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John Divola: Dents and Abrasions

March 26 – May 14, 2016

Artist's Reception: Saturday, April 2, 2016, 6–8 p.m.

Gallery Luisotti is pleased to announce the upcoming exhibition John Divola: *Dents and Abrasions*. Featuring eight works from his series *Intervention*, *March Base*, and *Discarded Painting*, the exhibition finds Divola revisiting the subject matter and concepts of his early *Vandalism* series in the contemporary context of evolving technology and personal perspective. *Dents and Abrasions* shows Divola's sophisticated understanding of the photographic camera's documentary limits and demonstrates his interest in process and observation in the context of lived environments and entropy.

In the mid-1970s John Divola created a phenomenal and ambitious body of work, *Vandalism*. The work entailed Divola entering abandoned (and, one presumes, uninhabited) homes, spray-painting geometric shapes and/or patterns on the homes' walls, and photographing the markings in black-and-white. *Vandalism* is by definition a crime involving the deliberate destruction of private property. Yet Divola's photographs, which capture both the artist's painted interventions, and sense of place, are anything but evidence of a crime. In fact, *Vandalism* subverted this basic preconception of photographic documentation by bringing to the fore photography's inherent surface tension: a space that lies between an illusory and enigmatic subject matter (the spray painted marks) and the evidentiary signs of exurban abandonment.

In *Dents and Abrasions* we find Divola renegotiating the territory of *Vandalism*. Here we find abandoned dwellings, located at the edge of human existence, and found to be in decrepit and dysfunctional condition. Different than his earlier work, Divola's current works are perhaps more poetic and narrative. At times the poetic may be signified by the literal, found writing on walls, or take the form of forsaken paintings, foraged from the dumpster where Divola teaches, and installed in abandoned homes. In still other works Divola's paint cans transform neglected spaces into canvases carrying mystifying and minimalistic patterns into the representational space of the photographic. The specificity of these structures, their locations in time, place and circumstance, are in dialog with a discourse of gesture and abstraction that has prevailed as a primary locus of interest in the discourse of much modern and contemporary art.

As in *Vandalism* the subtle blemishes left by a modern inhabitant: the furniture that scratches walls, the nails that leave holes, the surfaces abraded by overuse, are of equivalent interest and import to the blunt gestures of the artist. It is also a continuation of the photographer's career-long interest in the surfaces, slippages, and incidental inclinations of camera work.