

# Cob.

Press

LORENA LOHR

# Cob.

FLAUNT MAGAZINE

1/10/2021

PEOPLE ART FASHION MUSIC F L A U N T PARTIES VIDEO DETOX STORE

OCTOBER 1, 2021

## LORENA LOHR | SHOOTING IMPERMANENCE

BY JOHN-PAUL PRYOR



There is a distinctly haunted quality to the photographic output of artist Lorena Lohr that seems to perfectly capture the existential anxieties of our era—especially in the wake of the pandemic, which gave reality a peculiarly lonely apocalyptic shade in the last two years. The composition of her images is immaculately considered, giving them a painterly quality, and the scenes she shoots of empty car seats, abandoned parking lots and worn advertising signs contain a profound otherness that goes far beyond the all-too-easy clichéd tag of Americana. Her work explores a residual energy that seems to communicate temporality and the transience of the human condition—hatching questions in the viewer's mind as to what has previously transpired in the spaces she is inviting them to step into. Here, the always modest British-American image-maker explains the genesis of her artistic practice, and tells us why the most mundane scenes from everyday life in the USA can swing open the saloon doors of perception.

# Cob.

FLAUNT MAGAZINE

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How did you begin your journey into photography—why was it an artistic form that spoke to you?

It was a progressive process that developed by chance, and over a relatively long time, beginning from finding a cheap film camera when I was 17 years old. When you're growing up a lot of things are sacred because they haven't happened to you before—you're going your own way for the first time—so I would try to remember different events by arranging scrapbooks, and then by taking photographs. Because one thing seemed just as significant to me as the next, the photographs somehow ended up being more of the corners of—and of smaller objects—than of any people I might have been sharing any kind of experience with. I guess I found that certain details that otherwise could be overlooked could trigger memory and wonder just as much as more blatantly sensational events.

When did you first take this pursuit on the road?

I started traveling around America by bus and by train when I was 19, on multi-ride Greyhound bus passes, which allow you to take unlimited trips for a period of two weeks, one month, or three months. The first time was a three-day cross-country bus ride from the East to West coast, and I began to record all the towns that I passed through, all the bus stations, motels and streets—as well as the landscapes that connected them. Because I was always filling in books, doing rough drawings and sticking in found things like flattened cigarette packages, discarded images, branded bar advertisements, notes passed from person to person, all that kind of stuff—it seemed natural that when I got my films developed the photos should go in sequence in some kind of book or zine, to mark off a time that had since passed, and then begin something else new. I started printing off small publications on a home printer, and then over time I began to get runs of zines printed at a print shops. From just handing them out to friends or people I met, they began being taken in by bookshops, and this practice of collating images into smaller chapters of one larger series has continued to this day.

Why were you drawn to shoot places off-the-beaten-track?

It became vital to me to make a record of the small towns that are connected by bus and rail throughout America—places which are for the most part isolated and rendered invisible by commerce in the bigger cities, but which each have their own highly specific and nuanced character. The camera made it possible to express that the objects and structures in any given town, and at any certain time, could tell the narrative of not only my life but other people's, in a manner that didn't require words but still evoked a secret history that was always unfolding. It made these things permanent, whereas in real life they might just be glimpsed at and forgotten.

What interests you in shooting empty spaces, such as the back seats of cars?

These spaces aren't particularly empty to me, in that that they can provide an alternative portrait of the person or people that have existed in them previously. Someone has been here, building things up, taking them apart, and having experiences there that might have even dictated the path of their lives. Even an object that could be so easily thrown away for one person could have had a great importance to someone else at another time. After all, scenes from everyday life are often constructed around particular objects, such as a chair, kitchen utensils, walls that both conceal and reveal, a drink, or a door that leads to another destination.

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*FLAUNT MAGAZINE*

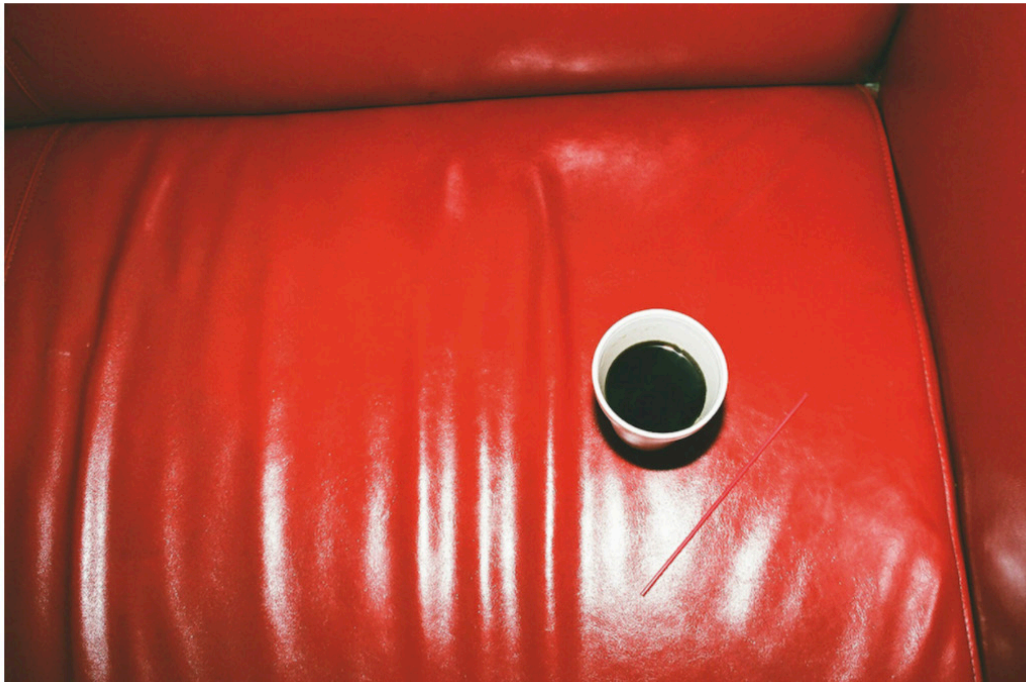
*1/10/2021*

Are you trying to draw the viewer into the space?

I'm not trying to steer the viewer into looking into any of this in any particular way, as the subject of the photographs—much like the everyday lives that have made the structures that I have depicted—are for the most part multifaceted and defiant of simple interpretation. The viewer can think what they like, but at the same time, if the photos help in some small way to assist others in seeing that these seemingly uninhabited spaces are, in many ways, as alive as the people who have created them, and to remind others of the importance of the stories that have played out over them, then that is important to me.

What would you say to someone who described your work as Americana?

I don't really think of this subject matter as Americana. For one thing, that word suggests seeing America from quite a detached viewpoint of another place. On a personal level, I don't think I'm shooting in America from a foreign perspective—my family have lived around the country since before I was born, and I have been going around there since I was young. More generally speaking, I don't like the foreignness suggested by 'Americana' as it is really not all that foreign to people throughout the developed world. Really, the motifs from American mythology aren't completely American—they come from mass migration and are repeated all over the world, entwining with other cultures to build up to a universal language of signs and symbols. The only thing I like about the word 'Americana' is its relation to cliché. I'm kind of transfixed by how—in even the most clichéd images from the catalogue of 'Americana'—there is a deep mystery to explore, as if the more we look at these things, the more we have the possibility of discovering.



