



The Story of California. The Story of You.
Oakland Museum of California



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**RICHARD MISRACH DONATES PHOTOGRAPHS TO THE
OAKLAND MUSEUM OF CALIFORNIA AND THE
BERKELEY ART MUSEUM AND PACIFIC FILM ARCHIVE
TO COMMEMORATE ANNIVERSARY OF THE 1991
OAKLAND-BERKELEY FIRE**

**Gift and Simultaneous Exhibitions Opening in October 2011 Mark the
20th Anniversary of the 1991 Catastrophic Oakland-Berkeley Fire**

(Oakland, CA) July 6, 2011—The Oakland Museum of California (OMCA) and the University of California, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive (BAM/PFA) announce the gift of 33 photographic prints by celebrated Bay Area photographer Richard Misrach (American, b. 1949) to each institution respectively. The photographs were taken immediately following the catastrophic firestorm that struck the Oakland and Berkeley hills in 1991. To commemorate the 20th anniversary of this devastating event, Misrach has donated these photographs to the prominent cultural institutions of the affected East Bay. Exhibitions of his work documenting the fire aftermath will take place at both institutions this fall.

“These prints are a tremendous gift to both the Oakland Museum of California and the community that lived through the firestorm,” says OMCA’s **Curator of Photography Drew Johnson**. “Misrach is one of the most important artists working today; this gift represents a lasting contribution to California’s cultural history. The gift is perfectly aligned for OMCA as it reinforces our dedication to telling the many stories of California and the people and events that shape our heritage.”

Out of respect for the victims of the fire—which killed 25 people, injured 150 others, and destroyed nearly 3,000 houses and 1,520 acres—Misrach’s images have remained unexhibited for the last 20 years. This October, both the Oakland Museum of California and the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive will commemorate the disaster

through exhibitions of Richard Misrach's photographs of the fire aftermath, as well as related works presented from their respective collections.

"This is an extraordinary gift to our museum and our community," says **Lucinda Barnes, BAM/PFA chief curator and director of programs and collections**. "We are indeed privileged to be the recipients of this exceptional body of work from Richard Misrach, one of the most important photographers of our generation. Misrach has created in these monumental photographs astounding works of art, which also serve as a provocative means of collective memory. As in much of his work, the fire photographs explore man's effects on the natural environment; in many cases, the result is decay and destruction—but there is also profound beauty in them."

1991: The Oakland-Berkeley Fire Aftermath, Photographs by Richard Misrach is on view **October 12, 2011, through February 5, 2012**, at the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, and **October 15, 2011, through February 12, 2012**, at the Oakland Museum of California. In addition each institution is presenting different companion installations to commemorate the fire. Visitors to both exhibitions can participate in recording histories surrounding the fire by contributing their own recollections and reflections in an over-sized handmade elegy book made by the artist.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Richard Misrach launched his career in the early 1970s when he documented street life on Telegraph Avenue. Starting in the late-1970s, he turned to the creation of cultural landscapes with an 8x10 view camera. His work ranges widely and has taken him around the world, from the petroleum industry's toxic wastelands along the Mississippi River and the detritus of Katrina to the beaches of Hawaii and the pyramids of Egypt. Misrach's photographs have been exhibited worldwide and are held in the collections of more than 50 major institutions, here and abroad, including the Oakland Museum of California; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Art Institute of Chicago; and the National Gallery of Art. He is the recipient of numerous fellowships and awards, including the German Society for Photography's Cultural Award for Lifetime Achievement in 2002 and the Lucie Award for Achievement in Fine Art Photography in 2008. Misrach is represented by the Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco; Pace/MacGill Gallery, New York, and Marc Selwyn Fine Arts, Los Angeles.

ABOUT THE OAKLAND MUSEUM OF CALIFORNIA

The Oakland Museum of California (OMCA) brings together collections of art, history and natural science under one roof to tell the extraordinary stories of California and its people. OMCA's groundbreaking exhibits tell the many stories that comprise California with many voices, often drawing on first-person accounts by people who have shaped California's cultural heritage. Visitors are invited to actively participate in the Museum as they learn about the natural, artistic and social forces that affect the state and investigate their own role in both its history and its future. With more than 1.8 million objects, OMCA

is a leading cultural institution of the Bay Area and a resource for the research and understanding of California's dynamic cultural and environmental heritage.

For more about OMCA, visit: www.museumca.org.

ABOUT THE BERKELEY ART MUSEUM & PACIFIC FILM ARCHIVE

The Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive (BAM/PFA) is the visual arts center of the University of California, Berkeley, the nation's leading public research university. One of the largest university art museums in the United States in both size and attendance, BAM/PFA aims to inspire the imagination and ignite critical dialogue through contemporary and historical art and film, engaging audiences from the UC Berkeley campus, the Bay Area, and beyond. Each year BAM/PFA presents fifteen art exhibitions, 380 film programs, and dozens of performances, as well as lectures, symposia, and tours. The museum's collection of more than 30,000 works ranges from Neolithic Chinese pottery to contemporary video art. Among the collection's exceptional strengths are Ming and Qing dynasty Chinese painting, Italian Baroque painting, Old Master works on paper, early American painting, mid-twentieth-century abstract painting—including important works by Hans Hofmann, Jackson Pollock, Eva Hesse, and Mark Rothko—Japanese cinema, Soviet silent film, West Coast avant-garde video and film, animation, and international classic films.

For more about BAM/PFA visit: <http://bampfa.berkeley.edu>.

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For more information and visuals, please contact:

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