

The Project: Occidente Nuevo- Recycled Tijuana

The title of the series, *Occidente Nuevo- Recycled Tijuana* plays off of Robert Adams's famous series *The New West*, a stunning photo essay about the suburbs in the western United States. The irony of the work is the new west is created from the debris of the old west. What's old is new again. I am creating portraits of the families living in the new suburbs of Tijuana Mexico. The New York Times article "Shantytowns as a New Suburban Ideal" describes the evolution of the suburban dwellings in Tijuana that are built with San Diego trash.

"As Tijuana has expanded into the hilly terrain to the east, squatters have fashioned an elaborate system of retaining walls out of used tires packed with earth. The houses jostling on the incline are constructed out of concrete blocks, sheets of corrugated metal, used garage doors and discarded packing crates — much of it brought down by local contractors and wholesalers from across the border. One of the strangest sights in Tijuana is a row of vintage California bungalows resting atop a hollow one-story steel frame. Once destined for demolition across the border, they were loaded on trucks and brought south by developers who have sold them to local residents."

The series *Occidente Nuevo-Recycled Tijuana*, weaves together many of the concepts present in my current work. My initial interest in suburbia is the impact of sprawl, the creation of more garbage, less space to put it and consumerism in general. The suburbs of Tijuana, highlight the positive aspects of a new way of developing suburbia through re-use. The photographs of families put a human face on the recycled homes and challenge the myths of suburbia, an extension of my series *The Hidden Suburbs: A Portrait*.

