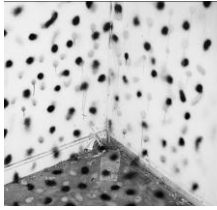


## Quick Guide

### John Divola: *As Far As I Could Get*

1. Who is John Divola?
  - Divola was born in Los Angeles in 1949
  - He earned his B.A. from California State University of Northridge and then an M.F.A from UCLA under Robert Heineken.
  - He has taught in the contemporary art department at University of California Riverside since 1987.
  - His career spans over 40 years, with most series shot outside of the studio using a combination of installation, land, and performance.
  
  - **Themes in his work:** His works bridges the gap between photography and conceptual art by questioning reality and dimensionality in photography, the presence and absence of the photographer in his works, and the relationship between the natural and artificial in a photograph.
  
2. Why is the exhibition shown at three separate institutions?
  - SBMA Photo department organized *As Far As I Could Get*, the first major museum exhibition of Divola's work. Two other SoCal museums are also displaying Divola's work – each venue is showing different series - as part of a simultaneous collaboration (one exhibition spread over 3 venues):
    - Pomona College Museum of Art: September 3 – December 22, 2013
    - Los Angeles County Museum of Art: October 6, 2013 – July 6, 2014
    - Santa Barbara Museum of Art: October 13, 2013 – January 12, 2014
  
3. What is displayed at the other venues?
  - LACMA: four series of Divola's work
    - *20x24 Polaroid* (1987-1989): fabricated sculptures photographed in the landscape
    - *Artificial Nature* (2005): 36 continuity stills from films made between the 1930s-1960s
    - *Seven Songbirds and a Rabbit* (1995) : series of details from the Keystone Mast collection of stereographic negatives housed at the California Museum of Photography, Riverside
    - *As Far As I Could Get* (1996–2010): Divola positioned his camera on a tripod, set the timer for ten seconds, and then ran straight away from the camera.
  - Pomona College:
    - *Zuma*: (1977-78) the gradual destruction by fire and vandals of an abandoned house on Zuma beach in Malibu, California.
  
4. Why are there no individual labels?
  - Divola prefers the viewer to arrive at their own interpretations about the photographs. There are intro panels before each series describing the background and overarching themes. There is also a gallery guide.
  
5. Where were the photos taken?
  - As a lifelong resident of California, Divola's photographs were all shot in the Southern California area. Many series were taken in Los Angeles county or the Inland Empire.

6. What are the different series at SBMA?



1. Vandalism (1974-75)

**Location:** Von Romberg Gallery

- In abandoned suburban structures he photographed holes in the walls, graffiti, and scattered debris; documenting the presence of unseen actors and creating the sense of arriving after the actions occurred.



2. LAX Noise Abatement Zone (1975)

**Location:** Emmons Gallery

- These images, produced in series, allow the viewer to enter the spaces and witness the emptiness of the structures from multiple inside or outside views. He forensically records the forced entries that came before him.



3. Untitled (1990)

**Location:** Gould Gallery

- Carefully lit handfuls of white flour are thrown against a freshly painted black backdrop. Ordinary elements were transformed into mystical shapes; highlighting the distance between reality and representation.



4. Dogs Chasing My Car in the Desert (1996-1998)

**Location:** Campbell Gallery

- While driving in the desert, Divola photographed dogs chasing his truck. Documenting their pursuit of a nearly unattainable goal, reaching the car, mirrors photography's inability to document reality and humanity's often hopeless devotion to unreachable goals.



5. Dark Star (2008)

**Location:** Gould Gallery

- Building on his work in *LAX/NAZ* and *Untitled*, Divola spray-painted dense, black discs on walls of an abandoned house. These circles suggest something celestial or sublime but, because they are merely paint in desolate structures, also comment on photography's ability to elevate the ordinary to the extraordinary.



6. Theodore Street (2013)

**Location:** Sterling Morton Gallery

- Shot in the same Riverside, CA house as *Dark Star*, these images demonstrate the changes made to the house by vandals. He used a device called a gigapan, which takes 40-120 photographs in a 15 minute window. Stitched together, the gigapan produces extremely detailed large scale prints.