity that produces the "cultural content" of the commodity, immaterial labor involves a series of activities that are not normally recognized as "work" - in other words, the kinds of activities involved in defining and fixing cultural and artistic standards, fashions, tastes, consumer norms, and, more strategically, public opinion." Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000); "Immaterial Labor - Maurizio Lazzarato," accessed March 26, 2016, <http://www.generation-online.org/c/fcimmateriallabour3.htm>.

³⁰ Rossiter, "FCJ-022 From Precarity to Precariousness and Back Again."

*What is in the image, what is intended by it? What is the picture of, who is the picture for? Where does content end and context begin?*³¹

For our purposes, these questions elicit an analysis of the staging and photographic capture of suburban landscapes but also what lies beyond: to the phase of "postproduction," and further still to the external processes of distribution and the moment of reception. This process may seem to describe a linear if not obvious trajectory for the formation and reception of the photograph yet the proceeding section suggests that whatever linear modes of production we might conventionally assign the production of a photograph becomes fractured and rearranged in the realm of digital production. Material and temporal distinctions in the production of a photograph become hazy in the wake of networked and digital technologies, not unlike the porous categories and shifting boundaries of labor.

Digital Reconstructions

Most of today's contemporary art public will encounter *Creek, Santa Rosa* as an image on the Internet. However, when viewed as a printed photograph, it still manages to evoke the crystalline sheen of backlit surfaces and high-definition screens. Again, the photograph is a digital composite, made using Adobe Photoshop, the ubiquitous software for digital image editing. Of course, the photographic composite has historically embodied many forms and processes prior to the digital. I will return to this in a moment but first a few words about the photograph, which is indeed unique from others in the series. While exactly which elements of the image were digitally

³¹ Clark, *Image of the People*, 91.

altered—and how—remains unknowable, the dense amount of visual data and sheer luminosity of color might be explained by the five unique photographs comprising the image; that is, five different exposures, focal points and perspectives.³² As such, every detail in the image presents itself at maximum resolution, creating an unusual if not unnatural sense of space. The stratified effects described earlier can be attributed to the multiple angles comprising the image—angles from different photographs that were “stitched” together into a single panoramic perspective, along a *vertical* axis. In other words, we are simultaneously looking up at the horizon of tract homes in the distance and down at the stony creek in the foreground. This digital augmentation creates an extraordinary flatness that distorts distance, pressing all forms nearer to the surface. The two men radiate with strange buoyancy, and somewhere in the center of Sultan’s field of chartreuse grass and stone-filled buckets we might suspect there is a virtual seam.

Similar effects might be found in the work of contemporary German artist Andreas Gursky. Gursky’s digital composites manifest as large-scale photographs—some measure up to 73 x 143 inches—and gained significant critical attention as early as 1999.³³ The reception surrounding his work is useful to reiterate here. In describing the spatial qualities of the images Margaret Sundell writes, “atmospheric perspective is eliminated...things that originally lay one behind the

³² Sultan, Phone Interview with Kelly Sultan.

³³ Calvin Tomkins, “The Big Picture,” *Modern Painters*, Spring 2001.

other now lie next to each other on the same spatial plane. At the same time, single-point perspective remains intact, creating a disturbing sense of spatial dislocation and an even more disturbing gap between what we think we're looking at and what we're actually seeing."³⁴ Calvin Tompkins on the effects of *Rhein II* (1999): "What Gursky has done in *Rhein*, it strikes me, is to eliminate the trace. He took out everything - factory, strollers, barges, weather - that would have anchored his scene to a particular place in time, and what's left is not just 'a modern river' but a modern state of mind, made visible as an image" (Fig. 13).³⁵ Elsewhere, Pam Lee writes:

...no matter just where things are plotted relative to the standard coordinates of foreground, middle ground, and background, nearly everything seems available to the same inexhaustible visuality, a condition scarcely relieved by the conventions deployed to signal far-awayness. Perspective does less to communicate distance than it dramatizes the depthless depth of the image. The picture strikes a balance between its alloverness of vision and its radical compression of space.

And furthermore:

...in refusing any singular point of view, it likewise rejects any sense of agency constructing it.³⁶

I will return to Lee's conclusion in a moment, but at this point it may be useful to make a brief digression into the technical

³⁴ Margaret Sundell, "Andreas Gursky Exhibition Review," *Artforum International*, March 2000.

³⁵ Tompkins, "The Big Picture."

