

THOMAS DANE GALLERY

Slenske, Michael. 'Photographer Catherine Opie's Time Is Now'. *The Wall Street Journal Online*. 11 January 2016

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Photographer Catherine Opie's Time Is Now

Acclaimed artist Catherine Opie is at the top of her field, with numerous shows this winter and a recently published book, '700 Nimes Road,' featuring the gowns, shoes and jewelry that Opie shot at Elizabeth Taylor's Bel Air estate in 2011



Elizabeth Taylor's jewelry spilling out from a Louis Vuitton suitcase with labeled boxes. Photo: Treasure © Catherine Opie. Courtesy Regen Projects, Los Angeles And Lehmann Maupin, New York And Hong Kong

FOR THREE DECADES Catherine Opie has photographed subjects ranging from Minnesota icehouses to surfers in Malibu to artist friends, including John Baldessari and Kara Walker. In that time Opie, 54, has also become a grande dame of the contemporary art world, with a mid-career retrospective at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, teaching gigs at Yale and UCLA, representation by Hollywood's Regen Projects and Lehmann Maupin in New York, and a recent appointment to the board of the Andy Warhol Foundation. This winter is one of Opie's busiest yet, with a two-gallery takeover in New York City and coinciding solo shows in Los Angeles, at the Museum of Contemporary Art and UCLA's Hammer Museum in January, plus another at LACMA in February.

11 DUKE STREET, ST JAMES'S, LONDON SW1Y 6BN

TEL +44 (0)20 7925 2505 FAX +44 (0)20 7925 2506 info@thomasdane.com

THOMAS DANE GALLERY

“It’s weird because it’s all happening within a month,” says Opie in the photography studio she built behind her former home in L.A. Despite the recent attention, Opie admits, “For so many years every single article started out with, ‘The leather dyke who was known for portraits.’ ” It’s true, the artist’s photographs of drag kings, leather sadomasochists, lesbian couples and herself—pierced and hooded in leather S&M gear—turned Opie into a lightning rod for controversy in the LGBTQ community.

However kinky, Opie’s oeuvre has always been utterly American. “Cathy Opie is one of the great photographers of our moment,” says Helen Molesworth, chief curator at MOCA. The museum is devoting its Pacific Design Center outpost to *700 Nimes Road*, the photo collection and book showcasing the gowns, shoes and jewelry that Opie shot at Elizabeth Taylor’s Bel Air estate during a six-month span shortly before (and after) Taylor’s March 2011 death. Though the two never met, their mutual business manager asked Opie if she wanted to shoot Taylor in 2007. Opie wasn’t interested until she revisited *William Eggleston’s Graceland*, Eggleston’s 1984 exploration of Elvis’s estate. “*Graceland* was done many years after Elvis passed, and it was already a monument, but *700 Nimes Road* wasn’t, and that’s what I liked about it,” says Opie. With two rules from the actress’s camp—never disturb Dame Taylor or photograph any medical supplies—Opie snapped some 3,000 images of the star’s belongings. One of the highlights (shown) features a trove of Taylor’s most iconic jewelry spilling out from a Louis Vuitton suitcase with meticulously labeled boxes framing the shag carpet beneath. “For me the real story is the boxes,” says Opie. “I just love reading them.”

In addition to *700 Nimes Road*, Opie’s first solo exhibition with MOCA in nearly two decades, she will also have solo shows at Lehmann Maupin’s two NYC locations and at the Hammer, where she’ll display ethereal American landscapes and a series of portraits of famous friends and family. “By making really formal portraits I’m asking this simple question: Can I get you to look? Can I use language that’s so familiar and tied to art history that I actually get you to pause for a moment?” says Opie, who is constantly debating with her UCLA students about the relevance of photography in the Instagram era. “I’m just asking for that pause.”

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/photographer-catherine-opies-time-is-now-1452535705>