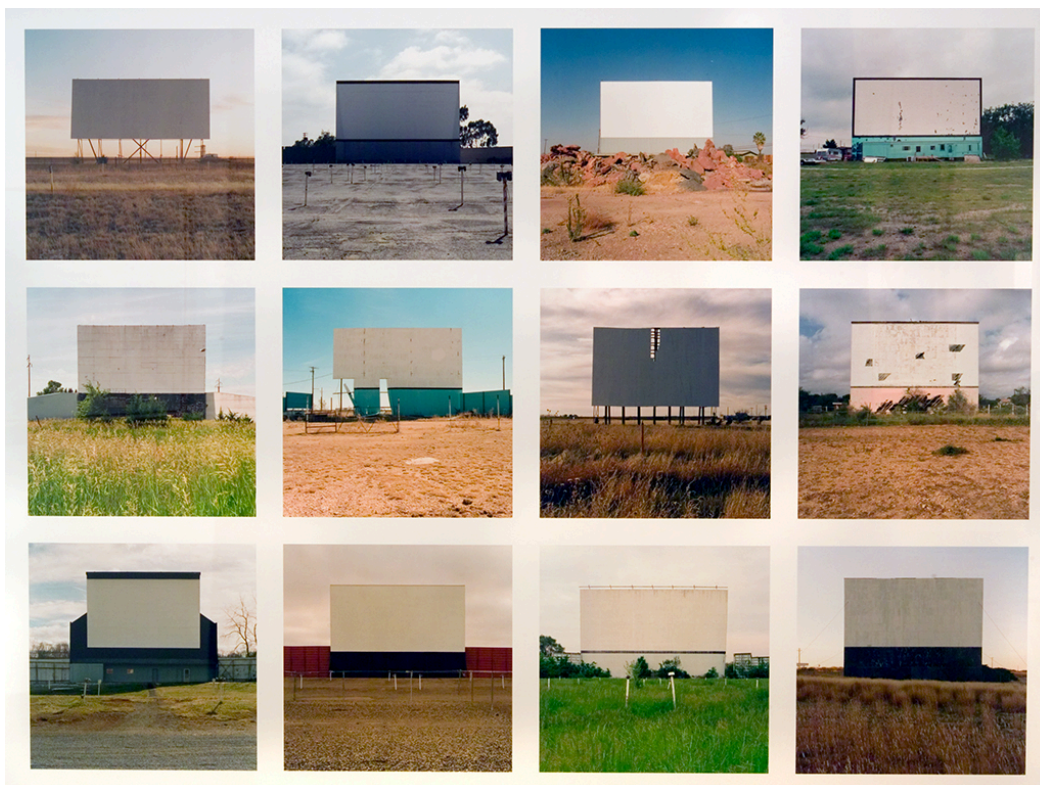


< Common Work of Art

Past Common Works of Art

## 2019 Common Work of Art

### *Twelve Drive-Ins I*, Jeff Brouws



**Jeff Brouws**

born 1955, San Francisco, California

***Twelve Drive-Ins I***, 2005

lightjet chromogenic color print mounted to Plexiglas

Museum purchase: Helen Foresman Spencer Art Acquisition Fund, [2005.0064](#)

The Spencer Museum of Art has selected the photograph *Twelve Drive-Ins I* by Jeff Brouws as the KU 2019–2020 Common Work of Art to accompany KU's newest [Common Book](#), *Tales of Two Americas: Stories of Inequality in a Divided Nation*, an anthology edited by John Freeman. *Tales of Two Americas* features writers who examine the inequitable realities in the United States through essays, poems, memoirs, and short stories. The book's themes include interrogations of the American Dream, the costs and value of education, notions of socioeconomic and racial inequality, home and homelessness, safety and insecurity, change and gentrification, and many more.

Brouws's print depicts 12 separate photographs of American drive-in movie theaters in nondescript locations. Drive-in theaters are a distinctly American phenomenon associated with the 1950s and 1960s. Yet, these drive-ins are all devoid of human activity, and many seem long-abandoned, suggesting deindustrialization, isolation, and nostalgia for a past when these sites were thriving social opportunities for spectacle and escape from everyday life.

This year's Common Work of Art resonates with one of the many themes found in Freeman's *Tales of Two Americas*: that the myth of the American Dream may only ever have been an unattainable and fictional projection of our desires and cultural biases.

The Common Work of Art will be on view in the exhibition [Visible and Divisible America: In Conversation with the 2019–2020 KU Common Book](#) from September 7 to December 1, 2019.

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