³⁶ Much of my argument is informed by Lee's incisive account of the ways through which Gursky's, "world picture" perpetuates the post-industrial agenda of capitalism under globalization. Her elegant summation of the political economies underlying discussions surrounding post-industrial labor and new information and networked economies and their subsequent implications within the realm of cultural production and contemporary photography, have deeply inspired the methodology of this paper. Pamela M. Lee, *Forgetting the Art World* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2012), 72.

capabilities and operations of image editing software such as Adobe Photoshop and the digital composite.

Dating back to the advent of the medium, the composite photograph, in its most basic definition is a single composition made from combining several different images and as such does not comprise a new formal category.³⁷ However, the immaterial process of digital compositing differs from earlier analog means in critical ways. In the digital synthesis of images the photograph is not bound to the physical manipulation of film, negative or print—manipulations are ultimately tied to the measurements and precision of the human hand. Computer software programs such as Photoshop combine photographic “layers” with seamless accuracy by utilizing mathematical algorithms that synthesize the visual qualities of each individual pixel.³⁸ All of this occurs within a matter of seconds, with an immediacy that is necessitated by the hyper-speed of contemporary image production and consumption.

The malleability and possibilities within digital editing software are quantitative yet encompass a universe of optical potentiality that is, in many ways, beyond one’s natural visual

³⁷ The term itself comprises any number of techniques including photomontage, multiple exposure, or combination printing that involve the amalgamation of two or more images into one composition.

³⁸ Adobe Photoshop is raster-based technology. Bitmap (or raster) images are composed of pixels or “bits” of data that are mapped across a dot matrix. The make-up of this imaging technology compliments digital photography, which uses electronic image sensors to form an image by charging pixels with light. It is also physically comparable to more conventionally analog, or indexical, methods of impressing an image onto a chemically treated, light-sensitive surface. While light exhibits properties of both waves and particles, images are mostly experienced on surfaces that have been impressed with something closer to light “packets” rather than light waves. Halftone dots or film grain can usually be seen if a photographic image is scrutinized closely. Similarly, a bitmap image is resolution dependent and if one “zooms in,” the pixels composing a raster image become visible. The density of these pixels directly informs the size of a raster image.

capacities. The mathematical logic behind such manipulations remains incredibly abstract and complex, while the use of these tools has become exceedingly ubiquitous and effortless. Not only can figures and architecture be added, removed or duplicated, skies can be tweaked to the perfect hue of blue, shadows can be precisely adjusted or totally eliminated, so that whatever intuitive qualities of light more *indexical* modes of photographic production reveal about vision, soon become data points when transformed to the binary algorithms of the digital. Hito Steyerl has written extensively on this front suggesting that the advanced technologies of computer software have rendered the distinction between production and postproduction inseparable:

With digital technologies, these processes have accelerated substantially. Traditionally, post-production meant synching, mixing, editing, color correction, and other procedures performed after shooting a movie. But in recent years, postproduction has begun to take over production wholesale. In newer mainstream productions, especially in 3-D or animation, postproduction is more or less equivalent to the production of the film itself. Compositing, animation, and modeling now belong to postproduction. Fewer and fewer components actually need to be shot, because they are partially or wholly created in postproduction. Paradoxically, production increasingly starts to take place within postproduction. Production transforms into an aftereffect.³⁹

The last sentence is key here. In Steyerl's "transformation" we intuit that this shift is rather a conflation, or perhaps erasure of the real world referents of photographic images. That is, photographic constructions are now born at the site of digital mediation and alteration (i.e. computer software), rather than the encounter between camera and physical subject. To clarify, this very brief elaboration

³⁹ Steyerl and Berardi, "Cut! Reproduction and Recombination."

on the differences between earlier analog strategies of compositing and newer digital techniques is not an attempt to extend ontological debates surrounding the veracity or evidentiary function of photographic images, which have found a newly flavored fervor in the digital landscape of our present moment.⁴⁰ But rather, an attempt to think through the ways in which digital technologies reconfigure our understanding of an image, allowing us to think critically about how, why and for whom an image is made.

Despite the narrative ambiguities and visual uncertainties in *Homeland*, Sultan's "patches of paradise," exhibit suburban visions that retain a quality of sameness in their elemental makeup (e.g. houses, pools, trees, inlets of water, and rolling hills, etc.). Certain menacing visual forms appear, and reappear, in the series. A line of tract housing, an already generic and serialized form, is repeated in many of Sultan's photographs. Again, they are always serial and uniform in their geometries and colors. However, in reconsidering an image like *Simi Valley* we notice how odd yet seamless the particular procession of homes pictured integrates into the rocky mountain and grassy valley of the southern Californian landscape (Fig. 7). Cast shadows do not quite sync with the illuminated spaces of the visual field. A strip of bright green grass separates the line of homes from the barren field in the front half of the picture, indicating a stark border between domesticity and its fringes. Yet its edges are almost too precise and angular. Integrated into this patch

