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PRESS RELEASE



Steve Davis
As American Falls

January 20 – February 26, 2011

Opening Reception
Thursday, January 20, 6 – 8 pm

James Harris Gallery is pleased to present *As American Falls*, our third exhibition of photographs by artist Steve Davis. Over the course of a three year period, Davis travelled to American Falls, Idaho documenting the small town where the artist grew up. By returning repeatedly throughout the different seasons of the year, Davis was able to capturing the spirit and struggle of a rural community bound by big agriculture and a changing way of life. Although these images are tied to one location, they transcend their specificity to stand in for many small American farming towns across the country.

Overlooking southeastern Idaho's Snake River--tamed and fattened by a massive dam, illuminated by brilliant sunsets--American Falls seems to be dying a death that is as slow as it is unspectacular. The local businesses of the past are all but gone, devoured by monsters like Walmart--25 miles from town. Agriculture, the primary source of the town's economy has also felt the corporate bite. Family farms that made Idaho known for their "Famous Potatoes" are disappearing in favor of giant farms controlled by international conglomerates. A future coal gasification plant for fertilizer production is seen by many as the town's best hope.

Steve Davis moved to Idaho when he was ten. The artist's states "(The joke is) none of my family members who chose to stay in Idaho got out alive. The economy, agricultural pollution, the wind and the cold make this town a place not for the weak or faint hearted. In spite of the challenges that face American Falls, people make lots of babies. They go to churches, go to bars, and many, while still young and independent, just go; as did the town's namesake--destroyed by the very dam that irrigates the crops that feed us."

Steve Davis is the Coordinator of Photography and faculty member at The Evergreen State College in Olympia, WA. His work has appeared in the New York Times Magazine, The 50 States Project and is in the collections of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, George Eastman House, the Tacoma Art Museum and the Musee de la Photographie in Belgium.