CHRIS SHARP

Edgar Ramirez & Aaron Siskind

Dialectical Surfaces

October 15 - November 14, 2026

Chris Sharp Gallery is pleased to present a two-person exhibition of Edgar Ramirez and Aaron Siskind, entitled *Dialectical Surfaces*.

Friend and peer to the abstract expressionists, Aaron Siskind (1903-1991) was famously referred to by Elaine deKooning as “the painter’s photographer.” Siskind was largely responsible for not only embracing the language of abstraction through the medium of photography, but also for introducing the depiction of found or natural urban decay, or maybe better put, ‘dialectical surfaces,’* (surfaces marked and scored by change over time) into the canon of western art in the late 40s. In his work, the flat but textured space of the lived wall reveals a captivating formal complexity produced by time, weather and the elements. Indeed, in his universe, a given urban fragment is liable to be as pictorially compelling as any abstract canvas by Clifford Still or Franz Kline. Pioneered as such, this terrain will be later valorized and explored in a variety of ways by the Nouveau Realistes, such as Mimmo Rotella in Italy and Jacques Villeglé, François Dufrene, and Raymond Hains in France in the early 50s, echoing down to the present in so many contemporary collage and process-based pictorial practices.

Born and raised in the South Bay, Mexican-American, Los Angeles-based artist Edgar Ramirez has already added a significant voice to this discussion. Ramirez combines a canny eye for color, composition and texture with a capacity for trompe l’oeil that is less driven by pictorial deceit than by embodying the organic decay of a dialectical surface. Ultimately committed to a more general conversation around the urban and painting, not to mention legacies of abstract expressionism and landscape, Ramirez’s formation as an artist is indivisible from his background. A first generation Mexican-American growing up around the oil refineries of San Pedro and the world’s busiest port, Ramirez brings the specificity of his personal context to bear with a rich and fully integrated painterly practice.

This exhibition offers a unique opportunity to consider the two most remote poles of this ongoing discussion side by side. Featuring some of Siskind’s most iconic photos, such as Jerome, Arizona 21,1949, as well as pieces

from trips to Chicago that same year and later in Mexico in 1955, the exhibition brings the photographer's black-and-white works into counterpoint with Ramirez's chromatically opulent reflections on urban blight, class, industrial production, and globalism in a practice that expands and deepens the discussion initiated by Siskind over 75 years ago.

*This term is inspired by and indebted to Robert Smithson and his 1973 essay, Frederick Law Olmsted and the Dialectical Landscape, in which he claims: "Abstraction can only be valid if it accepts nature's dialectic."

Edgar Ramirez (b. 1989, Los Angeles, CA) lives and works in Los Angeles. Recent solo exhibitions include Alameda Stones, Post-Fair with Chris Sharp Gallery, Los Angeles, 2026; From the Rail to the Water, Meliksetian and Briggs, Dallas, 2024; Smoky Hollow, Chris Sharp Gallery, Los Angeles, 2023; I've Been Dreamin' Too Long, Chris Sharp Gallery, Los Angeles, 2022; and Terminal Island, ArtCenter College of Design, Pasadena, 2020 Recent group exhibitions include Muna Island, Chris Sharp Gallery, Los Angeles, 2026; Cardboard: Infinite Possibilities, Wönzimer, Los Angeles, 2026; Sick Ass Foos, Charlie James Gallery, Los Angeles, 2024; IdentificarX, ArtCenter College of Design, Pasadena, 2024; Signal to Noise, Diane Rosenstein Gallery, Los Angeles, 2024; Strong Winds Ahead, François Ghebaly, Los Angeles, 2023; Distribuidx, Lisson Gallery, New York, 2023; Color Fields, Long Beach Museum of Art, Long Beach, 2023; Rostro, Charlie James Gallery, Los Angeles, 2022; Quinn Emanuel Artistsin- Residence, Show Gallery, Los Angeles, 2022; Aqux, The Mistake Room, Los Angeles, 2022; Dark Waters, Watts Labor Community Center supported by David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles, 2021; and Fell for Everything, ArtCenter DTLA, Los Angeles, 2020.

Artist and educator Aaron Siskind (1903-1991) holds a preeminent place in the history of American photography.

Between 1947 and 1951, Siskind exhibited regularly at the prestigious Charles Egan Gallery alongside many well-known painters of the period. Numerous posthumous exhibitions have been organized worldwide. Such institutions are amongst others, the Phillips Collection, Washington D.C.; Cleveland Museum of Art; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Whitney Museum of Art, New York; and the Center for Creative Photography, Tucson. Work by Aaron Siskind is held in museum collections, including the Art Institute of Chicago; Center for Creative Photography, Tucson; Getty Center, Los Angeles; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Museum of Modern Art, New York; The Museum of Photographic Arts, San Diego; National Museum of Modern Art Tokyo; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; and the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington D.C.
Siskind published several important books and catalogues, and seven major monographs such as Places: Aaron Siskind Photographs (1976), Harlem Document, Photographs 1932-1940: Aaron Siskind (1981), Aaron Siskind: Pleasures and Terrors (1982), and Song of The Open Road (1990).t