⁴⁰ Pam Lee offers a succinct account of photography and its relationship to the indexical in the wake of digital modes of production.

of grass is a grey retaining wall in a terraced pyramid shape whose edges suggest it is made of concrete brick, but also resembles the square grid of digital pixels. Indeed, it seems "that housing tract is only texture."⁴¹ In treating these more idealized forms as ornament in a decorative backdrop—not unlike the red balloons, idling cars or a string of lights that also occupy these narratives—the artist troubles the physical *fixity* of home. All signs begin to register as shifting surfaces and textures, fluid and irresolute.

In assessing the larger political implications of a similar photographic "disembedded"-ness found in the work of Gursky, Lee has assigned these qualities a Marxian designation: the "ether." For Lee, the ether signals: "Capital conflated with communications," and thus, "a new world of value based on information, unencumbered by the gross materiality of people and things."⁴² The otherwise invisible "ether" is reflected in Gursky's immense scale and content (sites of commercial and financial spectacle such as global stock markets or 99 cent stores) but more notably through the "immaculate," "ordered" and seamless perfection of his digitally modified images. Taking Gursky's *Salerno* (1990) as her central focus, Lee claims the "alloverness of vision represents the good life pledged by the postindustrial society" this visuality betrays the real, more material conditions of production (Fig. 14).⁴³ Lee's concern here was stated earlier, for Lee

⁴¹ This phrase is taken from a pastel drawing of the same title, made by contemporary artist Ed Ruscha in 1976.

⁴² Lee, *Forgetting the Art World*, 91.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 93.

this scene ultimately "rejects any sense of agency constructing it."⁴⁴ Instead the work, "internalizes the logic of a world system to the point where its processes are thoroughly and indivisibly naturalized."⁴⁵

In light of Lee's analysis of Gursky, *Creek, Santa Rosa*, may now recalibrate with an intense superficiality. If figures have been moved, removed and manipulated, treated as *things* rather than subjects and subjectivities according to the "ethereal" imperatives of globalization, is Sultan's *Homeland* complicit with this agenda?

While the artist remained insistent on the work's narrative, rather than political, expression, Sultan's subjects inevitably mark the harsher realities of homeland economics. However this insistence also amplifies Sultan's privileging of his own subjectivity, and thus forefronts the inherently social relations inherent to the photographer and photograph. In other words, his own agency is never removed from these images. Their intense ultra-clear visuality and seeming seamlessness is ruptured by the ambiguities of Sultan's narratives.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 72.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 93.

CONCLUSION

In closing, I return to the site of Courbet's *Stonebreakers*, to the two anonymous men slowly chipping away at the landscape. It is a landscape in transition: raw, geologic forms broken down and cleared for pathways of commerce and industry. If this picture underlies Sultan's *Creek, Santa Rosa*, it also appears to foreshadow fears surrounding the physical condition of photography's "dematerialization," that is, its shift from the indexical trace to the virtual composite. Material shifts further reflected in socio-economic conditions defined by new modes of production and labor under globalization. The tenor of Courbet's allegory reads differently. The "unsightly" cast of his stonebreakers and their insistence on an excessive materiality seem to foreclose the illusion of a seamless, inexhaustible landscape—momentarily blocking the flow of capital.

But perhaps these are not Sultan's conclusions. For the men in *Creek, Santa Rosa* are not *breaking* stones, but moving them. Can we read these stones as pixels? They are indeed pixels. Sultan's allegory is ultimately a gesture of formal self-reflexivity, in it we encounter a moment of absolute transparency. The movement of stones, the pliancy of the pixel, Sultan points us to the very constructed-ness involved in the imagery and images of *Homeland*. Disruptions and fractures surface as narrative blips and visual anomalies, always transmitting the heavy shadow of Sultan's interminably *personal* projections.

Figures



Figure 1: Larry Sultan, *Richmond Parkway*, 2007 (57 x 70 in.)



Figure 2: Larry Sultan, *Canal District, San Rafael*, 2008 (59 x 70 in.)

