

Floridas

Anastasia Samoylova

2 Sept – 8 Oct, 2022

Vernissage on Friday 2 Sept, 17–21.00



Rusted Car, 2020
Archival Pigment Print, 100 x 80 cm

Florida. The political swing-state. The swampland paradise. The refuge of excess. The tourist fantasy. The real estate deception. The sub-tropical fever dream. The elusive place where image and reality become inseparable. Floridas, a recent series by the American photographer **Anastasia Samoylova** (b. USSR, 1984), documents it all in a layered portrait of contemporary Florida. The project establishes a dialogue with the oeuvre of Walker Evans, employing a visual language similar to his detached and laconic imagery. The book **Floridas** was published in 2022 by Steidl and edited by David Company. It combines Samoylova's contemporary photographs with the historic archive of Florida images by Walker Evans, obtained from The Met Museum's digitized collection.

In 1934, Walker Evans created a list of subjects for documenting the "American life" as he was staying in Florida. People of all backgrounds, from the upper class to the new down-and-out. Automobiles and the automobile landscape, architecture and the American urban taste. The commerce of small and large scale, the city street ambiance and the hateful stuff. Amusement industry, fake culture, bad education, religion in decay. This is just a part of the topics reflected in Evans' photography. Anastasia Samoylova has aimed her lens at similar subjects of culture and social values as Walker Evans between the 1930s and the 1970s. Both photographers observe, document and elegantly keep subjectivity out of the frame.

The semantics of the everyday and the framing angle give away the similarities between the working methods of Evans and Samoylova. There is a certain alerting hollowness behind the rust, the glossy cars and the pristine pinks of Florida's buildings that lurks in Samoylova's photographic work. It hides in the empty flooded garage, in the shadow of the trees on the facades, or in vibrant reflections that mirror the emptiness. Samoylova's images are both deceptive and alluring; her compositions with a loaded depiction of colour create a slightly surreal atmosphere.



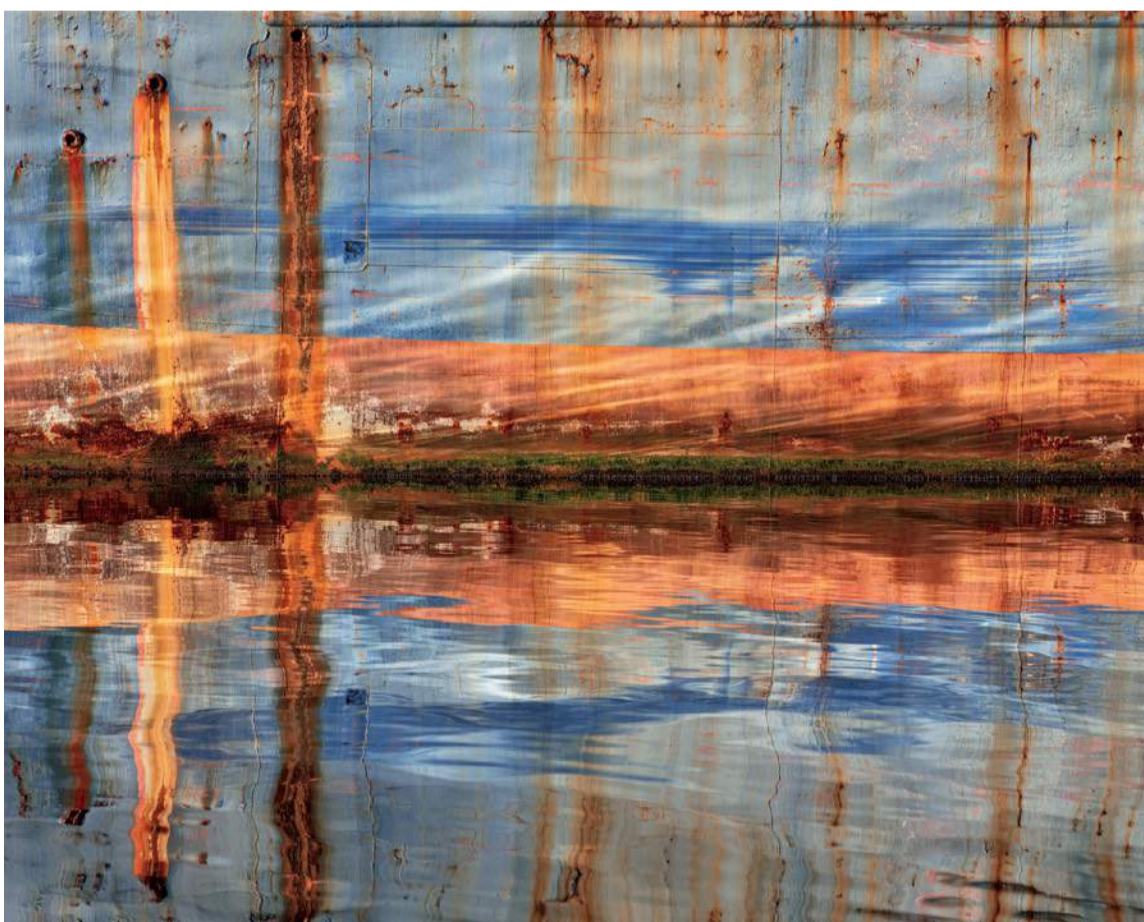
Wind, Miami Beach, 2020
Archival Pigment Print, 100 x 80 cm



