

## Noritaka Minami Solo Exhibition “California City, California”

- **Period** Saturday, April 7th, 2017—Saturday, June 2th, 2018  
\* Closed on May 1st, 2nd, and during May 15th to 22nd
- **Hours** Tuesdays through Fridays, 13:00—20:00  
Saturdays, 12:00—19:00 (closed on Sundays, Mondays, and National Holidays)
- **Venue** KANA KAWANISHI PHOTOGRAPHY  
2-7-5-5F, Nishiazabu, Minato-ku, Tokyo 106-0031 / Tel: +81 3 5843 9128

### ▼OPENING RECEPTION

April 7th, Saturday, 18:00-20:00

### ▼ARTIST TALK

April 7th, Saturday, 17:00-18:00

“Architecture and Photography—Investigating the Future and the Past”

- Shuichi Iketani (Editor, Asahi Camera)
- Daisuke Sugawara (Architect, CEO of SUGAWARADAIKUSUKE Co. Ltd.,)
- Noritaka Minami (Artist)

\*talk will be held in Japanese language only



*Tract No. 3198 (California City, California)*  
2017, Piezography print, 500×760mm

© Noritaka Minami, courtesy KANA KAWANISHI GALLERY

■ Please contact below for any image enquiries ■



KANA KAWANISHI PHOTOGRAPHY is pleased to announce the opening of Noritaka Minami's solo exhibition, *California City, California*, on Saturday, April 7, 2018. This will be KANA KAWANISHI PHOTOGRAPHY's very first exhibition at their new space in Nishi-Azabu district of Tokyo.

In his series *1972—Nakagin Capsule Tower*, which was published by Kehrer Verlag in 2015, Minami photographed the iconic Metabolist apartment complex designed by the architect Kisho Kurokawa. He examined its unique presence in the city of Tokyo as an image of “the future” from the past by documenting the various conditions in which the capsules exist today. In this upcoming exhibition, Minami presents a new body of work that continues his interest in investigating images of “the future” from the past that remain in the landscape today.

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The photographs in this exhibition explore California City, a community in the Mojave Desert proposed and developed by sociologist turned real estate developer Nathan K. Mendelsohn in 1958. This large development was begun in response to the rapid economic and population growths Southern California experienced after World War II. Mendelsohn announced an ambitious goal of creating a brand-new metropolis in the desert that would eventually rival the city of Los Angeles.

Mendelsohn was one amongst many real estate developers of this era that rushed to purchase large parcels of undeveloped land to create master-planned communities that offered people the opportunity at home ownership and achieving the American Dream. He presented to the public an image of an ideal development strategically located away from the chaos of existing cities and carefully designed with all the essential resources to lead a comfortable, modern life. California City was showcased as a “wonderland” with abundant supply of water underneath the land that would enable the creation of a large and thriving community even in a seemingly harsh location such as the Mojave Desert.

Mendelsohn's vision (or delusion) continued to proceed over the next decade with meticulous planning for the land and an aggressive sales campaign to attract homeowners from across the United States. In 1960, the city built its first police station and received its own zip code. In 1965, California City became officially incorporated, even though the population was still under one thousand people. It became the third largest city in the state of California in land size, and every single street that was constructed within its city limits was given a name. These street names as well as the lines that officially divide thousands of private properties on the land appear on maps to this day.

However, the black and white photographs shot by Minami from the air reveal that hardly anything exists on much of this development today except for the complex network of streets that stretch across the vast landscape. The houses, parks, and infrastructure originally planned for this land and presented through countless drawings and promotional materials by Mendelsohn and his associates are nowhere in sight. The one large and impressive structure that happens to be present on this desolate land is a privately-run prison.

Furthermore, the photographs Minami shot on the ground follow the people who do occupy this space but only on a temporarily basis. During holiday weekends, over fifty-thousand people descend to this normally uninhabited landscape with their trailers and take advantage of the existing streets with their ATVs and dirt bikes. Photographs of the thick haze of dust that blankets the landscape through this recreational activity show that people now use this land in a way that is drastically different from Mendelsohn's original vision for the city.

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Minami's photographs show that the layout for a city is still in place and something could potentially be built there in the future. Yet, there are also no signs that suggest this city will ever be built in reality. The plan for a large community just sits on the ground as if suspended in time, an unintended legacy of a developer who projected an overly optimistic outlook on the land more than a half century ago. At this current moment in which we face a sense of uncertainty regarding the direction of society and its values, the history of California City may offer valuable lessons and questions in order to reflect on our own future.

