

Doug Biggert
Hitchhikers and a Sandal Shop

March 31 – May 7

The George Adams Gallery, in conjunction with the Robert Mann Gallery, is pleased to announce an exhibition of photographs by Doug Biggert. The exhibition encompasses two distinct bodies of work, each the product of years spent documenting chance encounters. The first is a series of portraits of hitchhikers Biggert has picked up on his travels, predominately along I-80 and Route 49 in Northern California beginning in the early 1970s. The second features patrons who frequented Socrates Sandal shop on West Balboa Boulevard in Newport Harbor, CA, from 1968-1972. Over forty snapshots from the *Hitchhikers* series – which runs to approximately 450 images over almost three decades – will be on view across both galleries. In addition, a small cross-section of the *Sandal Shop* images will be presented at the George Adams Gallery, along with a documentary short produced about the artist, *Beautiful America*, from 2008.

Starting around 1973, Biggert began hosting a twice-weekly late-night jazz program at KVMR, a radio station out of Nevada City, CA. Driving his green VW Bug on his commute to and from San Francisco and later Sacramento, he began picking up hitchhikers for company and taking informal portraits of his passengers. Biggert continued this practice for decades, keeping the photos in a binder in the VW to show his would-be subjects by way of explaining his motives. Over the years the project expanded well beyond his regular commute through the Gold Country with the result that these snapshot portraits capture not only an itinerant population of young teens, college kids, tourists and down and outers, but also the look of an evolving America from the '70s onward. For decades Biggert has been drawn to the margins of society; his photographic impulses have lead him to document countless examples of the kind of visual placeholders that have long signified subcultures such as graffiti, bumper stickers and hand-painted street signs. In life, as in his art, his boundless curiosity is as much the connoisseur's as the cataloguer, where images are just one facet of the collections he has amassed. Yet while Biggert rarely sought to create a record of a time or a place, by simply being present, he offers an insight into a kind of alternative lifestyle that so defined a generation and a region.

The *Sandal Shop* series was Biggert's first major photographic undertaking, consisting of mainly portraits taken at the sandal shop near Balboa Beach where he worked from about 1968 until 1972. During his tenure at the shop – employment was perhaps too strong a term – Biggert began regularly photographing customers with a Kodak Instamatic he kept on hand for just this purpose. The snapshots would then be displayed in the store, in time growing to more than 1400 images. What began as a casual pastime came to form an idiosyncratic record of life in Southern California at an inflection point of social and political change. The photographs caught the attention of Tom Garver, then director of the Newport Harbor Museum (now the Orange County Museum of Art), leading to Biggert's first exhibition, *A Sandalshop Wall*, in 1972.

Douglas Biggert was born in Evanston, Illinois in 1941 and raised in St Louis, MO, where he attended Principia College and later graduated from Washington University. His first exposure to photography was as a child, when given a camera by his aunt though he didn't begin photographing in earnest until he was living in California, with the *Sandal Shop* series. By nature a wanderer, Biggert himself first hitchhiked through the southwest as a teenager and around Europe during a summer abroad while in college. He eventually found his way to California, living first in Balboa, in Orange County, later moving to San Francisco and then Sacramento. The urge to explore never left him however. By his own admission, Biggert has visited all fifty states, in part through his own wanderlust but also through his role as the manager of global distribution of magazines for Tower Records, a position he held from 1978 until 1999. In this capacity, Biggert was hugely influential in proving distribution and exposure for a nascent Zine scene, sometimes supporting publishers directly to see an issue produced.