Why does America seem so particularly fascinating to you?

American stories have always been laced with a sense of impermanence, a sense that everything is not going to last. It is still (by comparison to the rest of the world) a new country and frontier, and most of the structures there haven't existed for all that long. Unlike in Europe, the buildings in the States are not made to last forever—there is an acceptance in the USA that renewal and demolition are integral to progress, a part of life. This acceptance of destruction and loss could only be possible in a country whose people are as mobile and transient as they are. I actually find most places fascinating, as the past remains visible and tangible on the walls and in the structures of any place, even in very developed cities. But I suppose for one reason or another, I feel this most strongly in America.



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*ANOTHER MAGAZINE*

19/07/2021

AnOther

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# Lorena Lohr's Enchanting, Evocative Desert Nudes Paintings

ART & PHOTOGRAPHY / IN THEIR WORDS



Untitled 2, 2017 - 2020 Courtesy Lorena Lohr

**Swapping her camera for a paintbrush, the artist's latest work depicts naked women "in dialogue with the natural world" of the American west**

JULY 19, 2021

TEXT Dominique Sisley

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ANOTHER MAGAZINE

19/07/2021

**Lorena Lohr** has spent the last decade roaming, alone, through the heart of the American southwest. Armed with a cheap compact camera and some rolls of 35mm film, the Canadian-British artist imbues new life into old landscapes, transforming forgettable scenes of everyday ephemera into hazy, evocative masterpieces. Over the years, Lohr has used photography to re-enchant Memphis, Nevada, Montana, Nebraska, Colorado, Tennessee and Wyoming (to name just a few).

It was during these travels – which were mostly done on foot, train and bus – that she found inspiration for her latest project. During a late-night, long-distance Greyhound journey through Arizona, Lohr found herself captivated by the view from her window. The expansive desert landscape, illuminated by the polychromatic pastel sunrise, compelled the artist to go deeper into her visual practise, putting down her camera in exchange for a paintbrush. The result, years later, is *Desert Nudes*: a series of small oil paintings depicting naked women “in dialogue with the natural world” of the American west. Here, she tells us more about her inspirations and creative process.

*“I hadn’t made any of my own paintings before, but then I started travelling around America properly when I was 19, and I woke up on the Greyhound at about five in the morning in Arizona. I’d never seen the desert before – the light was a pastel haze and there was this huge expanse of new terrain, with highly specific features. It didn’t seem barren to me in the way that people often think the desert can be. Everyone on the bus was still asleep, and I took some photos out of the bus window.*

*“Desert Nudes came out of that idea on the Greyhound bus. It really started out as an appreciation of the landscape more than a female form, but the female form I thought would tie all of this together, harmonising the desert landscape. I wasn’t trying to say anything with this idea, just to make something which would commemorate the desert, which is in some ways the source of all my photos and work. I only wanted to make one painting originally, which would feature a whole desert vista, but I just naturally started to draw more and more of these nudes, populating different features of different deserts. As I spent more time travelling around America on the train or bus, I would look out the window and take in the forms from the perspective of how they could be sketched, as well as capturing them in photos. In the end, over quite a long time, this accumulated to a series of paintings. It took about eight years before I thought of collecting some of the paintings and making them into this series.*



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*"The female form seems at home in the natural world, even if not painted with the most natural proportions or details. I find that a representation of the male nude can seem more out-of-sync within the natural landscape. It might look too comical in this kind of setting, like one of those great airbrushed romance novel illustrations. You can put a female form in any kind of setting and it will still evoke something like desire, hope, escapism, and all kinds of things beneath the conscious level of thought.*

*"Before I started painting, I got into looking at a lot of reproductions of historical painting, particularly Northern Renaissance oil paintings, in secondhand bookstores and libraries. These Northern Renaissance painters had not yet travelled across America. They imagined the deserts of the Middle East, which look extremely fantastical in some paintings. So it was interesting to play around with the idea of how their nudes, which were mainly situated in a mythological context, would translate into this new frontier. Even though the figures that I draw have a particular type, they're not mythological figures. They're not Venuses, not really even nymphs. I thought it would be interesting to place a more generalised idea of a woman in a landscape that might look fantastical but is in fact common to a lot of people living in the American southwest.*

*"I didn't study painting, and had previously only done it in school art class. I didn't know any technique, so I had to teach myself how to draw and paint to a level I was satisfied with. It was important that the pictures came out of my head and not from reference material. It all took a long time, but I worked on it whenever I could, and it has eventually become something that I do more consistently on the side of photography.*

*"I'm making more paintings at the moment. It has become such an important part of my life that I don't think I'll stop doing it on the side. Having photography and painting is pretty much all-consuming, especially as photography means a participation in so much more life, so many more situations, than just making photos. So really that's enough for me. I have a large project planned in America which focuses on the small towns that are built up around the railway lines, so I've got a lot to be getting on with."*



# Cob.

FINANCIAL TIMES

05/12/2020



DOUBLEACT



## Welcome to our clash pad

Should you hang contemporary paintings on candy-pink walls? Absolutely, say interior designer Rachel Chudley and gallerist Victoria Williams. By Victoria Woodcock

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAKE CURTIS

**T**he National Gallery doesn't want them. The Musée d'Orsay did away with them in 2011. And when MoMA opened its renovated gallery spaces last year it followed suit, transforming its standard Super White walls with bluish-tinged Cabbage White, Sulking Room Pink and deep-blue Serge (among other hues) from Farrow & Ball. "It's no longer taken for granted that you need a white wall to pay reverence to an artwork," says interior designer Rachel Chudley, whose projects are typically laden with colour and dotted with contemporary artworks – often sourced through her friend and collaborator Victoria Williams, the director of London's Cob Gallery.

"An abstract painting inspired the entire colour scheme of this room," says Williams of a room in the Highgate home of photographer Lucy Tudhope and her music producer husband Adam – one of Chudley's latest projects. "Rachel worked with specialist paint-maker Donald Kaufman [who is also, conveniently, her father-in-law] to create the bespoke wall colours."

### INTERIORS AND ART SHOULD BOTH BE AN EXTENSION OF YOUR PERSONALITY\*

The painting in question is by Joseph Goody, one of the emerging artists represented by Cob, whose work Chudley has in her own home. In the Highgate house, two of his colourful explorations of shape and form hang against cornflower-blue in the hallway, while a larger work dominates the dining area, its subtly two-tone pistachio and pale-pink walls offset with a pop of sea green on the skirting boards. "We created the three different colours to work with the painting," says Chudley of the space, which features a vast antique Irish farmhouse table, a brass-inlaid concrete floor and sweeping hand-dyed linen curtains in a dusky rose ombre. "The colours all reference the artwork without mimicking them," she adds.

