

Exhibition Interview

NEWS



WUWM Lake Effect's Bonnie North spoke with photographer Brian Ulrich during his January visit to Milwaukee. You can listen to the interview [here](#). His exhibition *Brian Ulrich: Copia – Retail, Thrift and Dark Stores, 2001-2011* runs through May 18, 2014.

This insightful, decade-long, three-phase investigation of the American consumer psyche traces a route from exuberant excess to the bleak architectural landscapes of closed malls and empty parking lots. For his first chapter, *Retail*, Ulrich traveled extensively across the United States to document shoppers in vast and ubiquitous enclosed malls and big-box stores. He relied on a hand-held camera with the viewfinder at waist level to create candid images of people engrossed in navigating an abundance of goods. He then turned his attention to thrift stores, which became a

primary destination for a growing segment of the country's population in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis. The *Thrift* chapter focuses on workers attempting to bring order to the mountains of donated, discarded, and unwanted consumer products. Lastly, in *Dark Stores, Ghostboxes, and Dark Malls*, Ulrich utilized a large-format view camera to produce richly detailed photographs that explore the lasting impact of the economic recession. This chapter contains haunting landscapes of the interiors and exteriors of abandoned buildings.

Brian Ulrich: Copia – Retail, Thrift and Dark Stores, 2001-2011 was organized by the Cleveland Museum of Art. This exhibition was made possible by the Fred and Laura Ruth Bidwell Foundation.

Cleveland, OH, 2004, The Cleveland Museum of Art 2007.170 © Brian Ulrich



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