

JOHN BERGGRUEN GALLERY

228 GRANT AVENUE SAN FRANCISCO CALIFORNIA 94108 TEL 415-781-4629
FAX 415-781-0126 GALLERY@BERGGRUEN.COM WWW.BERGGRUEN.COM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Michael Gregory
Western Constructs

October 1 – October 31, 2009

John Berggruen Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of new paintings by California-based artist Michael Gregory. *Western Constructs* marks Gregory's ninth solo exhibition at the gallery, and will be on view from October 1-October 31, 2009. John Berggruen Gallery will host a reception for the artist on Thursday, October 1 between 5:30 and 7:30 p.m.

Western Constructs was born out of a series of road trips the artist took from 2007 through Spring 2009. On each of these trips, the first through Iowa, the second through Idaho, Washington and Oregon, and the third from Brooklyn, NY to his home in West Marin County, CA, Gregory was reminded of the concept of two Americas; in this case the relatively prosperous coasts, and the struggling middle. The paintings that resulted from Gregory's travels depict this duality. Two works in particular, *Great Divide* and *Wilderness of Lights*, illustrate this theme eloquently, one a long dusty road that seems to lead into the heartland of America, and the other a vast sprawl of urban lights illuminating the night sky. Both have similar horizontal orientations and horizon lines, but the Americas they depict are literally night and day.

The places represented in *Western Constructs* are fictive, assembled from the artist's photographs of his trips, the events happening in the world at the time, and the books he was reading, as has long been the artist's practice of assembling and conflating impressions of place. As Gregory puts it, "America has always been an idea, a construct of our imagination and our imagination has outdistanced even its vast boundaries and empty places." The sprawling spaces convey the vastness of the American landscape, its inherent beauty, the bleakness of the American dream gone awry, and the hope for a better and unfettered life in their open vistas and wide-open possibilities. The horizontality of many of the works in *Western Constructs* is a departure for the artist from the insistent verticality of his previous series, appropriate to the experience of a road trip in which the view is constantly framed by the windshield, and to the expansiveness of America's wide-open spaces.

Michael Gregory was born in Los Angeles in 1955. He received his BFA from the San Francisco Art Institute in 1980, and currently lives and works in the Bay Area. Aside from exhibiting on a regular basis at John Berggruen Gallery, Nancy Hoffman Gallery in New York, and Gail Severn in Idaho, Gregory's work is included in many private and public collections including the Delaware Art Museum, the Denver Art Museum, Microsoft Corporation, General Mills Corporation, Bank of America, and most recently, the San Jose Museum of Art.

For further information and photographs, please contact the gallery at 415.781.4629 or info@berggruen.com

Gallery hours: Monday - Friday: 9:30-5:30, Saturday: 10:30-5:00