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BOOK INFORMATION SHEET (10.06.17)

Author (as it should appear on the book): Steve Fitch

Title: *Vanishing Vernacular*

Subtitle: *Western Landmarks*

Contributors: Concluding essay by Toby Jurovics

Partner: n/a

Book pages: 172

Number and type of illustrations: 130 photographs by the author, including 2 gatefolds and 127 in color and 3 in black-and-white

Trim size: 10" x 11.875"

List price: \$45.00

Discount: trade

ISBN (book): 978-1-938086-60-1

ISBNs (electronic):

Edition: Hardcover

E-book? later

Interactive e-book? n/a

Jacket: yes

Edition size: 1,500

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To warehouse: March 15, 2018

Printed in: Singapore

Distributor: Casemate/IPM

Bookstore categories (list three): American West/Photography/Architecture

Audience: Steve Fitch is among America's most well-known chroniclers of the American West. He has a sizable reputation and following in the photography world among artists, curators, museum and other bookstores, so his past will help launch this, his newest book. Furthermore, anyone interested in the vanishing roadside landmarks of the American West will be intrigued by this large body of work that extends 45 years. Much of what Fitch photographs has already vanished or will soon be gone, as interstates and franchises take over the historic roadside culture of America.

Selling points: (1) Photography in general and the American West in particular. Just about every newspaper and magazine has reviewed Fitch's previous photographic books, so that legacy is a foundation for the launch, but, given the topic, national and regional media (newspapers, photo magazines, and journals) will also be intrigued. (2) The American West remains a unique region in American culture and an attraction for millions of visitors every year from throughout the world. Readers will be interested in a book that chronicles the many roadside landscapes of the iconic West that no longer exist or are endangered species.

Description of the work:

Steve Fitch is among America's most well-known chroniclers of the American West who has been photographing the West's changing vernacular landscape and its vanishing roadside landmarks for more than 45 years. In his new book, Fitch presents both the ancient and modern West by way of photographing petroglyphs, neon motel signs, hand-painted business signs, drive-in movie theatre screens, and radio towers—all vanishing landmarks. They are now endangered because of the advent of the Interstate Highway System and its corporate franchises that have eclipsed travel and small businesses along historic U.S. highways such as Route 66.

In this fascinating and comprehensive account, we join in Fitch's expansive journey, beginning in the 1970s and the days of *Easy Rider* and ending in the present age. His quest is truly an odyssey of epic proportions and the book's 130 unforgettable photographs are deliberately sequenced to mimic the experience of the open road—during both day and night. Fitch explains how he developed the project in his informative introduction, in which, interestingly, he suggests that the petroglyphs of the ancient Pueblo people have endured far better and longer than anything made during the last sixty years. Curator Toby Jurovics, in his insightful concluding essay, reveals Fitch's own view of photography as a visual form of cultural anthropology and positions Fitch's work in relation to that of Robert Adams, Joe Deal, Frank Gohlke, Stephen Shore, and other practitioners of the photographic style known as the "New Topographics."

Vanishing Vernacular: Western Landmarks is sure to become a modern-day classic, a book that will be all the more revered as America and Americans move farther away from the U.S. highways of the past. That historic roadside economy and its vernacular culture and architecture are vanishing like endangered species, but, thankfully, Steve Fitch was along for the long ride. In sharing that past, he has created his own kind of preservation by saving the West's iconic landmarks of the open road through his photography.

Blurbs:

"Steve Fitch reminds us of one of the great pleasures of the classic American road trip, the exuberant roadside motel sign, an endangered species he artfully captures in all its neon glory, alongside drive-in movie theaters, hand-painted signs, and other oddities of the Western cultural landscape."

—Katherine Ware, Curator of Photography, New Mexico Museum of Art

About the Author:

Steve Fitch has been a photographer since the early 1970s. He has taught at the University of Colorado at Boulder, Princeton University, and, most recently, at the College of Santa Fe and the Santa Fe University of Art and Design. He is the recipient of two National Endowment for the Arts Fellowships in 1973 and 1975, the last National Endowment for the Arts Survey Grant, awarded in 1981, and the Eliot Porter Fellowship in 1999. He is also the author of *Diesels & Dinosaurs: Photographs from the American Highway* (Long Run Press 1976), and *Gone: Photographs of Abandonment on the High Plains*, with essays by Merrill Gilfillan, Kathleen Howe, and Evelyn Schlatter (University of New Mexico Press 2002). His work is in the collection of the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Whitney Museum of American Art, and Yale University Art Gallery, among others.

About the Contributor:

Toby Jurovics is Chief Curator and Richard and Mary Holland Curator of American Western Art at the Joslyn Art Museum in Omaha, Nebraska. Previously, he was Curator of Photography at the Smithsonian American Art Museum and Associate Curator of Photography at the Princeton University Art Museum. He has organized exhibitions on Robert Adams, Lewis Baltz, Barbara Bosworth, Emmet Gowin, A. J. Russell, William Sutton, and William Wylie, among many other artists, and has written seminal essays on Thomas Joshua Cooper, John Gossage, and the New Topographics. He is the author of *Framing the West: The Survey Photographs of Timothy H. O'Sullivan* (Yale University Press, 2010).