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JACKSON FINE ART PRESENTS

ABELARDO MORELL: Tent Camera Obscura

Opening Reception: Friday, March 7, 6-8 pm

Exhibition Dates: March 7 – May 3, 2014

Jackson Fine Art is proud to present *Tent Camera Obscura*, a solo exhibition of photographs by renowned artist, Abelardo Morell. This will be his second exhibition with Jackson Fine Art, running in tandem with *Abelardo Morell: The Universe Next Door*, a touring retrospective on view February 23rd through May 18th at the High Museum in Atlanta.

Over the past 25 years, Morell has created photographs that are full of magic and wonder, revealing unseen beauty in our everyday world. Citing classical and contemporary influences ranging from Giovanni Battista Piranesi to Ernest Hemingway to Minor White, Morell takes a modernist approach to his photographs, while exploring timeless themes and conveyors of cultural meaning such as family, books, maps, money and museums. His keen interest in optics and the mechanics of photography has compelled him to explore a number of techniques including photograms, still-life tableaux, stop-motion studies, camera obscura and his self-devised tent camera.

In 1962, Morell fled Cuba with his family, relocating to New York at the age of thirteen with little knowledge of the language and a fascination for the visual and cultural differences between these two places. He struggled with English throughout high school and turned to Hemingway's books to help him learn the language. Morell found comfort in Hemingway's ability to convey complex emotions through simple, concrete language. In 1969, he received a scholarship from Bowdoin College where he was first introduced to photography. He studied under John McKee, whose teachings focused on the business of looking at things and the connections between photography, painting, music and life. He cites McKee's fluid way of teaching the medium as a lifelong influence on his work.

During his early career, Morell created street photography in the style of Diane Arbus and Gary Winogrand. After the birth of his son in 1986, he was forced to abandon this reactionary approach, moving the focus of his life and work to the domestic interior. Confined by the walls of the apartment, Morell saw every object and moment as photographable. He began capturing images of his family and experimenting with different vantage points, even crawling on the floor as if he were a child himself. Morell created a gently poetic and complex visual language that has defined his career in the decades since.

While teaching photography at the Massachusetts College of Art, Morell turned his classroom into a *camera obscura* to illustrate to his students the basic mechanics of a camera. In doing so, he discovered that any room can be turned into a *camera obscura*, an early optical device in which light travelling through a hole projects an inverted view of the surroundings on the opposing wall. Morell began transforming entire rooms into cameras and photographing the outside world as projected onto various interiors. He started by making black-and-white pictures in his own home before traveling in search of other sites to create these uncanny images that are at once familiar and foreign. In these photographs, reality doubles over itself, forming a disorienting, dreamlike space.

Most recently, Morell began to wonder what it would be like to marry images of landscapes with the surfaces of the ground nearby. He worked with his assistant to create a portable *camera obscura*, a light-tight tent that uses periscope type optics to project a view of the landscape onto whatever ground is under the tent. The shapes in the landscape and the texture of the earth balance abstraction and representation to form a new painterly landscape, giving birth to the tent camera obscura series.

Abelardo Morell was born in Cuba in 1948. Morell received his undergraduate degree in 1977 from Bowdoin College and an MFA from the Yale University School of Art in 1981. His photographs are in some of the most important private and public collections around the world including the Center for Creative Photography, Tucson, AZ, The George Eastman House, Rochester, New York, The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, and the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, England. Morell is the recipient of numerous awards including the Cintas Foundation Award in 1992, the John Guggenheim Memorial Fellowship in 1993, and the ICP Infinity Award in 2011. He has published eight books to date, and is currently working on *The Island of Rota*, in conjunction with Oliver Sacks and Ted Muhling (to be published by MoMA later this year). *The Universe Next Door*, a major retrospective of his work jointly organized by the Art Institute of Chicago and the Getty Museum. The exhibition has travelled to the Art Institute of Chicago, the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles and to the High Museum in Atlanta, GA on February 23rd. A monograph of the same name was published to great critical acclaim by the Art Institute of Chicago and the Yale University Press. Morell lives and works in Boston, Massachusetts where he is a professor at the Massachusetts College of Art and Design.