

GOLDEN STATES OF GRACE

PRAYERS OF THE DISINHERITED

A COMPELLING LOOK AT RELIGION FROM THE BOTTOM UP

A MULTI-MEDIA EXHIBIT BY RICK NAHMIAS

THE STORY:

While depictions of conventional middle-class religion are widely visible, rarely seen are the sacred worlds of society's marginalized: the outcasts, the fallen, those that have been labeled "other" - ironically, those for whom religion was first formed. "Golden States of Grace" aims to give image and voice to some of those whom are active parts of our nation's diverse religious landscape, but who because of the world, society, or their own actions, may have been silenced, and now worship as a means of finding refuge, family or of forging community.

Using California as the lens through which to examine universal questions of who "belongs" in our society "Golden States of Grace" documents eleven marginalized communities at prayer in eight different faith traditions. Through photographs, audio oral histories, music and text, these faces and stories represent groups who are reinventing time-honored modes of worship and ritual and pushing their respective traditions into the 21st century. Among the participating communities are:

- ◆ THE WORLD'S FIRST TRANSGENDER GOSPEL CHOIR
- ◆ A JEWISH CONGREGATION OF RECOVERING ADDICTS
- ◆ A MUSLIM COMMUNITY OF SURVIVORS OF THE CAMBODIAN GENOCIDE
- ◆ INMATES INSIDE SAN QUENTIN PRISON PRACTICING ZEN BUDDHISM



Be they the physically disabled, immigrant sex workers, the rural poor, those afflicted with HIV/AIDS, or women facing a lifetime of incarceration - each community represents an Eastern, Western or indigenous mode of worship, as well as wide ranging socioeconomic and ethnic make-up. Three-plus years of photographing, interviewing, writing and research has been culled into a handsomely mounted exhibit, and companion book (university of New Mexico Press, 2010) which crosses numerous boundaries and boldly asks difficult questions of individuals and communities who stand at religious and cultural intersections few others have.

AUDIENCES:

This exhibit is well suited for everything from general fine art and humanities museum audiences, to cultural and religious centers, to houses of worship, seminaries and secular university programs focusing on religious studies, anthropology, sociology, interfaith relations or history. "Golden States of Grace," employs a rich mix of artful black & white photography, incisive text, music and audio interviews to address numerous themes including:

- ◆ INTERFAITH RELATIONS
- ◆ CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND TOLERANCE
- ◆ MARGINALIZATION/"OTHERNESS"
- ◆ THEOLOGY
- ◆ HUMAN RIGHTS/SOCIAL JUSTICE
- ◆ ART & RELIGION
- ◆ DOCUMENTARY PHOTOGRAPHY/PHOTOJOURNALISM



EXHIBIT ELEMENTS:

Fifty-six framed black & white Lightjet prints (many at life size)* with five accompanying Sintra-mounted text panels and didactics, an ambient gallery soundtrack CD of music, prayer and spoken word, and an audio listening station CD containing the oral histories and conversations with members of the participating communities.

Size: Approximately 270 running feet*

Security Requirements: moderate

Schedule: 8 and 12 week bookings available

Multimedia Installations/Lectures/Interfaith Programming and Interactive workshops available

*A forty-image version of the show is also available

ABOUT THE ARTIST:

Rick Nahmias, is the creator of "[The Migrant Project: Contemporary California Farm Workers](#)," an acclaimed photographic documentary of the state's migrant work force. It is currently touring museums, universities and cultural centers of North America. His work has been profiled in newspapers, magazines and journals and on TV and radio across the U.S., and is part of several prominent public and private collections including the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History. He holds a BFA in both Film/TV & Religious Studies from New York University.

For more information on the book, exhibit loan fees, or to book this exhibit please visit: goldenstatesofgrace.com

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