Other Cob gallery artists make an appearance in the house. A picture from Jason Shulman's chromatic *Photographs of Films* series – created by setting the exposure time on his camera to capture the entire length of a film in one image – stands out against a whimsical Melissa White for Zoffany wallpaper in the living room.

In the main bedroom, the colours of Lorena Lohr's stylised photographs of Florida dissolve into the pale-pink walls.

"Art should be an extension of your personality, as should your interior. The two have a symbiotic relationship," Williams says.

The latter could also be said of Williams and Chudley, who refer to each other throughout most of our conversation as "Natty" and "Chud". "We met in our early 20s through a mutual friend, the playwright Polly Stenham, whom I went to university with," says Williams. "Back then we all lived together in Polly's house." In 2011, Williams and Stenham established Cob Gallery as an artist-led project space, which included pop-ups of Guts For Garters, the former Camden art-meets-design-meets-fashion store that Chudley set up with her friend Cassie Beadle – now the curator at Cob. The same year, the duo showed an exhibition titled *Anatomy Dinner*, which featured paintings

Victoria Williams (far left) and Rachel Chudley in the hallway of one of Chudley's recent projects in Highgate, with two works by Joseph Goody (both untitled) hung against walls of custom-mixed paint



Top left: *Photographs of Films: Wizard of Oz* (1939), 2016, by Jason Shulman, set against wallpaper by Melissa White for Zoffany. Above: *Untitled*, 2018, by Lorena Lohr

PHOTOGRAPHS: COURTESY OF JASON SHULMAN AND THE COB GALLERY; COURTESY OF LORENA LOHR AND THE COB GALLERY

FT.COM/HTSI

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Cob.

THE BROOKLYN RAIL

22/07/2020

# BROOKLYN RAIL

CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON ARTS, POLITICS, AND CULTURE

## Art Books

### Lorena Lohr's *Tonight Lounge*

This book of photographs showcases snippets of what one might call the normal, or at least the ordinary.

By Sarah Moroz

“She dislikes the abnormal, it is so obvious,” Gertrude Stein wrote—of her own tastes—in *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*. “The normal is so much more simply complicated and interesting.” This too could be ascribed to Lorena Lohr, whose book of photographs, *Tonight Lounge* (published by London-based Cob Gallery), showcases snippets of what one might call the normal, or at least the ordinary. The British-Canadian photographer traveled through various American states and documented glimpses of small towns using 35mm color film and assorted cheap cameras. She captured ramshackle bars, shabby motels, decaying façades, and dejected residences, all a part of her ongoing series, “Ocean Sands,” began in 2010, featuring a mix of blurry natural vistas and flash-lit interiors. Unlike a travelogue or a visual diary, the vignettes seem—as writer Louise Benson expressed in the introductory text—“connected to no landscape, an adrift and neglected America.” The images are untitled, although a visual key in the back parenthetically adds varying local specificity (Memphis; Algiers, Louisiana; Stanton Street, El Paso; Cut Bank, Montana). These geographical cues aside, a feeling of placelessness prevails. Lohr’s gaze doesn’t seem to hinge on locus despite her regional approach: rather, she turns tangible terrain into an existential tableau. The series loosely evokes the aesthetic of 1970s Stephen Shore, both through the portfolio’s softened palette and in the perspicacity of finding odd beauty in the seemingly prosaic.



# Cob.

*THE BROOKLYN RAIL*

22/07/2020

The scenes appear unremarkable due to the quotidian subject matter, yet they exude a peculiar malaise. There are ice cubes dumped in a sink with no faucet, not yet dissipated into liquid, in a pink bathroom. There's a maraschino cherry lanced with a sword toothpick, the garnish cast aside from its drink in a little saucer. The compositions turn a quiet throwaway scene into something that makes the viewer curious about its previous, unseen gestures. Focusing on such minutiae—loose electrical wires, dried out palm trees, peeling walls, painted brick, forlorn banquettes, formica table tops, and curling landline cords—Lohr implicitly asks the viewer to reconsider what has aesthetic magnetism. The normal, and even the déclassé, gets her attention: these objects become a springboard for imagining past lives and tacit narratives contained within forgettable spaces.



# Cob.

## THE BROOKLYN RAIL

22/07/2020

The subject matter may seem offhand, but Lohr's color palette is considered and striking. She summons a story from both gaudy tones and muted pastels, be it a pink leatherette seat adrift on a watery-looking dark blue carpet, or a wave of brown discoloration cresting along washed out vertical blinds. The book's first image stars an oozy, granita-like cherry-red beverage, but even a white telephone on a white table set against a white wall—what ought to be just a plain yogurt of an image—somehow feels charged with ambiguity. The surfaces and textures—carefully framed to direct the viewer's eye—focus on details but open up expansive possibilities.

The venues she selects emit a kind of weary energy, yet are completely unpopulated (except one pair of legs dangling from a barstool). Otherwise, only murals and dregs and stains allude to human presence. Better days were some time ago, if they were ever better at all; in this way, Lohr conveys something eerie, almost post-apocalyptic. In that sense, Lohr's gaze acts as a post-mortem, reviewing what lags behind: “the half-finished drink...the back door left ajar,” as Benson puts it. She turns minute details into clues, but also crops out other—perhaps telling—visual information that could provide context. The tightness of the shots leaves the viewer with a sense of incompleteness and enigma. There's only the slightest hint of Americana romance in the banality, but much more of a sense of precipice, of the Lynchian: everyday iconography can be imbued with something sinister and uncertain, can double a tacit signifier of something more twisted. Even the signage of assorted stores and motels seems to communicate little: Furniture, True Value, Western, OK. Words feel as evasive as visuals; nothing feels quite as accessible and intelligible as it should.

*Tonight Lounge* also includes a short story by writer Kirk Lake, “The Lost Ship of the Desert,” in which a drifter couple travels by bus. The troubled communication between them seems to echo the spirit of Lohr's work. “The more questions she asked the vaguer he became,” Lake wrote, “as if the closer they'd got to it the further away they really were.” Unknowability persists, even with more scrutiny. We assume normal is readily legible, but it is in fact full of vagaries that lie dormant and unexplained.

Cob.

GUILLOTINE

20/06/2020

**Giltn**

ART

LIFESTYLE

FOOTWEAR



RECHERCHE...

