

# Westchester Photographic Society

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## Presents Ashok Sinha

December 4, 2020 7:30 PM

A Zoom Webinar



### **GAS AND GLAMOUR Roadside Architecture in Los Angeles**

I love cars and I love Los Angeles for being a city of cars. Over the last decade or so, I have been intrigued by LA's love affair with the automobile, tracing back to a time when cars themselves were objects of beauty. Those cars are no longer on the streets today but the buildings from that era remain. My interest in this story is primarily about this car culture's manifestation within the city's built environment, especially its 'surface streets' (ordinary city streets), where there was once a time when the car and the act of driving was celebrated, and these streets once allowed a unified mental image of an urban texture to be retained - a sense which is now improbable and destroyed by freeway architecture, which has reduced entire communities to a name on the exit sign.

As an architectural photographer, I wanted to connect with that lost design history and capture LA's car-culture-induced optimism and ambition reflected in polychromatic, star-spangled coffee shops, gas stations, car washes, and others that once lured the gaze of passing motorists. These buildings were similar to advertising billboards - symbols of consumerism that sent a universal messaging to the drivers and beckoned them to come inside. They also often played a role within the social fabric of the communities that they were part of, and sometimes injected a hint of humor in the nature of the vernacular architecture itself. While some of these iconic buildings have since been lost, many have somehow endured the test of time and redevelopment, standing as sculptural icons of an era that shaped LA into one vast drive-through experience. The sites I have photographed have also provoked me to wonder if we are the last generation of "true" motorists. As driverless cars become more prevalent in American cities, and optimism about the car is focused on removing the driver from the process, it makes me wonder about the architectural message of driver-less communities of the near future. What architectural message will be relevant to self-driving cars? And if this experience is not on the visual spectrum, how will we know when we have arrived.

### **BIOGRAPHY**

Ashok Sinha is a New York-based photographer whose large scale landscape photographs picture uncommon perspectives. His photographs have been exhibited by The Museum of the City of New York, the International Center of Photography, and The Royal Photographic Society.

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Ashok Sinha, December 4, 2020, 7:30 pm.**

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Topic: WPS Weekly Zoom Meeting with James Maher

Time: 7:30 pm

The link for all of our future Zoom WPS meetings (7:30 pm)

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