

## BLOUINARTINFO

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### Watching From the Sidelines: See Catherine Opie's Raw Portraits of Teenage Football Players

By Alanna Martinez



Catherine Opie's "Football Landscape #16 (Waiianac vs. Leilehua, Waiianac, HI)," 2009, C-print by Alanna Martinez

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**WHAT:** Catherine Opie's "High School Football"

**WHEN:** March 10-April 14, Tuesday-Saturday 10:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.

**WHERE:** Mitchell-Innes & Nash, 534 West 26th St., New York

**WHY THIS SHOW MATTERS:** Catherine Opie's collection of photographs currently on view at Mitchell-Innes & Nash is not a recent body of work, but the series – images of teenage football warriors and their battlefields – finds new life in its first showing in New York.

Known for her work as a social documentarian and portrait photographer, Opie shot the series between 2007 and 2009. Here she manages to capture, yet again, a uniquely American niche community, this time turning her attention to the widespread phenomenon of competitive high school football programs and their dedicated participants.

The scenes in her sharpened Technicolor stadium landscapes are not to be confused stylistically with the snapshots that populate the pages of the sports section. The series is an anthropological

## MITCHELL-INNES & NASH

investigation of a community that spans each region of the country, from the volcanic valleys of Hawaii to the bleachers on the humid banks of the Bayou.

She poses her subjects, post-practice and glowing with youthful testosterone, on the widely varying football fields of American high schools, or captures them sweating in their uniforms, tackling the opposition mid-game. Her talent for revealing the individual qualities of her subjects amidst the larger collective identity of the teams can be seen most clearly in the portraits of players in this series.