

BRUCE SILVERSTEIN

Nathan Lyons

Return Your Mind To Its Upright Position

October 30th – December 20th, 2014

Opening Reception and Book Signing: October 30th, 6–8pm



Bruce Silverstein is pleased to announce an exhibition of new work by the esteemed artist Nathan Lyons in conjunction with the publication of his highly anticipated fourth book, *Return Your Mind to Its Upright Position*. The exhibition features a selection of photographic diptychs created by Lyons that mirror the layout of the accompanying book. The extended meaning created by *reading* images as a pairing within a larger sequence remains Lyons's greatest artistic and conceptual contribution to this art form.

The exhibition begins with an installation of photographs spanning the years 1962 to 2013, representing all four of Lyons's books. This is an opportunity to experience, on a large scale, Lyons's visual journal of the residue of our social and cultural landscape, and his ongoing pursuit of meaning derived from the relationships between images in pairs and within a sequence. In an artist's statement prepared for an exhibition at the National Gallery of Canada in 1971, Lyons wrote, **"This series of photographs could be about me. But I think it is probably a series of questions about us and our stuff—pictures, objects and things. They may question us more honestly than we can ourselves."**

This "series of questions" has continued for over fifty years. Anne Wilkes Tucker, Gus and Lyndall Wortham Curator of Photography at The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, has written of Lyons's continuing visual inventory of the messages we send out to the world, explaining that "Lyons 'collects' into his pictures various public displays: lawn decorations, wall posters, advertisements, historical sites, store windows and billboards. What people display, plus how and why it appears, reveals what they value and often what their community values." The current exhibition traces his inventory through the present, revealing decades of incisive cultural observation.

The exhibition will include a special introductory component curated by Jessica S. McDonald, Chief Curator of Photography at the Harry Ransom Center in Austin, Texas, and author of the book *Nathan Lyons: Selected Essays, Lectures and Interviews* (2012). In addition to his reputation as an artist, Lyons is well known as a curator, theorist, and educator, and McDonald has devoted the front room of the gallery to highlighting Lyons's groundbreaking contributions and broad influence in the field.

In 1969, after more than a decade of producing pioneering exhibitions and publications at George Eastman House, Lyons founded the Visual Studies Workshop in Rochester, New York. The Workshop offered some of the first graduate programs devoted to the study of photographic history, curatorial practice, and academic research in this medium, and became a center for critical discourse in media studies and visual arts. Many of Lyons's students became leaders in the field as artists, curators, critics, educators, and museum directors.

Nathan Lyons (b.1930) has received many distinguished honors throughout his career, including the International Center of Photography's Infinity Award for Lifetime Achievement in Photography in 2000. In 1985, Lyons received a National Endowment for the Arts Senior Fellowship. His work is held in over 60 museum collections around the world.