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## AMERICAN QUEEN AMERICAN DREAM

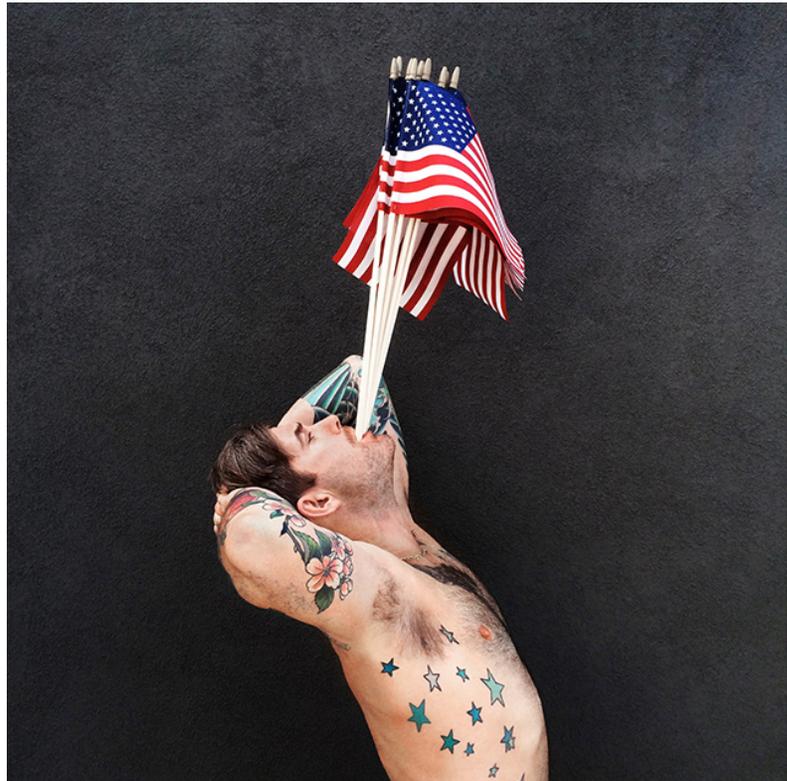
### 30 years of self portraits by John Arsenault

November 21, 2019 - January 4, 2020

*Opening reception:*  
*Thursday, November 21, 2019*  
*6:00 - 8:00 p.m.*

ClampArt is pleased to announce "American Queen, American Dream: 30 Years of Self Portraits by John Arsenault." This is the artist's sixth exhibition at the gallery.

Growing up in a small town in northern Massachusetts, John Arsenault began taking photographs at sixteen years of age. He moved to Boston shortly after high school, where he lived for several years before relocating to New York City to pursue a BFA at the School of Visual Arts. From the beginning, one of Arsenault's frequent subjects has been himself. Turning around his lens, he began to produce an outlandish and absurd, wild and exotic account of his life as a young, gay artist. "I wanted to produce a visual monologue about my life. I wanted to reveal the aspects of myself that I find most mystifying . . ." Exploring facets of his personal relationships, his sexuality, and his identity, Arsenault has constructed varied scenarios that not only tell the story of his experiences, but also comment upon society at large through the course of three decades and many homes from Provincetown to Palm Springs and Los Angeles back to New York City. Arsenault's recurring use of the American flag represents the artist's claim to his rights and citizenry despite vociferous intentions by others in this country to deny him of certain basic dignities that citizenry should automatically afford.



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Arsenault has a great eye for the strange, the unexpected, and the laugh-out-loud ridiculous. He is not afraid to poke fun at himself, and thus, is able to comment upon matters of broad cultural import without seeming shrill or pedantic. Writer Dan Halm has commented, "By tackling timely social issues in his over-the-top photographs, Arsenault not only casts a spotlight on these issues but at the same time delves into his own personal history." Arsenault's work is vulnerable and honest with an intention of inclusiveness. In young adulthood, he often navigated universal themes of heartbreak and longing, while more recently he has devised a nuanced exploration of the dynamics within his close relationships, the most momentous of which is his marriage to his husband, Raf. As Halm concludes, "One can learn a lot about oneself through another's eyes."

John Arsenault's photographs are represented in the permanent collections of the Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art in Overland Park, Kansas; the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; and the Leslie-Lohman Museum in New York City. His first monograph, *Barmaid*, was published in 2015 with Daylight Books, and his second monograph, *For You!*, came out in 2017, also with Daylight Books.

For more information and images please contact Brian Paul Clamp, Principal, or see [www.clampart.com](http://www.clampart.com). Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Image 1: © John Arsenault, "Swallow," Palm Springs, California, 2014, Archival pigment print.

Image 2: © John Arsenault, "New Guy in Town," Los Angeles, California, 2011, Archival pigment print.