

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Henry Wessel

Photographs

January 11 – February 17

The Charles Cowles Gallery is pleased to announce our first solo exhibition for photographer **HENRY WESSEL**. For over 30 years, **WESSEL**'s photographs have documented the architecture, landscape, and lifestyle of the United States and its inhabitants. Focusing on the quotidian charms of the American West, **WESSEL** directs the viewer's attention to the minute while revealing a grander observation. His themes are classic of mid-century America: consumerism, mass production, the expansion of suburbia and pleasure seeking. Though his images are not filled with the euphoric optimism that marked the rise of these trends, nor are they a critique of what are now considered to be American foibles. Instead, throughout his project, **WESSEL** treats his subjects with a head-cocked curiosity that documents the regional characteristics with humorous affection. The Cowles Gallery exhibition will focus on the following series: *Odd Photos*, *Real Estate Photographs*, and *Las Vegas*. In addition, we will have never-before published images from all periods in **WESSEL**'s career. This exhibition is in partnership with Robert Mann Gallery who will be showing different photographs from **WESSEL**'s oeuvre.



WESSEL, born in Teaneck, New Jersey, migrated west in the early 1970s where he began his documentation of Western American life. He has stayed true to this subject matter for a majority of his career, often lingering on certain themes over several bodies of work: houses, deserted landscapes and quirky images from everyday life. His photographs were included in the landmark 1975 exhibition *New Topographics: Photographs of a Man-Altered Landscape* at the George Eastman House and he has been identified with that loosely associated group ever since.

HENRY WESSEL received a B.A. degree from Pennsylvania State University in 1966 and an M.F.A. degree from the pioneering photography program at Visual Studies Workshop in conjunction with State University of New York at Buffalo in 1972. In 1971 he was awarded the first of two John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Fellowships and he has also received three National Endowment of the Arts grants. Over the past thirty years, **WESSEL**'s work has been featured in many exhibitions in the United States and Japan. His work is also included in many public collections: Art Institute of Chicago; Denver Art Museum; Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University; Metropolitan Museum of Art, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and Victoria and Albert Museum in London.

HENRY WESSEL's retrospective is on view at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, January 27 - April 22, 2007. A new monograph will be available from Steidl (2007, \$60). Also available from Steidl *Henry Wessel: California and the West, Odd Photos, Las Vegas, Real Estate Photographs, Nightwalk*, a collection of five of his series, is available (2006, \$88).

There will be an opening reception for the artist on Jan. 11 from 6 – 8 pm. The exhibition will be on view at the Charles Cowles Gallery at 537 West 24th Street, between 10th and 11th Avenues in Chelsea. Hours are 10am-6pm, Tuesday through Saturday.

For further information or photographs, please contact the gallery.