

## Ken Gonzales-Day

MINNESOTA MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART

141 E. 4th Street

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For more than a decade, Ken Gonzales-Day has been exploring the history of racialized violence in America, creating several bodies of work that are brought together for the first time in this exhibition. Cumulatively, his work is a powerful and complex statement that challenges what we thought we knew about this country's great dilemma. The Los Angeles-based artist has extensively researched lynchings in California, where Mexican Americans and Asian Americans were widely targeted during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This work resulted in a nonfiction book—*Lynching in the West, 1850–1935* (2006)—as well as the series “Erased Lynching,” 2006–16, comprising photographs of executions that have been altered to remove the victims' bodies, and “Searching for California Hang Trees,” 2002–14, in which the artist photographed trees in locations where hangings occurred.

Examples from both series are included here. Also included among the works that fill the entirety of the museum's single gallery are photographs from his 2005 “Memento Mori” series, featuring original portraits of young men the same age and race as those of specific historical victims of racially motivated violence, as well as more recent works in which photographed re-creations of historical killings are composited with photos of protests against latter-day slayings of people of color.

The works here serve as powerful documentation of Gonzales-Day's ongoing efforts to call attention both to the complex history of institutional racism and its extrajudicial expressions and to his own vantage point as an observer. By extension, viewers question their own relationships to this history.



Ken Gonzalez-Day, *Nightfall I*, 2007, C-print, 36 x 46". From the series “Searching for California Hang Trees,” 2002–14.

— Jay Gabler