



SF Gate ePicks: ART
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En Masse: Photographs by Camerawork Members (Thru April 2)
(featured image: Mommy with gun, 2004)

Reputations Made Here

If you've ever wondered why San Francisco has such a reputation for photography, check out the current show at SF Camerawork for a glimpse of fine work by emerging photographers in our midst. Jessamyn Lovell's portraits of rural America also happen to be portraits of her family, which has known some hard times since her mother began using a wheelchair. But Lovell's photos are not your classic Dorothea Lange shots of a farm family in dire straits. From the defiant look in her mother's eye as she hoists a shotgun, you can see that they're managing, thank you very much. Her adopted son and four daughters sport nose piercings and an array of hippie, preppy, Goth and skater looks, and do not smile as they pose in a yard with a broken fence and stare down the camera -- not exactly Norman Rockwell's America, but one much more recognizable as the place we call home. On the opposite side of the tracks, Mark Luthringer's "Ridgemont" is a series of digital shots of grand entry signs to real estate developments whose bastardized Tuscan-Alpine-adobe architecture comes with names to match, such as Crystyl Ranch and Miraggio. Here, Luthringer cleverly reveals the irony that the developers somehow missed: "The Preserve" is a hill featuring a sprawling model home and nary a tree in sight, and "Whitegate" says it all when it comes to a gated community of Spanish colonial haciendas. As Andrew Moisey points out in his artist's statement, all but two of the 43 presidents of the United States were frat boys -- so to get a good look at the future leaders of the free world, one need only look at Moisey's revealing shots of Pledge Week. "Three Pledges" shows a trio in sneakers and ties perched on a sagging couch awaiting instructions, with self-consciously casual poses and fresh-scrubbed faces that are eager, wary and feckless -- they're just kids, really, but already they're carrying themselves like presidential candidates. But take in the setting, and it's hard not to feel sorry for these pledglings: all that effort just to hang out in a dim living room with dingy striped wallpaper, sticky linoleum floors and a scuffed-up door that's been slammed like pledges during rush.

-- Alison Bing, special to SF Gate
SF Camerawork, 1246 Folsom St., SF; Tues-Sat, 12 pm-5 pm; free; (415) 863-1001.