**LORENA LOHR – TONIGHT LOUNGE**

ART // JUIN 20TH, 2020



*Lorena Lohr  
Tonight Lounge*



# Cob.

*GUILLOTINE*

20/06/2020

Publiée par les éditions britanniques **The Cob Gallery**, *Tonight Lounge* est la première étude complète de la photographie de nature morte contemporaine de **Lorena Lohr**, qui documente ses voyages à travers l'Amérique au cours de la dernière décennie. Cette publication rassemble tous les chapitres de sa série *Ocean Sands*. Depuis près d'une décennie, la photographe canadienne-britannique parcourt le sud-ouest américain en bus et en train, documentant les paysages éphémères et le caractère singulier de l'environnement urbain de la région. Rien n'est épargné par Lohr: des motels et des bars aux parkings et aux terrains vagues, ses clichés capturent les aspects inattendus et souvent étranges de la banalité des lieux qu'elle visite. Sans détachement ni commentaire ironique, la photographe relève la beauté et l'originalité dans des espaces négligés ou abandonnés et qui, autrement, passeraient inaperçus. Bien qu'elle ne se limite pas à un sujet particulier, l'ensemble de l'œuvre de **Lorena Lohr** se caractérise par des motifs récurrents : les fils électriques, les boissons colorées et les détails de la carrosserie des voitures ne sont que quelques-unes des caractéristiques qui traversent ses séries et ses livres. Le langage, tel qu'il est entrevu dans la signalétique commerciale, est un autre leitmotiv de ses photographies : les phrases génériques qui évoquent un exotisme en rupture avec leur environnement sont très présentes, contribuant à la fois à la richesse visuelle de ses compositions et faisant allusion à l'espoir, au désir et à l'isolement. L'ouvrage de 164 pages, avec des essais de Kirk Lake et Louise Benson, est maintenant disponible sur la **boutique en ligne** des éditions **The Cob Gallery**.



# Cob.

*ANOTHER MAGAZINE*

08/05/2020

AnOther

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## The Self-Isolation Photographic Diaries: Week Six

Our photographers share an image from week six of lockdown,  
featuring washing machines, a blackbird and a meditation on the  
fluidity of time

MAY 08, 2020

TEXT AnOther

LEAD IMAGE Photography by Lorena Lohr

# Cob.

*ANOTHER MAGAZINE*

08/05/2020

**Lorena Lohr (lead image)**

"When seen at a certain moment in time, objects that might otherwise go unnoticed can speak in a language of their own. Here are some washing machines and dryers waiting around outside ..."



Photography by Eddie Whelan



Photography by Eddie Whelan

# Cob.

*THE FACE*

*23/03/2020*

## THE FACE



*Image taken via @phdonobue*

### Culture

In the current situation, isolation is an ordeal – but it can also look pretty. Just check out these seven photographers lensing quiet street scenes, empty shopping centres and bars without people for proof.

Words: [TJ Sidhu](#)  
23rd March 2020

Self-isolation. All feels a bit George Orwell doesn't it? Commutes are now roughly 50 seconds long. Bed-kitchen table-sofa-bed. Personal hygiene is long gone. FaceTime is the new good-time-gal and it's likely you've been wearing tracksuit bottoms for eight days straight.

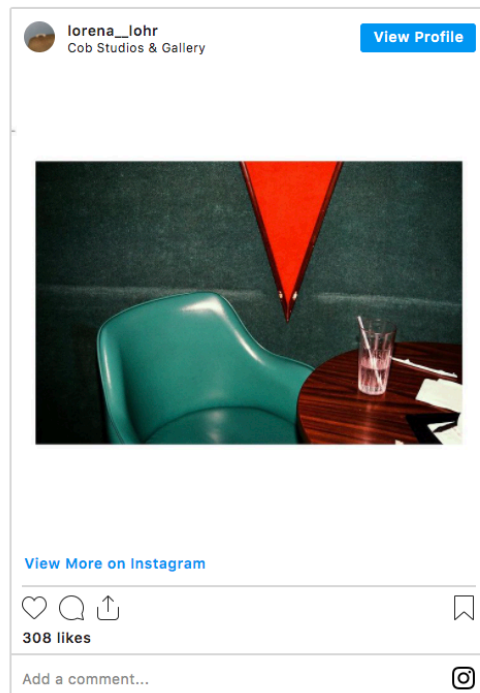
If by now you're starting to feel a bit doolally, take a breather and check out the photographers and curators capturing isolation in many forms on their Instagrams, from the confines of the living room walls, of course. Loneliness never looked so inviting...



# Cob.

*THE FACE*

23/03/2020



**LORENA LOHR @lorena\_lohr**

Lorena Lohr captures mundane moments and flips them into romantic viewpoints, as shown in her photography book *Tonight Lounge* published by independent north London gallery, Cob Gallery, accompanying the exhibition of the same name shown earlier this year. A solo, sickly-sweet milkshake topped with whipped cream, a lipstick-stained cigarette lying limply on the floor, and the corner of a mint green café wall are subjects Lohr often plays with. Attention to detail is key in her work, as is the killer colour palette of blush pinks, reds and blues.

Cob.

WALLPAPER

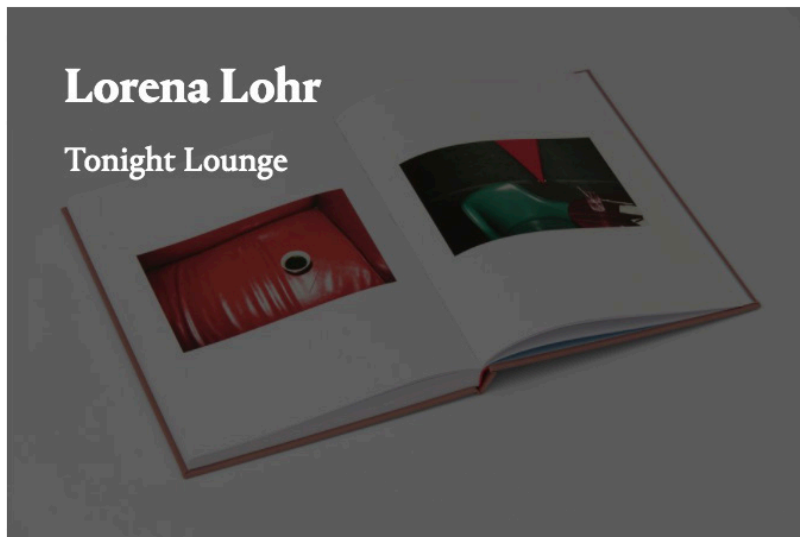
06/01/2020

# Wallpaper\*

ART | 6 JAN 2020 | BY [JESSICA KLINGELFUSS](#)

## Photo finish: the photography books worth a second look

The influence of the humble (and not so humble, on occasion) photobook on the world of [photography](#) has been nothing short of monumental. Stoked by the advent of the digital age, the photobook has become increasingly central to artists' practices – the 'supreme platform to disseminate work', notes collector and photographer Martin Parr. As we hurtle into a new decade, the Wallpaper\* photography desk picks out its [favourite recently published titles](#) for your perusing pleasure.



**Lorena Lohr**

**Tonight Lounge**

# Cob.

*ANOTHER MAGAZINE*

25/12/2019

AnOther

ART & PHOTOGRAPHY

DESIGN & LIVING

ANOTHER MAN

LOVES

ARCHIVE

PURCHASE

## Christmas, as Seen by Ten Photographers

Ten photographers, whose work has appeared on AnOthermag.com this year, share images that encapsulate the festive season for them

DECEMBER 25, 2019

TEXT AnOther

LEAD IMAGE Photography by Benjamin McMahon



Photography by Lorena Lohr

Lorena Lohr

"This was taken around Christmas nearly ten years ago, an exotic touch in the cold."

