

For Immediate Release

Zoe Strauss *If You Reading This*

May 17 – June 23, 2007

Opening: May 19<sup>th</sup>, 6 – 8pm

Silverstein Photography is pleased to announce *If You Reading This*, the first New York solo exhibition of works by the photographer and installation artist Zoe Strauss. This exhibition is a midterm review featuring the artist's ongoing "I-95" project, which Strauss refers to as her "epic narrative."

Featuring photographs of downtrodden city dwellers, abandoned structures, bemusing signage and remnants of urban decay, "I-95" is an annual installation that began in 2001. Photographs are adhered to support piers under the highway overpass at Front and Mifflin Streets in Philadelphia. The outdoor exhibition is on view from 1-4pm the first weekend of each May. Strauss encourages visitors to remove the laminated photographs, and throughout the year she offers Xerox reproductions for five dollars on her website—an expression of her commitment to community accessible art. Invitations to this exhibition have been signed, annotated, and edited by the artist, keeping with that tradition.

Strauss, 37, was the first in her immediate family to graduate from high school. She worked as a nanny and didn't attend art school. Having previously worked on large-scale installations, including an indoor medical laboratory entitled "Whirlforce Medical Research Laboratory" in 1997, as well as a live work of two motorboats crashing together, Strauss turned to photography after buying a 35mm camera with money received from her 30<sup>th</sup> birthday. She shoots most frequently in her native South Philadelphia neighborhood. Both her imagery and motivation are likened to Diane Arbus, Garry Winogrand, and Nan Goldin. "The juxtaposition of the difficulty involved in getting by and the beauty in our everyday lives is what I'm interested in," says Strauss.

Strauss' ongoing commitment to community activism led to the establishment of the Philadelphia Public Art Project (PAP), an organization she runs on her own that is dedicated to making art accessible. In 2006, she had a solo exhibit at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Philadelphia, part of the Museum's Ramp Project. Strauss' exhibit was based on the theme of desire. Thirty photographs mounted to wood were displayed for three months in the museum, during which time she removed a few at a time to hang outdoors in the neighborhood.

Strauss was selected for the 2006 Whitney Biennial, where she presented a slide show of images made primarily in Philadelphia, but also Biloxi and Gulfport, MS after Hurricane Katrina. She received a 2005 Pew Fellow, a 2004 Arcadia Works on Paper Award, and a 2002 Leeway Grant. Her work is included in the Philadelphia Museum of Art permanent collection.

A special edition print will be available with all proceeds going to the **Center for Arts Education** in New York City and the **Philadelphia Public Art Project**. Accompanying *If You Reading This*, Strauss will hold an outdoor slide show presentation in Chelsea at a date to be determined. Please contact [elizabeth@silversteinphotography.com](mailto:elizabeth@silversteinphotography.com) with inquiries.

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