



## Carte blanche to Émilie Flory: Pier 24 Photography, San Francisco

Estimated reading time: 6mins

For her third carte blanche, the guest curator of the L'Été Photographique de Lecture festival, Émilie Flory, invites (<https://www.9lives-magazine.com/88963/2022/09/12/emilie-flory-curatrice-du-festival-ete-photographique-de-lecture-est-notre-invitee/>) us to leave the Gers, to go to the edge of the Pacific Ocean, in San Francisco. Head to Pier 24 Photography, a unique place located on the Embarcadero in San Francisco, under the Bay Bridge. Today, Émilie

# Flory shares with us her crush on this exhibition space which houses the permanent collection of the Pilara Foundation and which is dedicated to the collection, preservation and exhibition of photographs.

It's good to cross the ocean for the third day together. I want to talk today about a place that made me feel good when I was living in San Francisco. It's an incredible space, with atypical offers for the United States (free entry for example!). This is Pier 24.

The directors Chris McCall and Allie Haeusslein do a wonderful job, committed to the artists, to the promotion of this magnificent collection and a rare and precious public reception policy. Indeed the desire of the place remains that the works and exhibitions are visited in the best possible conditions. Admission is therefore free upon reservation of a slot, which allows for a reduced gauge. Visitors thus benefit from the spaces and a time of serene contemplation, no crowds, no hubbub. I love this generous idea and I took full advantage of it!!



View of the exhibition Secondhand 2014, Installation by Erik Kessels © and photo credit the artist and Pier 24

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Exhibition view Secondhand, Joachim Schmid Photogenetic Drafts series © the artist and Pier 24.  
Photo ÉF



Located on San Francisco's Embarcadero, under the Bay Bridge, Pier 24 Photography houses the permanent collection of the Pilara Foundation, which is dedicated to collecting, preserving and exhibiting photography. This Foundation has a beautiful history, it was the Révélations retrospective by Diane Arbus at the SFMoMA (San Francisco Museum of Modern Art) in 2003 which inspired the purchase of the first photograph from the Pilara Foundation: a portrait from the Untitled d 'Arbus. " *The emotional intensity that characterizes this photograph inspired subsequent acquisitions in the collection, which today includes more than 4,000 works by international artists, covering the entire history of the medium and its international reach. At the heart of the collection are the photographers who were first exhibited in two seminal exhibitions of the twentieth century: New Documents (1967) at the Museum of Modern Art and New Topographics (1975) at Eastman House. In recent years, the Foundation has brought together emerging photographers in depth, developing funds that bear witness to the evolution of practices in this field . »* (source Pier24 website)



Detail of the exhibition, Erik Kessels, series In Almost Every Picture #8 (Oolong) © the artist and Pier 24. Photo ÉF



Exhibition view Secondhand, Matt Lipps series Horizon/s © the artist and Pier 24. Photo ÉF

Pier 24 Photography is housed in the historic annex of the Pier 24 port building designed in 1935 to connect 2 piers. The Pilara Foundation is the first in 30 years to occupy this historic building in the port of San Francisco of approximately 2600 m<sup>2</sup>. Opened in 2010 after two years of renovation, it offers vast exhibition spaces and, which doesn't spoil anything, a rather fascinating view of the Bay.

They have been organizing for 12 years, two annual exhibitions inspired by the works of the collection and accompanied by a catalog. "The inaugural exhibition highlighted important veins in the collection, with rooms devoted to portraiture, contemporary photographers from the San Francisco Bay Area, historical images of the city, early American color photography and works produced by the Farm Security Administration (FSA). This exhibition

also included complete portfolios of Diane Arbus, Larry Clark, Lee Friedlander and Garry Winogrand. In many exhibitions that followed, these themes were explored further. »



Views of the exhibition Whiteness of The Whale by Paul Graham, 2014 © and photo credit the artist and Pier 24

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For my part, I was able to see Secondhand there, which tackled subjects that I question as a curator: the collection, reuse and reinterpretation of images by artists and visual artists. I enjoyed seeing a rich display of the work of Erik Kessels (including a series that still moves me: that of Oolong the rabbit), a set of Photogenetic Draft by Joachim Schmid (which I exhibited in 2011 and found in a different variation here), revisiting John Baldessari and Richard Prince and discovering the work of Matt Lipps and Maurizio Anzeri, among others. Paul Graham's incredible monograph *The Whiteness of the Whale* was equally influential,

I also had the chance, thanks to mutual artist friends (Chris McCaw and Rachel Phillips) to meet Allie, who showed me around the reserves and the workspaces, quite inspiring and obviously stimulating for all professionals (and collectors ). While waiting for a next trip to California, you can discover the exhibitions on their site but also the list of artists in the collection (including a dozen French), it makes you dizzy and smile.

## **PRACTICAL INFORMATION**

Pier 24

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<https://pier24.org> (https://pier24.org)

Free

Open Monday to Friday from 9 a.m. to 5:15 p.m., by appointment