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# THE TENNESSEAN

## Sherrick & Paul shares gritty modern photographs from Highway 99

By Sara Estes

In the 1930s, at the height of the Dust Bowl and Great Depression, revered documentary photographer Dorothea Lange set out to photograph the lives of migrant farm workers in the United States. Making her way through the rural West, Lange captured the sorrow and struggle of specific time and place, along with a piercing sense of hope only found in the worst of times.

Photographer and filmmaker Katy Grannan (<http://www.katygrannan.com/>) traveled along California's Highway 99 photographing areas that Lange visited 75 years ago. During Saturday night's art crawl, Wedgewood- Houston newcomer Sherrick & Paul (<http://www.sherrickandpaul.com/2014/>) will open an exhibition of photographs from Grannan's resulting two-part series, "The Ninety Nine and the Nine." It is the third exhibition presented by the gallery since it opened in November of last year.

"I'm excited," said gallery owner Susan Sherrick. "It's a real privilege to be able to show these photographs. They're really important."



Katy Grannan, "Wanda Stands Alone Under the 9th Street Bridge," Modesto, CA. (Photo: Courtesy Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco, Salon 94, New York, and Sherrick and Paul, Nashville)

For these images, Grannan turned her camera lens to the gritty fringes of society where, for the most part, the "American Dream" is a distant myth. The Ninety Nine series consists of color portraits taken throughout the parched landscape and forgotten towns of California's Central Valley stretching through Modesto, Fresno and Bakersfield. The Nine refers to a set of additional black-and-white images that pull back the lens to show subjects in the context of their surroundings.

The exhibition features 14 photographs, including "Wanda Stands Alone Under the 9th Street Bridge, Modesto, CA," a black-and-white image from The Nine that was printed specifically for this exhibition. "We are the first gallery to show it," Sherrick said.

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In her halting street portraits, Grannan makes expert use of glaring sunlight and stoic angles to present her subjects in a light that is simultaneously heroic and vulnerable. Seen as a group, the images form a kind of disjointed army — forgotten soldiers of a class war waged long ago.

Grannan's view of the American West as it exists today — its austere terrain and inhabitants — neither exploits nor critiques the culture, but offers a glimpse into a unique psychological landscape that covers a large portion of our country. Each individual is imbued with his or her own distinct, complex energy. They are presented as Grannan seems to perceive them herself: imperfect and strong, dignified and resilient, struggling and lionhearted. Sherrick was first introduced to Grannan's photography while living in New York in 2004. "I was working as a sales assistant to the senior director at Marian Goodman, who had bought one of Grannan's works from GreenbergVan Doren," she said. "I went to pick it up. That was the first time I'd seen anything by her."

The two then worked together at Fraenkel Gallery in San Francisco from 2007 to 2011. When Sherrick moved to Nashville and began making plans to open her gallery, Grannan always topped the list of artists she wanted to show. "Very much so," said Sherrick.