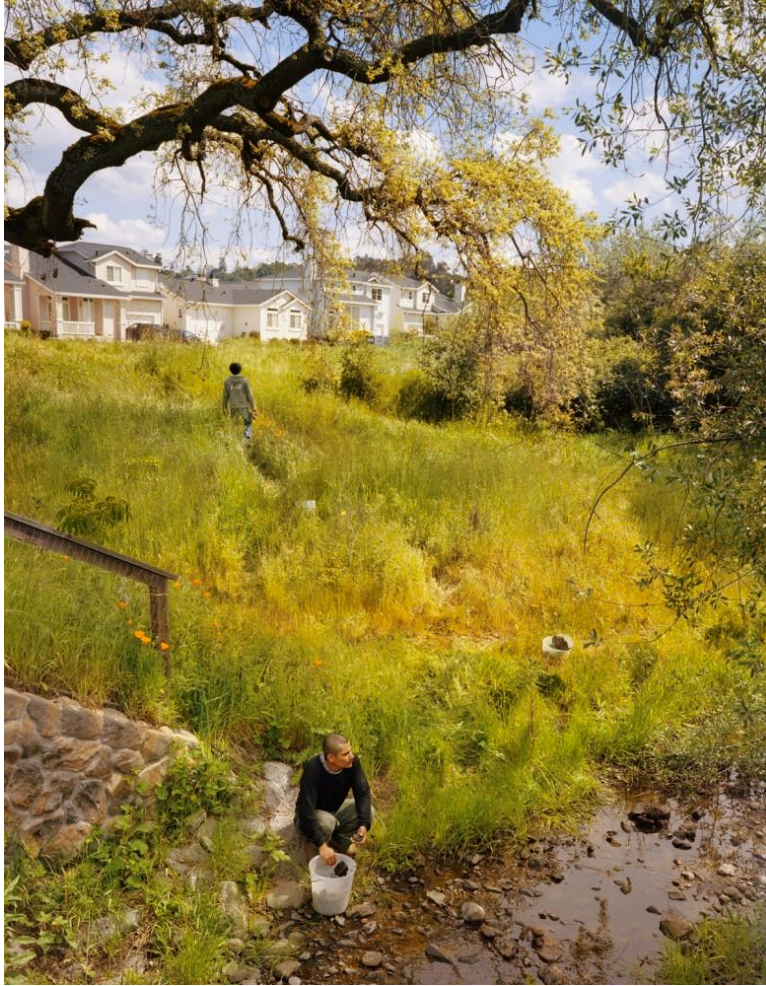


Figure 3: Larry Sultan, *Creek, Santa Rosa*, 2009 (59 x 70 in.)

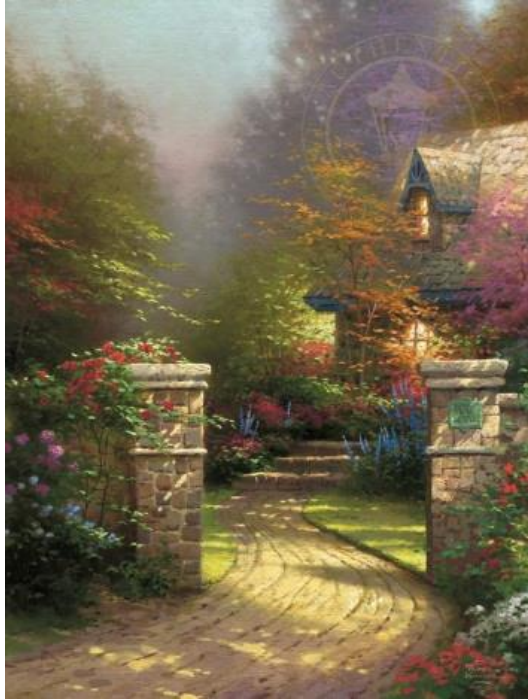


Figure 4: Thomas Kinkadee, *Rose Gate*, 1995 (variable dimensions)



Figure 5: Larry Sultan, *Argument in the Hallway*, 1986



Figure 6: Larry Sultan, *Corte Madera Marsh*, 2009 (59 x 70 in.)



Figure 7: Larry Sultan, *Simi Valley*, 2009 (59 x 70 in.)



Figure 8: Larry Sultan, *Batting Cage*, 2007 (59 x 70 in.)



Figure 9: Larry Sultan, *Welcome, Bienvenidos*, 2008 (59 x 70 in.)



Figure 10: Larry Sultan, *New Homes, Inland Empire*, 2008 (59 x 70 in.)



Figure 11: Larry Sultan, *Cul-de-Sac, Antioch*, 2008 (59 x 70 in.)



Figure 12: Gustave Courbet, *The Stonebreakers* (1849-50; now lost)
(165 x 257 cm)



Figure 13: Andreas Gursky, *Rhein II*, 1999 (190 x 360 cm)



Figure 14: Andreas Gursky, *Salerno*, 1990, (170 x 250 cm)

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