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Doug Biggert

Hitchhiker Series (It Takes Time...), c. 1973-79

Unique c-print

3 1/2 x 4 7/8 inches

DoBih 14



Doug Biggert

Hitchhiker Series, c. 1973-79

Unique c-print

4 7/8 x 3 1/2 inches

DoBih 35



Doug Biggert

Hitchhiker Series, c. 1980-89

Unique c-print

4 7/8 x 3 1/2 inches

DoBih 67



Doug Biggert

Hitchhiker Series (I Took Him Up 80), c. 1973-86

Unique c-print

4 7/8 x 3 1/2 inches

DoBih 32



Doug Biggert

Hitchhiker Series, c. 1999-06

Unique c-print

5 7/8 x 4 inches

DoBih 16



Doug Biggert

Hitchhiker Series, c. 1973-81

Unique c-print

3 1/2 x 4 7/8 inches

DoBib 06



Doug Biggert

Hitchhiker Series, c. 1973-86

Unique c-print

4 7/8 x 3 1/2 inches

DoBih 42



Doug Biggert

Hitchhiker Series, between 1973-91

Unique c-print

4 7/8 x 3 1/2 inches

DoBih 76



Doug Biggert

Hitchhiker Series, c. 1980-86

Unique c-print

5 1/8 x 3 1/2 inches

DoBih 69



Doug Biggert

Hitchhiker Series (The English Man), c. 1990-99

Unique c-print

5 7/8 x 4 inches

DoBih 15



Doug Biggert

Hitchhiker Series, c. 1973-86

Unique c-print

4 7/8 x 3 1/2 inches

DoBih 61



Doug Biggert

Hitchhiker Series, c. 1980-86

Unique c-print

3 1/2 x 4 7/8 inches

DoBih 71



Doug Biggert

Hitchhiker Series, c. 1973-79

Unique c-print

4 7/8 x 3 1/2 inches

DoBih 34



Doug Biggert

Hitchhiker Series (Hollister 1), between 1973-1999

Unique c-print

4 7/8 x 3 1/2 inches

DoBih 46



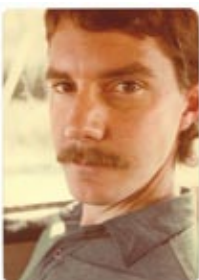
Doug Biggert

Hitchhiker Series (Hollister 2), between 1973-1999

Unique c-print

3 1/2 x 4 7/8 inches

DoBih 47



Doug Biggert

Hitchhiker Series, 1981

Unique c-print

4 7/8 x 3 1/2 inches

DoBih 60



Doug Biggert

Hitchhiker Series (Alaska), c. 1984

Unique c-print

4 7/8 x 3 1/2 inches

DoBih 37



Doug Biggert

Hitchhiker Series, c. 1980-86

Unique c-print

4 7/8 x 3 1/2 inches

DoBih 64



Doug Biggert

Hitchhiker Series, c. 1973-79

Unique c-print

4 3/8 x 3 1/2 inches

DoBih 73



Doug Biggert

Hitchhiker Series, c. 1973-79

Unique c-print

4 7/8 x 3 1/2 inches

DoBih 21



Doug Biggert

Hitchhiker Series, 1987

Unique c-print

4 7/8 x 3 1/2 inches

DoBih 66



Doug Biggert

Hitchhiker Series, 1985

Unique c-print

3 1/2 x 4 7/8 inches

DoBih 49



Doug Biggert

Hitchhiker Series, c. 1980-89

Unique c-print

4 7/8 x 3 1/2 inches

DoBih 63



Doug Biggert

Hitchhiker Series (Coca-Cola), c. 1981

Unique c-print

3 1/2 x 5 1/8 inches

DoBih 53



Doug Biggert

Hitchhiker Series, c. 1991-95

Unique c-print

5 3/8 x 3 1/2 inches

DoBih 72



Doug Biggert

Hitchhiker Series, c. 1973-79

Unique c-print

4 3/8 x 3 1/2 inches

DoBih 74



Doug Biggert

Hitchhiker Series (Eureka, Oregon), c. 1983

Unique c-print

3 1/2 x 4 7/8 inches

DoBih 38



Doug Biggert

Hitchhiker Series, c. 1973-86

Unique c-print

4 7/8 x 3 1/2 inches

DoBih 77



Doug Biggert
Hitchhiker Series, c. 1991-95
Unique c-print
4 7/8 x 3 1/2 inches

DoBih 45



Doug Biggert
Hitchhiker Series, c. 1973-86
Unique c-print
4 7/8 x 3 1/2 inches

DoBih 33



Hitchhiking sign: "East -> KS? Hungry"
c. 1973-99
Marker on cardboard
15 3/4 x 13 1/8 inches



Hitchhiking sign: "Travelin' Broke & Hungry, Grateful 4 Anything"
c. 1973-99
Marker on cardboard
14 1/4 x 19 inches

\$



Chloe Colpé and Xavier Carcelle
Beautiful America, 2008
Digital video with sound
14' 31"



Doug Biggert
Sandal Shop Series, 1968-72
44 Unique Kodak Instamatic prints from a group of over 1400 photographs
3 1/2 x 3 1/2 inches each

DoBih 78