

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Brendan Lott
Looking In and Looking Out

6 November – 23 December 2021
Opening Reception: Saturday, November 6, 2:00 – 7:00pm

Walter Maciel Gallery is pleased to present *Looking In and Looking Out* by Los Angeles based artist Brendan Lott. This exhibition is a continuation of Lott's insight and observation of life during the pandemic which was initially presented in the exhibition, *Safer at Home* at our gallery last fall. The exhibition will include archival pigment prints in various sizes.

In the early days of the pandemic when Los Angeles announced the stay-at-home order, Lott began shooting photographs during the day and night from his DTLA loft of the residential building across the street. His interest developed in observing the loneliness, boredom and solitude that would eventually transform into creative energy, thoughtful activity and freedom as rules of the pandemic eased over the last year and a half. What began as a ritual of peeking into the private lives of others to capture candid moments of the mundane grew into inventive activities within the context of social distancing and limited public space. The early moments of fear and anxiety began to evolve into a feeling of acceptance and comfort as neighbors started to gather with lovers or small groups of friends. The everyday moments of life seemed to be a bit more exciting and fun-filled compared to the earlier pandemic life when we all felt trapped and contained.

Lott captures a range of activities from a man singing and dancing in sequined leggings and unzipped sweatshirt on New Year's Eve to a young couple embracing in a kiss in an empty room to a woman whispering into her friend's ear in a darkened room to isolated figures thumbing through their phones in their beds. Lott acknowledges these images are problematic since the subjects are unaware they are being photographed while knowing this is the only way to achieve a documentation of true intimacy even if the act itself is unsettling. Much like in the movie *Rear Window*, Lott gives his viewers the thrill of being a voyeur while also feeling a bit guilty for looking.

In conjunction with the photographs capturing intimate interior moments of pandemic life, Lott presents a select group of images shot on the streets in downtown Los Angeles. He captures various abstract fields within the urban landscapes often formed as isolated close-ups of graffiti, peeled layers of posters, cracked paint, decrepit architecture and discarded debris. Los Angeles writer, Jack Skelley states,

"The wide sidewalks are empty. How many storefronts are now boarded? Who observes the tattered adverts plastered on the plywood? They are ripped, faded, pasted-over. If anyone stopped to notice them, they might be symbols of desolation. Compulsive but futile attempts to persuade. Their audience a void. He notices them. He sees something else: The street is lined with these spontaneous collages. Abstract murals. Accidental collaborations. The beauty of chaos and decay in every direction. A thousand Rauschenbergs. He frames them with his camera."

For Lott these documented moments function as found paintings. There is beauty everywhere. The images are blown up in scale and make specific reference to various artists and art movements.

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. His work is currently included in the exhibition *Art and Hope at the End of the Tunnel* that was curated by Edward Goldman at the USC Fisher Art Museum. Past solo exhibitions include *Memories I'll Never Have* at the San Jose Museum of Art in 2008 as well as various 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 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. Lott is the recipient of many prestigious awards including an E. Eric/Elizabeth D. Johnson Fellowship in Studio Art, a Murphy & Cadogan Fellowship in the Fine Arts and a Pollock-Krasner Foundation grant.