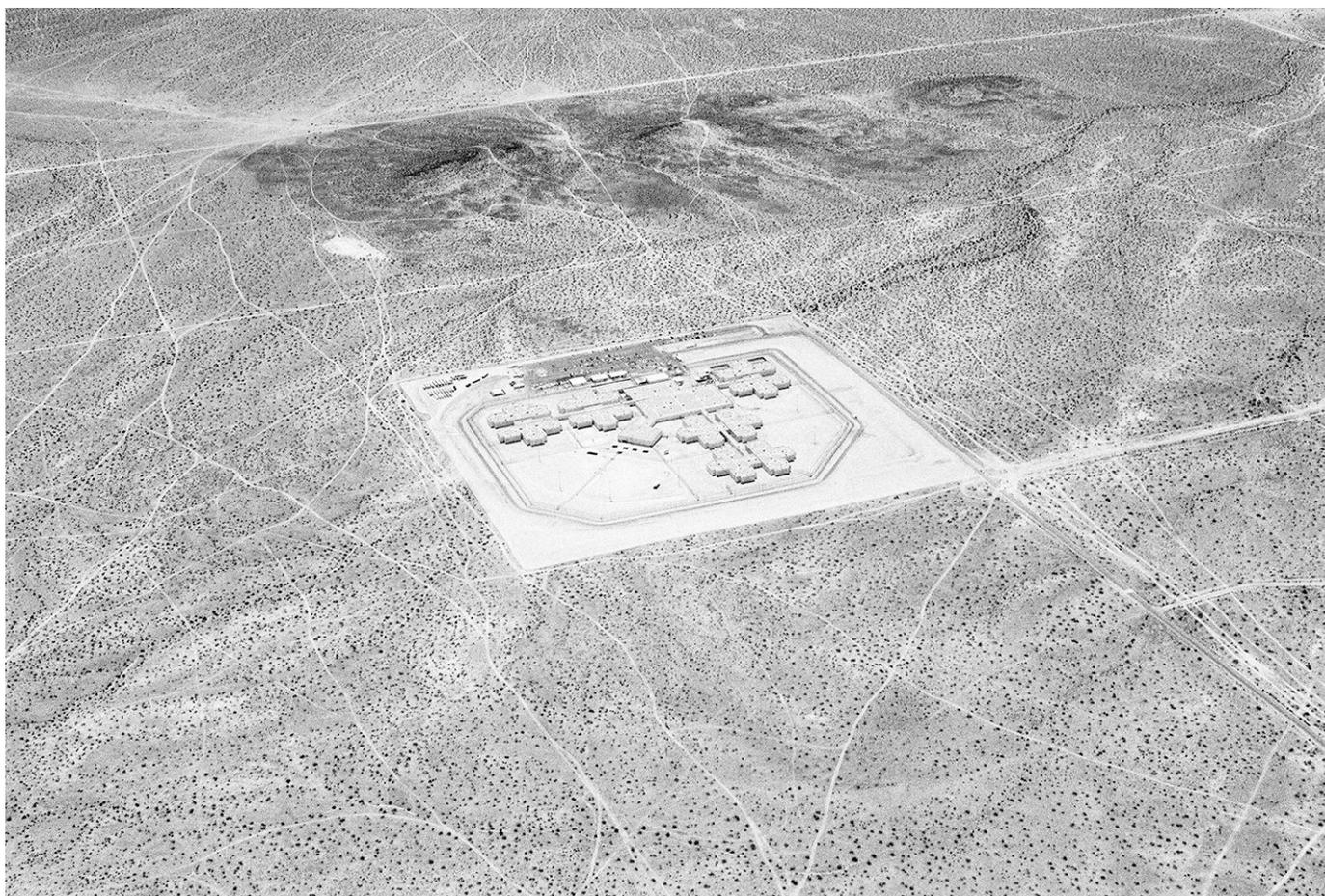
■Please contact below for any image enquiries■

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## Artist Biography

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Noritaka Minami was born 1981 in Osaka, Japan, and currently lives and works in Chicago, USA as Assistant Professor of Photography at Loyola University Chicago. He has also taught photography at Harvard University, Wellesley College, the School of the Museum of Fine Art, Boston, University of California, Berkeley, and University of California, Irvine. Minami graduated from the University of California, Berkeley with a BA in Art Practice and graduated from the University of California, Irvine with a MFA in Studio Art. Solo exhibitions of his works have been held at UCLA Department of Architecture and Urban Design, Griffin Museum of Photography, and UC Merced Art Gallery. His works have also been exhibited in group shows at Aperture (New York), Somerset House (London), Gewerbemuseum (Winterthur) and many others. Minami's monograph, *1972—Nakagin Capsule Tower* published from Kehrer Verlag in 2015 received the 2015 Architectural Book Award from the Deutsches Architekturmuseum in Frankfurt, Germany. Minami's works are held in the collections of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, UCLA Architecture and Urban Design, and Museum of Contemporary Photography Chicago.



*Correctional Facility (California City, California)*  
2017, Piezography print, 500×760mm  
© Noritaka Minami, courtesy KANA KAWANISHI GALLERY

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*Wonderland (#65-15)*  
2017, Piezography print, 250×340mm  
© Noritaka Minami, courtesy KANA KAWANISHI GALLERY



*Wonderland (#29-08)*  
2017, Piezography print, 250×340mm  
© Noritaka Minami, courtesy KANA KAWANISHI GALLERY

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