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SF Camerawork
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Forage From Fire *Images by Norma I. Quintana*

Curated by Ann Tinca

Exhibition: October 4 – 20, 2018

Opening Reception: Thursday, October 4, 2018, 6 - 8 PM

San Francisco, CA, August 21 — One-year anniversary of the Atlas Fire – Artist Norma I. Quintana’s solo exhibition *Forage from Fire*, on view at SF Camerawork October 4 – 20, 2018, documents the remains of her home and studio destroyed by the Atlas Fire in Napa, California in October 2017.

Quintana is an avid collector - of memories, photographs, characters, antiques, and anecdotes. Her previous photographic series *Forget Me Not* and *Circus: A Traveling Life*, document her fascination with the lives of unsung heroes and performers “behind the scenes.” Her home was a testament to her eye for vintage curiosities, exquisitely curated and displayed.

On October 8, 2017, the Atlas Peak wildfire descended upon Quintana’s neighborhood. First responders arrived at her door, and she and her family had only minutes to gather important documents and quickly evacuate.

Within a few hours, the home where she raised her children and its treasured, numerous collections of books, artifacts, and art were destroyed—consumed in minutes by the fire’s intense heat.



Norma I. Quintana, *Type Writer*, 2017

Days after the smoke cleared, Quintana's documentarian instincts kicked in and she started making work with remnants she salvaged from the ashes. Using her iPhoneX, she photographed and chronicled the blackened and burnt objects - some barely recognizable - to create a new series *Forage From Fire*. Framed by the black plastic gloves issued for fire clean-up, the sequence of images include jewelry, camera bodies, Christmas ornaments, pendants, doll parts, kitchen tools, and picture frames which she saw as objet d'art.

The objects signify markers in an archeological dig for familiar treasures. But they also provide healing and closure and a path forward for Quintana. She states, "As an artist, when I despair, I don't break down, I break through." More than documenting a loss, her new project provides inspiration to others recovering from trauma and puts life into perspective. Quintana continues to excavate memories and embraces the blank slate placed before her.

Media Coverage:

[After the Northern California Wildfires, an Artist Pieces Together a Life.](#)

Seph Rodney, **Hyperallergic**. Nov 9, 2017

[A Photographer Turns the Lens on Her Own Home's Charred Remains.](#)

David Markus, **KQED Arts**. Oct 31, 2017

[3 artists among many who lost home, studio in Wine Country fires.](#)

Charles Desmarais, **SFGATE**, Oct 20, 2017

ARTIST BIO:

NORMA I. QUINTANA is a photographer and educator born in Cleveland, Ohio. She holds a B.A. in Sociology from John Carroll University and Master of Social Sciences from Case Western University in Ohio. Quintana moved to the Bay Area in the 1980s and worked in human resources in Silicon Valley. She began her career as a fine art photographer in 1999 and studied with pioneer photographers: Mary Ellen Mark, Graciela Iturbide and Shelby Lee Adams. She works in the tradition of social documentary. Her portrait series include *Forget Me Not* and *Circus: A Traveling Life*, which have been exhibited nationally. Her book *Circus: A Traveling Life* was published as a monograph by Damiani Editore and distributed by [Distributed Art Publishers](#). Quintana has lectured nationally at Stanford, UCLA, American University, Penn State and internationally in Madrid, Spain.

ABOUT SF CAMERAWORK:

Founded in 1974, SF Camerawork's mission is to encourage and support emerging artists to explore new directions and ideas in the photographic arts. Through exhibitions, publications, and educational programs, SF Camerawork strives to create an engaging platform for artistic exploration as well as community involvement and inquiry.

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