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*ELEPHANT*

17/12/2019

**ELEPHANT**

ART PHOTOGRAPHY LIFE POP CULTURE BOOKS SUBSCRIBE



Out Now! Issue 46

17 Dec 2019

PHOTOGRAPHY / PICTURE GALLERY

## Lorena Lohr's Intimate Portraits of Memphis Reveal a Country in Transition

British-Canadian photographer Lorena Lohr has spent a decade documenting America in evocative images of a country undergoing rapid change, where the mythology of the past collides with its uncertain future. Words by Louise Benson





# Cob.

*ELEPHANT*

17/12/2019

What do we know of America? It is a country coming away at the seams, where big cities dominate and the outer edges—from arid desert to roadside motels—are left to be forgotten. It is a country torn apart by divisive politics, even as the American Dream looms large. This is a narrative never far out of sight in the images of British-Canadian photographer [Lorena Lohr](#), who has spent the last decade travelling the American Southwest by bus and train. Many of these photographs are brought together in a new book, [Tonight Lounge](#), and [an accompanying exhibition at Cob Gallery \(until 11 January\)](#).

An unseen America emerges in her evocative photographs, documenting details of bars, motels, automobiles and parking lots. Her focus is on the quieter motifs of the built environment: faded murals, typography and signage arranged on buildings. In one image, photographed at Graceland in Memphis, a bed is wrapped in plastic; in another, a cowboy tips his hat on a black and white sign. Dreams and reality mingle and intertwine under Lohr's gaze. Her images capture a fast-changing landscape, pulled somewhere between the mythology of America's past and its uncertain future.

Lohr's recent works look to Memphis as a microcosm of these wider issues, where the spectre of Elvis haunts the city's lounge bars, casinos and fifties-themed diners. Her vignettes, arranged as a visual index of emblems, pay tribute to the enduring motifs associated with American and Rock'n'Roll mythology—as well as its stereotypes. Often tightly cropped, these images of the city feel intimate and dreamlike. They offer an unwavering, and highly subjective, insight into a world that already no longer exists—a world built on broken promises.

There is tenderness and sadness to these photographs, as well as an unspoken celebration of the individual. While Lohr's body of work builds a portrait of America through still life and deserted landscapes, her images are suffused with the very real hopes and aspirations of the people who inhabit and pass through them, found in the traces that they leave behind. *Tonight Lounge* focuses on these details, tugging on them like a loose thread to reveal a bigger picture, where the synthetic and the real, the trashy and the sincere, collide.

# Cob.

THE WEEK

14/12/2019

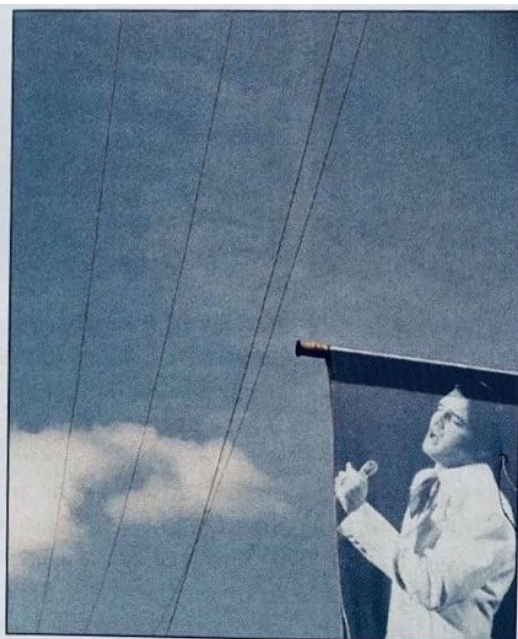
## Where to buy...

*The Week reviews an exhibition in a private gallery*

### **Lorena Lohr**

*at The Cob Gallery*

The Canadian photographer Lorena Lohr (b.1990) has spent the past decade travelling around the US on public transport, capturing details of its lesser-visited towns and glorifying in the beauty of the ostensibly mundane. This exhibition brings together a selection of images created over the past few years in locations as disparate as Tennessee, Nevada and Colorado, highlighting Lohr's painterly approach. In these photos, vast desert skies dwarf abridged stubs of commercial signage; a poster bearing an image of Elvis Presley caught mid-song flaps in the wind; and dusty landscapes glimpsed from bus windows blur into rapturous abstractions. Even an abandoned wastepaper basket is given improbable dignity, its ultra-marine colouring gleaming against a pastel pink wall in the winter sunshine.



*Detail from Untitled (2018)*

The America Lohr depicts could not be more different from the homogenised mall culture we might associate with that country; instead, the focus is on the handmade, the idiosyncratic and the overlooked. Prices start at £500.

205 Royal College Street,  
London NW1 (020-7209 9110).  
Until 11 January.

THE WEEK 14 December 2019

# Cob.

*ELEPHANT*

05/12/2019

**ELEPHANT**

ART PHOTOGRAPHY LIFE POP CULTURE BOOKS SUBSCRIBE



Out Now! Issue 46

## Image of the Day



December 5, 2019

**Lorena Lohr, Tonight Lounge, 2019**

The high desert and prairies of midwest America are the subject of photographer Lorena Lohr's recent photographs, presented in a new solo exhibition that opens this evening at Cob Gallery in London. Lohr explores the unexpected details of signage, wall facades and cables encountered along her journey, building up a new visual language of proximity and intimacy with the places that she encounters—a far cry from the majestic plains captured by iconic photographers of the American landscape such as Ansel Adams. Hers is an America littered with pop-cultural emblems, hope, sadness and longing, from Graceland in Memphis to the enduring kitsch of 1950s-themed diners.



# Cob.

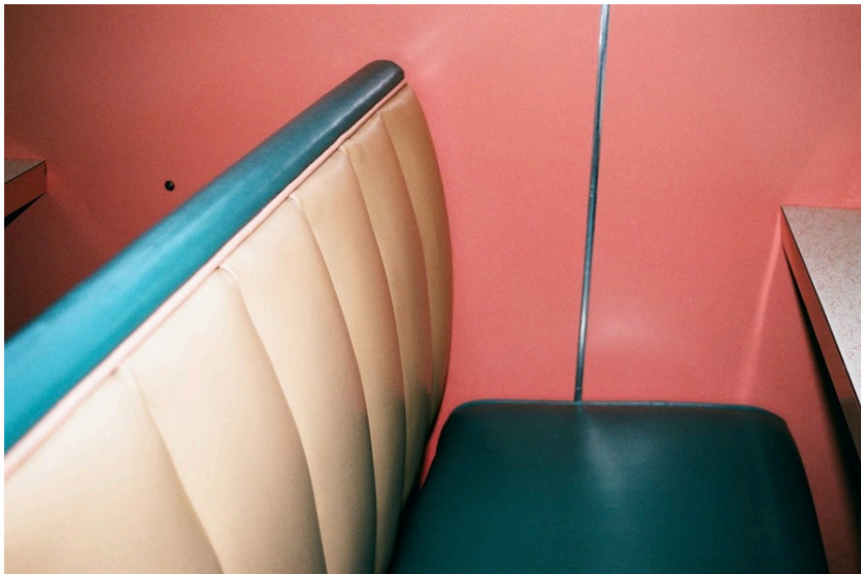
ANOTHER MAGAZINE

05/12/2019

AnOther

## Lorena Lohr's Beautiful Photos of Memphis and the Midwest

ART & PHOTOGRAPHY / IN PICTURES



Lorena Lohr, Untitled, 2018 © Lorena Lohr, Courtesy of Cob Gallery



A new exhibition at Cob Gallery, *Tonight Lounge*, documents Lorena Lohr's film photographs taken in the Midwest and Memphis



