

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Brendan Lott
Safer at Home

7 November – 19 December 2020

Social Distance Opening Reception: Saturday, November 7, 2:00 – 6:00pm
(controlled capacity and masks required)

Walter Maciel Gallery is pleased to present *Safer at Home* by Los Angeles based artist Brendan Lott. Lott's sixth solo show with our gallery, this exhibition will include photographs and a digital slide installation.

Staying home day and night with a desire to remain creative during the quarantine, Lott began shooting photographs from his DTLA loft of the residential building across the street. He became entranced with peeking into the private lives of others during the pandemic, capturing their behavior and activities in candid moments. These images are not portraits and he avoids showing complete faces. They are moments in time; a time of great uncertainty and fear. The final images simply reveal a knee, an edge of the face or just a headless body with the face obscured by architecture, plants, furniture or props. Metaphorically, Lott challenges the notion of the face being the site of our individuality, thus these faceless bodies articulate the evacuation of individual selves in the age of digital information.

"This is street photography when no one is in the streets," Lott says. "This is Robert Frank's *The Americans* when America is stuck at home. This is Walker Evans' subway portraits when no one has anywhere to go."

Lott entitles the series *Safer at Home*, referencing the nurturing environment that we create for ourselves with personal tastes revealed in the décor, arrangement of furniture, accessories and lighting. However there is an ominous feeling within each of these images. As noted by critic Daniel Coffeen, "What we learn from seeing these images is that there is no longer any safety at home for we are all evacuated, turned inside out, atomized within the network, all these isolated nodes gravitating towards the same center. The line that would separate a screen from a window has been erased. We no longer peer through windows; we view screens. The image is no longer *over there* or up on the screen, in theaters, or even on TVs. The image is right here. It's everywhere. It's us."

Lott acknowledges these images are problematic since the subjects don't know they are being observed. He's using secrecy to achieve a true intimacy - something impossible when the camera is known. This intimacy is both attractive and unsettling, giving the viewers the thrill of being a voyeur while also feeling a bit guilty for looking.

After receiving a BFA in filmmaking from the San Francisco Art Institute in 2001, Lott did his graduate work at Stanford University earning his MFA in 2006. He had a solo show at the San Jose Museum of Art in 2008 and has been included in group exhibitions at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles; San Francisco Arts Commission Gallery; UC Riverside Sweeney Art Gallery; Musée d'Art Modern et Contemporain in Strasbourg, France and Kunstraum B/2 in Leipzig, Germany. In 2016 Lott completed a major corporate commission consisting of 17 multi-panel photographic works for the Ritz Carlton Hotel in Chicago. Other public acquisitions include the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, Morgan Stanley in New York and Pimco Corporation in Orange County among others. Lott is the past recipient of several prestigious awards including an E. Eric and Elizabeth D. Johnson Fellowship in Studio Art, a Murphy & Cadogan Fellowship in the Fine Arts and a Pollock-Krasner Foundation grant.