

THE OLYMPIA PROJECT

87 Grand Street, Brooklyn



Not Far From Here **Kent Andreasen + Nate Burbeck**

September 25 - November 7, 2020

Artsy Viewing Room: September 25 - October 9

Open by appointment.

#notfarfromhere

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The Olympia Project is pleased to present [Not Far From Here](#), a two-person exhibition featuring work from Cape Town-based photographer Kent Andreasen and Brooklyn-based painter Nate Burbeck.

This exhibition, slated to open last September and then again in March, is more relevant than ever. *Not Far From Here* highlights the differences in perception, lived experience, and memory in the contemporary Midwest. These same differences are contributing to the movement across the United States and the world to grapple with, reconcile, and radically shift the understanding of how race, wealth, religion, and gender intersect to offer protections and privileges, or to strip people of safety and dignity.

The American heartland occupies a unique place in the imagination. From the earliest of colonial days, where backers of expeditions to the New World painted pictures to capture the hearts and wallets of Europe's royal houses, to Bob Ross's eponymous television show, scenes and images of the midwest and west have extolled the virtues of the land and the heartiness of its people. In the 20th century, this region flourished as travel by car and bus became frequent and affordable, with many of the country's scenic highways and byways carrying travelers through picture-perfect post-war suburbs and mid-century modern highway towns, invented by white flight or revived from their former glory along westward routes.

From the mid-19th century through the mid-20th century, depictions of the American dream abounded. Grant, Hopper, Rockwell, and Wood painted scenes from life that anyone could recognize. The friendliness of the people and places of the midwest beaming from paintings and photography, selling the region to the world. Literature and art alike focused on this heartland, the seeming true soul of the United States, undeniable and unapologetically recognizable. As all things do, this world has changed, and so has the art of which it is the subject. So often treated to trite commentary, cliched descriptions, and passive indifference, the Midwest has suffered an unexpected fate, far from its intellectual and economic roots; in truth, the region has been altered, and shifted, but it is no less deserving of our attention.

Nate Burbeck paints engrossing suburban scenes that feel they could take place anywhere, but upon closer inspection, perhaps it is a place you know well. The work is not intended to blur realities, or insinuate that the different spaces of the midwest are interchangeable, but is rather a commentary on a shared experience across a varied landscape. As Phil Christman says in his essay "On Being Midwestern": "in a period when some of the more interesting art and music consists of similar procedures repeated on a massive canvas, when cultured people are trained to find meaning in the tiny variations of a Philip Glass



symphony or an early John Adams tape piece, you'd think we could learn to truly see Midwestern flatness as something richer than mindless repetition."

Burbeck's images are immediately recognizable for what they are. They are however distinctive in their portrayal of solitary, lonely scenes. There is a sense of multiple removals; there sits palpable space between the artist and his subjects. People, when they're there, even when engaged in group activities, somehow seem alone. The landscape is beautiful, enticing, and haunting at the same time. The quality of the light in his work draws the viewer in, with questions about its origins. Everyone seems somewhat abandoned. Influenced by his own upbringing in Minnesota, the paintings whisper of secret knowledge, of an understanding of the truth of the Midwest.

Kent Andreasen's photographs from a roadtrip across the country depict a similar feeling - a deep loneliness at being nearly forgotten. Far from home, this South African photographer shows the American heartland as he experienced it, a far cry from the same view that would have greeted him half a century ago. However, like Burbeck's paintings, Andreasen's photographs create the sense of familiarity - both on the part of the artist and the viewer. By his own account, much of what Andreasen saw on this trip didn't feel foreign, but rather discernibly comparable to the landscape and personality of South Africa's Afrikaans heartland. A vision of a land and a people who are not quite sure of their evolving world, and yet completely confident in their own identities. At once the recognizable epitome of the United States, and yet, not the midwest we were sold in the past. The depth of light and distance in his photographs infer an invisible barrier standing between the artist and his subject, while simultaneously calling that same, "oh, I know that place" whisper.

Held together, the two artists depict an image of a lonesome and wayward world in the midwest - two divergent experiences and perspectives coming together to build a complete story. Art does not stand apart from the world around it, but rather reflects and amplifies it. In today's social and political setting, we see a reflection of perspective in Andreasen and Burbeck's works. An uncertainty about who we are and where we fit in the ever-changing world is not unique to any one place or person, it is universal. We sit, viewing a world not far from here, familiar, yet somehow just beyond our grasp.

About the artists:

Kent Andreasen (b. 1991) was raised in Cape Town, South Africa. While travelling extensively, he remains based out of his home city. After graduating from AFDA Film School (Cinematography) in 2013, Andreasen pursued a professional career in stills photography. His repertoire has been entirely self taught with a sharp focus on perfecting the beginning to end process. Andreasen shoots most of his documentary and commercial work on a variety of medium format cameras, and recently, larger format cameras.

Andreasen has shown at the Africa Salon (Yale, USA), M Gallery (Sydney, Australia) and in a number of group shows in South Africa. His work has been featured in a number of online publications, including *The New Yorker*, *It's Nice That*, *Heavy Collective*, *Ain't Bad*, *Booooooom*, and *Ignant*.

Nate Burbeck (b. 1987) was raised in Minneapolis, Minnesota and currently lives in Brooklyn, New York. He graduated from St. John's University in Collegeville, Minnesota in 2009. After graduating he was a participant in the School of Visual Arts' Summer Residency Program in 2010 and was named one of "Ten Artists to Watch in 2013" by Jehra Patrick of the Walker Art Center. In 2015 he was a recipient of the Minnesota State Arts Board's Artist Initiative Grant.

Burbeck's work has been exhibited in cities and venues across the United States including Anna Zorina Gallery in New York, Thinkspace Projects in Los Angeles, Soo Visual Arts Center in Minneapolis, Jonathan Ferrara Gallery in New Orleans and grayDUCK Gallery in Austin, Texas. His work was recently included in the Friends Seminary Benefit Auction hosted by David Zwirner. He has been featured in several online publications such as *Vast Art Magazine*, *Booooooom*, *Dirty Laundry Magazine* and the *American Guide*.

To make an appointment, or for press, pricing, and availability, please contact Sophie at art@sophieolympia.com.

Images:

1. Nate Burbeck, *Mielke Park (Oracle)*
2. Kent Andreasen, *Go Beavers*