DECEMBER 05, 2019



TEXT Belle Hutton



When I speak to **Lorena Lohr** on the phone, she has just arrived in Paris, where she's been renting a home, from London, where her darkroom is. Our conversation, however, is about the photographs **Lohr** has taken in the United States – a country she has been documenting for the last decade – which are going on show at Cob Gallery this week, in an exhibition titled *Tonight Lounge*. "I've been going back and forth from Paris to London on the bus – which is something I'm very used to," the British-Canadian photographer tells me, referencing her preferred way of journeying around the US: by bus and train.

Previous trips have seen **Lohr** capture fleeting, overlooked details in Mexican border towns like **El Paso** on 35mm film as part of her ongoing series *Ocean Sands*. **Lohr** is drawn to things that might otherwise be missed: she hones in on fading signs above stores or on walls, empty tables in diners (often with cups of half-drunk soda not yet cleared away), pastel pink tiling or desert-like shrubbery. "I've always been looking at these traces that people leave behind, and how they're a record of people's lives, the stories that they tell and the things that people make to sustain a life," **Lohr** explains. "They're very subtle but they're everywhere – and not just in the small towns that I have been focusing on."

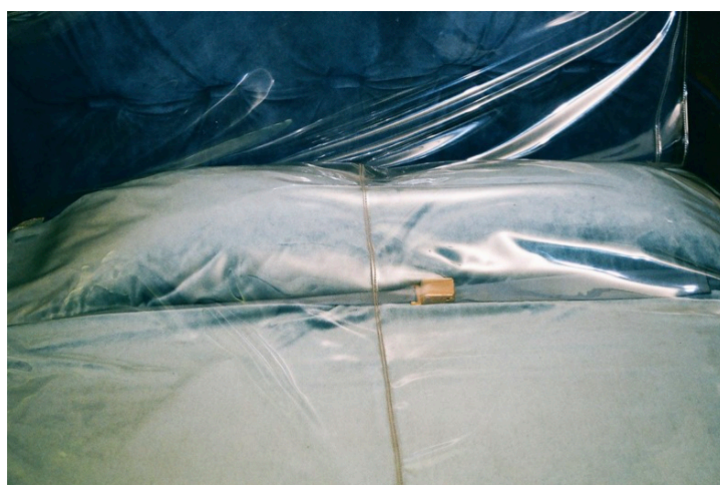


# Cob.

ANOTHER MAGAZINE

05/12/2019

*Tonight Lounge* features photographs taken in Memphis and the Midwest – a departure for Lohr from her usual geography of the USA's Southern states – earlier this year and in 2018. In the casino towns of Nevada, small towns in Montana, Nebraska and Colorado, Cheyenne in Wyoming and Memphis, Tennessee, she focused on what she's come to call "a universal language": the traces of people, and "intimations of some kind of desire or someone striving to make something different". There is a sadness to the sun-bleached powdery pink walls and empty leather banquettes, and a sense of something left unsaid. "I think that's important because people say too much," Lohr says. "These places are nuanced and every one has a highly distinct character but we do overlook things." Such character traits manifest in a variety of textures throughout *Tonight Lounge*: a rough beige wall, neon signs overcome with rust, and shiny wipe-clean plastic covering a plush turquoise bed (at Graceland, the home of Elvis Presley, where Lohr wasn't intending to take pictures but couldn't resist).



Lorena Lohr, Untitled (Blue Bedroom, Graceland), 2018 © Lorena Lohr, Courtesy of Cob Gallery

Lohr came across these same small markers of people and their stories when she travelled around Memphis, too. Considerably bigger than other towns she had photographed before, Lohr "was interested in looking at cliché, and exploring places that had been quite undocumented for many years". "The narratives that you find in rooms, where people had come and gone and left objects in a certain arrangement, give you a sense of history at its smallest scale," she says. "That also relates to a bigger city, a city that is steeped in cliché, and the symbols that have already been explored in a lot of Americana and rock and roll mythology. Even in places where we have a lot of existing documents, there's still something to be found – nothing is ever fully discovered." In Memphis, which Lohr describes as a "fractured place", the signs and details the image-maker was drawn to hinted at "a sense of preservation and illustrating these memories of bygone era".

Travelling by train so extensively, Lohr thinks that her work could amount to a sort of alternative train guide, illustrating as she has so many of the towns found along the USA's tracks. By walking through these towns (Lohr arrived at the Memphis train station and walked through the city to get to Graceland, which took her four hours) she is able to "see what's in between" and discover the overlooked details that she favours capturing. Lohr has long produced artist books of her work, but Cob Gallery is publishing a first retrospective book alongside the exhibition, bound, very aptly, in dusty pink leatherette ("someone said it looks a bit like a steakhouse menu," she laughs). The book compiles work made in this way from the last decade, but is also something of a starting point. "I think it will be going on for as long as I can do it," Lohr says, thinking of the next ten years.

## AnOther

### The Best Things to Do Before the Year Is Out

DESIGN & LIVING / ANOTHER TO DO LIST



Mowalola, Silent Madness. Courtesy of NOW Gallery



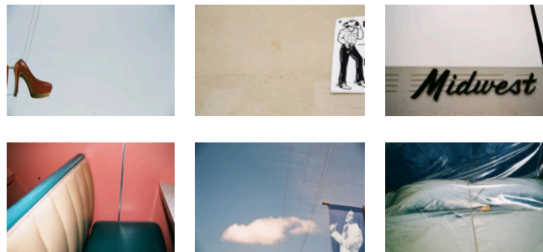
Our December to do list is here, featuring Mowalola's debut exhibition, a show recreating Jean-Luc Godard's studio, and the best films to see, restaurants to visit and more



DECEMBER 02, 2019



TEXT Belle Hutton TEXT Daisy Woodward



GALLERY / 9 IMAGES

#### Tonight Lounge by Lorena Lohr

#### **Lorena Lohr: Tonight Lounge at Cob Gallery, London: December 5, 2019 – January 11, 2020**

In her second solo exhibition at London's Cob Gallery, Lorena Lohr presents a series of photographs created in Memphis and the mid-west of the United States. Lohr hones in on details that might otherwise go overlooked in the towns and cities she discovers on her travels around America – the photographs in *Tonight Lounge* are part of a decade-long ongoing series that the image-maker has made in the country. Particular focus might be placed on some fading signage or a drink abandoned on a table in a diner: Lohr's photography hints at the characters that have created such scenes. As *Tonight Lounge* opens in London, Cob Gallery publishes a book of the same name looking back over Lohr's captivating photography from the last ten years.