Condo Reflection at King Tide, Hollywood, 2019
Archival Pigment Print, 100 x 80 cm

Samoylova has been photographing Florida intensively and extensively over the past few years. From the Keys, a southernmost tip of the state, to its borders with Alabama and Georgia. Pursuing one wandering road trip after the other, a traditionally male-dominated genre within American photography, Samoylova expands the field with a female perspective. She portrays Florida in all its intensity as a stark place — culturally, politically, economically and climatically. In Samoylova's imagery, it wears this starkness quite visibly. It is there in the fragile landscapes, in the precarious tourist industry, in the boom and bust of its cities, and on the faces of its residents.

Floridas seem to exist on the thin border between observational documentary photography and crafted photo-collage. It is the way the artist frames her shots that creates puzzling compositions. None of them are staged, Samoylova cuts out her layered images from the everyday. With subtle references both to Florida's complex history, and to the way it has been photographed by others, most notably by Walker Evans. Posters, storefronts, signs, and utilitarian objects are among those meticulously observed as silent reminders of the character of American culture as a whole.



Samoylova's project *Floridas* amounts to a nuanced portrait not of just Florida, but of the contemporary USA more broadly. "I believe that what is happening in the extremes of Florida is happening across the country," — recounts the artist. She sees and shows Florida as a condensed version of the US, while maintaining an outsider's perspective and paying homage to Walker Evans. With her vivid bright images and sharp juxtapositions. Anastasia Samoylova offers a test for endurance to the iconic narratives of the American Dream.

Barge, 2021, Archival Pigment Print, 127 x 100 cm

BIO Anastasia Samoylova

Anastasia Samoylova (1984) is a Russian-born American photographer who lives and works between Miami and New York.

Samoylova moves between observational photography, studio practice and installation. Her work explores notions of environmentalism, consumerism and the picturesque. Her series *FloodZone* (2019), an expansive photographic project that began in 2016, reflects and responds to the problem of rising sea levels through a striking case study of Miami. She was awarded a number of grants for *FloodZone*, including the South Arts Fellowship and Michael P. Smith Fund for Documentary Photography. *Floridas* is a follow-up series, it zooms in the state of Florida and explores it culturally, politically, economically, and climatically. Samoylova's two monographs, *FloodZone* and *Floridas*, were published by Steidl in 2019 and 2022.

In 2022, Anastasia Samoylova was shortlisted for the **Deutsche Börse Photography Foundation Prize** which resulted in an exhibition at The Photographer's Gallery in London (UK) and at the Foundation's Headquarters (DE). Since July 2022, the **George Eastman Museum** in Rochester (US) houses an extensive solo exhibition of Samoylova. In 2021, her work was shown at **Musée des beaux-arts du Locle** (CH), **Orlando Museum of Art** (US), **The Multimedia Art Museum** (RU), **The Print Center Philadelphia** (US), **Chrysler Museum of Art**, Norfolk (US) and **HistoryMiami Museum** (US). Other exhibitions include **Wilhelm-Hack-Museum**, Ludwigshafen and the **Kunsthalle Mannheim**, Germany; **Biennale für aktuelle Fotografie**; **Perez Art Museum Miami**, **Museum of Contemporary Photography Chicago**, **USF Contemporary Art Museum Tampa**, **Purdue University**, **Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design**, **Griffin Museum of Photography**, **Aperture Foundation New York**, **Currents New Media Santa Fe**, **Julie Saul Gallery New York**.

Samoylova's work has been published with *The Washington Post*, *The New Yorker*, *The Guardian*, *FD Persoonlijk*, *British Journal of Photography*, *De Volkskrant*, *Het Parool*, *PhotoVogue*, *FOAM*, *Art Press*, *Monopol*, *Artforum*, and others. She has lectured as an invited artist at *George Eastman Museum*, *Paris Photo*, *SVA New York*, among others. Her work is in the collections at the *Perez Art Museum Miami*, *Museum of Contemporary Photography Chicago*, *Wilhelm-Hack Museum*, and *Deutsche Börse Photography Foundation Collection* among others.



Reflection, Lake Placid, 2020
Archival Pigment Print, 100 x 80 cm



Car Reflection, Miami Beach, 2018
Archival Pigment Print, 100 x 80 cm