# Cob.

*SLEEK*  
17/05/2018

## SLEEK

Culture

### 14 Stirring Snapshots to See at Photo London

From enduring favourites to exciting new discoveries, we spotlight the pictures that caught our eye at this year's photo fair

17 May, 2018

**Lorena Lohr, *Untitled, El Paso, 2017***



British-Canadian photographer Lorena Lohr began her ongoing series,

*Ocean Sands*

,

in 2010, periodically venturing across the American Southwest by Greyhound and documenting her journeys on camera, in dreamy, faded hues. Her images are often devoid of people, centring more on the traces they leave behind them, as here — in a sumptuous diner shot on display at Cob Gallery's stand.



Cob.

WALLPAPER

16/05/2018

# Wallpaper\*

ART | 16 MAY 2018

## The 7 breakthrough artists to discover at Photo London 2018



*Untitled, 2017, by Lorena Lohr. Courtesy of Lorena Lohr and Cob Gallery*



# Cob.

WALLPAPER

16/05/2018

**N**ow in its fourth year, Photo London is officially all grown up with over 100 galleries set to participate at the fair this May, with Canadian fine art photographer Edward Burtynsky announced as its Master of Photography for 2018. Launched last year, the Discovery section serves as a platform for young galleries and emerging image-makers reshaping the photographic medium. Curated for the second time by art consultant and curator Tristan Lund, the 2018 edition of Discovery will feature 22 galleries, where a strong line-up of local and international galleries will take over an expanded, dedicated space.

*Here, in his own words, Tristan Lund shares the seven breakthrough artists to watch out for in the Discovery section at Photo London and why...*

## **Lorena Lohr at Cob Gallery, London**



*Untitled, 2017, by Lorena Lohr. Courtesy of the artist and Cob Gallery*

I love the inner world that Lorena Lohr creates in her photographs. Clearly referencing the strong American tradition of wandering street photographer, they exude the bitter sweet romance and mystery of the southern states. Part of the charm to her work is its simplicity, making it look really easy to take these kinds of photographs, which it definitely isn't!

# Cob.

*FISH EYE*

01/10/2017

≡ **fish**eye

## Lorena Lohr: "Ocean Sands"

PORTFOLIO · 4 YEARS AGO · MOLLY SISSON

At the age of 20, Lorena Lohr left England to live in New York. It was at this point that she began her photographic journey entitled *Ocean Sands*. Alone, she travels the Southwest of America, going from one deserted city to another. By train, bus or on foot, she discovers isolated places and their hidden treasures. Motels, "diners" and deserts... a detail is enough to stimulate one's imagination. Each image captures the essence of his solitary adventures. Army of "several inexpensive film cameras" She photographs effortlessly. Pastel tones, striking details and the importance of framing: this is how Lorena revives abandoned cities. His photos show illuminated signs in empty spaces and create a nostalgic atmosphere.



# Cob.

ANOTHER MAGAZINE

28/07/2017

AnOther

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## Lorena Lohr's Hazy Photographs Documenting El Paso, Texas

ART & PHOTOGRAPHY / IN PICTURES



Tonight Lounge Photography by Lorena Lohr



The photographer's dreamy series, *Tonight Lounge*, documents the Mexican border town



JULY 28, 2017



TEXT Belle Hutton

It was entirely by chance, due to a broken down Greyhound Bus in Arizona, that photographer [Lorena Lohr](#) first ended up in El Paso, Texas, a town that sits on the border of the US and Mexico. "It was very, very hot, over 100 degrees, and it didn't seem to be moving anytime soon. So I thought that hitchhiking was the best idea," Lohr tells AnOther over the phone. She was picked up by "a truck moving ice cream tubs from north to south," she continues. "I got dropped off [in El Paso] and I had no idea what it would be like."

El Paso is one of the Mexican border towns that *Tonight Lounge*, her photographic series documenting her travels on Greyhound Buses and Amtrak trains, focuses on; she has taken such trips every year since moving to New York in 2010. Shot on film, Lohr's photographs are personal responses to the locale that she encountered en route, rendered in dreamy pastel hues with the requisite alluring haze that pairing analogue photography with the American southwest seems to necessitate.



# Cob.

*ANOTHER MAGAZINE*

28/07/2017

The hitchhiked journey that first landed Lohr in El Paso was fortuitous indeed, as the image-maker became enamoured with the city and has plans to return – as she has already, “about five times over the last ten years” – to undertake “an extended survey of it, because it’s a very special place”. “It’s a city that is unlike anywhere else,” she says. “It was built in the 1920s and 1930s, so there are so many kind of prosperous buildings which are very Deco, but that’s combined with a lot of Mexican storefronts. And there are a lot of small businesses around all these tall skyscrapers that look quite amazing too. I stayed in this hotel which was full of faded cowboys and Deco mirrors, and a diner which had Mexican cooking.” El Paso is also home to one of the Bridges of the Americas, the road structures connecting the United States and Mexico.

It’s a magical place. “It’s all about walking around the town when you’re there. Because everything gets kind of magnified, and you end up interacting with people,” Lohr continues. “And even though the pictures don’t feature many people, there’s a kind of figurative quality about them.” Once Lohr points out the faint human presence in her images it’s hard not to see the traces of people: in the battered brown caravan, in the name ‘Jesse’ painted, but fading, on the side of a building, or in the table and red plastic chairs that are bare save for a pitcher and two glasses of an orange coloured drink. Pale blues, soft pinks and luscious greens dominate here, though without becoming saccharine. “I do have a particular eye for those colours, I guess; dusty pink, powdery colours. Everything’s been bleached a bit.”



Tonight Lounge Photography by Lorena Lohr



CULTURE | By [Lily Bonesso](#) | 09 February 2015, 2:00pm

## lorena lohr's photography explores america's sun-bleached south west

As Lorena Lohr opens her first solo gallery show *Ocean Sands*, exploring the trashy luxe of motel bathrooms and the pastel landscape backdrops of American South West bars, we speak to the photographer about bland paradises and empty words.



Lorena Lohr's exhibition *Ocean Sands* opens at [The Cob Gallery](#) this evening. In the words of curator, Jessica Draper, the show will be "very much in the style of Lohr: subtle, simple, sexy." Lohr's photographs give us fleeting glances of South West America: a world perpetually frozen in the 70s, its décor both trashy and naïve, where shell shaped basin's are an endearing reminder of a Polly Pocket left out in the sun too long. The hollow promise of paradise in the name *Ocean* becomes nothing but an empty pipe-dream, yet by leaving enough space for dreaming it retains its magic.

This is an exhibition undeniably by women, for women. The pastel colour palette, washed out tones and occasional flashes of red are like a well stocked knicker drawer, in all its intimacy, fragility and suggestiveness. Lohr shy's away from the word "vintage", which she aptly describes as too "chintzy" a word; rather she feels her images reflect on a slower world with fewer options and longer pauses. Her photographs often appear to capture an intermission: gaps in conversation, a moment waiting for someone to arrive or an interval of quiet thought.

### Tell us about your travels around America's South West and how this has influenced your work?

I first took the Greyhound bus in 2010, you could get an unlimited pass so you could get on and off where and whenever. It came in a blue plastic pocket with "Discovery Pass" on the front. They have since stopped making this. When I travel I won't try and find out much about a place in advance, and I don't go with any particular intention or aims. The photos initially were simply a document of this new experience and continent. I wasn't travelling alone then but now I do and it's become something else. The way the South West is stuck in a 70s washed out palette and architectural style, with equally faded looking men on the street. It has a sort of empty lonesome feeling enhanced by the strangeness of very tall cacti outside the storefronts, and there's no freshness or greenery; that is all appealing to me for one reason or another.

# Cob.

I-D

09/02/2015

**There is a distinctly American vibe to your images, and yet some are taken in London.**

**How do you feel about these two places?**

I don't often like the stoniness and sense of history in European cities. I find America to have more of a sincerity and sense of do-it-yourself, which makes you feel a lot more present. There is a brashness to it, but I don't find it vulgar. The forms are also more simplified. In London especially, you have to see more into the depths of things which is obviously important, but it is more pent up and restrictive and for the most part you don't feel like it's yours.

**People rarely feature in your work, why?**

It's not a conscious decision to omit people. Sometimes I just end up with an arm or a leg. Probably it's an aesthetic decision, the whole person does not fit with the image. Maybe I find it intrusive or awkward to take someone's photo at certain moments.

**Tell us a bit more about your zine *Ocean Views*?**

I started to do this zine, which I printed myself and mailed to subscribers when I was living in Brooklyn. It was a good way of making myself explore my work on a smaller scale and being motivated to put out more. I would pick a part of a borough, like a residential area of Queens or parts of New Jersey that I could easily get to and go around photographing interiors and street views. It is difficult to edit and turn it out fast, sometimes I don't like a certain image after I put it out but I see the value in learning from my mistakes. The idea of a stack gradually building up on someone's shelf over time was exciting to me.

**Why the regular reference to the ocean in your titles?**

I like these kind of phrasings that are quite bland yet conjure up a sense of exoticism or paradise. The kind of phrases that wherever you go in various cities you can see them repeated on signs. The words are quite empty and don't lead you to judge the images a certain way.

**Who are your favourite photographers and why?**

Henry Wessel, the light and black and white printing... Chauncey Hare's book *Interior America*. Joel Sternfeld's *First Pictures* is something that I saw relatively recently and is my favourite book in colour all round.

**What's your next project after *Ocean Sands*?**

Moving to the desert in Canada...

[lorenlohr.com](http://lorenlohr.com)

# Cob.

*SLEEK*  
18/12/2013

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## SLEEK

Uncategorized

**Lorena Lohr, explorer of all things wild**

18 December, 2013



Lorena Lohr, Palm Chair

**The night is when all these wild things are most present:** Interview with photographer Lorena Lohr

**By Sophia Satchell-Baeza**

Walking into the Rochelle school, a large and high-ceilinged cluster of Victorian buildings in the centre of London's Shoreditch, you might be forgiven for finding it an unusual location for Lorena Lohr's first photo show. With a singular eye for the lonely or unusual areas of deep or trashy Americana, the New York-based, London-bred photographer carries a roving camera and a strong sense of the power of the fleeting moment. We might be far away from a world of faded diners and soft-focus sand dunes, but Lohr's camera takes a closer look or an unusual framing of an image we think we know. This is border-town America, but it could just as easily be a long night in East London.

Photographer and painter Lohr is no stranger to travel. Two of her self-published photo-books, "Palm Desert" (2011) and "Desert Sands" (2012), document her rambling journeys through the Southwest, West Coast and Gulf of Mexico, hitching on the Arizona highway to reach a Texan-Mexican border town and taking photos of palms, plastic chairs and neon signs. *Ocean Views* is a bi-monthly photo zine sent in the post from her place in Brooklyn – an intimate yet minimal collection of fleeting moments, a slender scrapbook of places. The streets at night come alive in glimpses of a person's frame, the half-empty glasses of ridiculous cocktails, a tacky shop sign beckoning you in. Whether documenting a long night in Broadway for London-based magazine *Hot and Cool* or painting in oils her particular vision of the American desert, Lorena Lohr can make a strong image out of anything. We spoke to her about travelling, self-publishing, and her love of des(ert)s.

# Cob.

*SLEEK*  
18/12/2013

When did you start taking photos?

I was a teenage girl and wanted to record what happened in a sensational teenage way. But instead of the pictures of people the views of the rooms were good.

What are your favourite things to photograph? I like how you focus on things in pairs, on cups, on creamy desserts, table legs, lone chairs...

I don't know why I'm attracted to these things (apart from the creamy desserts). I enjoy seeing repeated motifs especially when travelling through areas of the USA and looking at palm trees and cocktail signs. These motifs connect to empty space and there's a sense of exoticism and dreaminess despite how much emptiness there is around too. Maybe not table legs so much but I do think lone chairs and certain kinds of drinks. I guess it's because I think about being alone in the night a lot, and I've spent a lot of time riding the bus and walking around, waiting for the bus on layovers and getting to know people and hearing their extreme stories. The night is when all these wild things are most present.

There's a hint of sadness in all these useless or worn out objects.

There's some degree of sadness in everything, but I'm not out to express that in the photos.

What do you look for when you photograph something? Do you give it a story in your head or hope the person looking will inject their own life into it?

I don't have any preconceived ideas, and no I never want to tell a story. It's possible to think of things as images or sensations and not through words. I don't think about the way other people will look at the photos. It's not my place to point out anything or explain myself. I just continue to make more images.

You paint too, what do you prefer?

I make quite technical oil paintings which require a lot of study and decision-making. I prefer to not to think of the meaning or effect of what I'm doing. I might prefer painting later, but sometimes I can be as free to make a really quick drawing as taking a photo.

There are lots of photos of empty landscapes - can you tell me a bit more about the places you've photographed and where you'd like to go next?

I will take a photo anywhere, but I think America's the best place. Green landscapes are really boring most times. I don't like the shade of green that grass has unless it's dry. I'd like to spend more time in the desert in Arizona and live there for a while. And I'd like to go to the Midwest and into the north, to see more empty landscapes.

Can you tell us a bit more about your publications? What is it about self-publishing that you like so much?

I've been putting out a printed photo zine called "Ocean Views" for the last 6 months which I mail out to my subscribers every fortnight, and made two larger books of the time in the Southwest, West Coast and Gulf of Mexico. I dislike formality and self-promotion, but to see physical prints on paper, the sense of collecting and passing around is very good. Most of my books I've given out to friends, but I've sold a few to some good bookstores and that's nice too. To have a stapled paperback which most times has lipstick stains amongst some luxe monographs.