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**SUMMER 1986**

**VOLUME IV NUMBER 2**

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**IMAGES II**

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Joe sits in.

CALENDAR

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Sally said, "Here, Spot. It's for you. They want an ad. An ad in SPOT!"

Spot said, "Wrong number. For advertising in SPOT, call (713) 529-4755."
MESSAGES

Q: How many seminoles does it take to change a light bulb?
A: Four. One to hold the bulb, one to change the bulb, one to interpret the significance of the action, and one to edit and publish the proceedings.

(Art Paper)

Remembrance of The Houston Foto Fest is one of the ends toward which this issue of SPOT is directed. If there is a subject to the issue, it is the search for desire. Desire seems through the view-finder of the camera, the darkness dispersed in the light of the image, the action caught in the cutting of time, essence erased through the object of a photograph. Desire revealed in delay, in dispersal, in the tract of what is absent—the wish. It is visible in the zones of representation where author and reader look for the signs of agreement.

FRAME: There is the reviewer's desire to explain the objects of her/his discourse—photography displayed during The Houston Foto Fest, the festival of looking. And there are the features: "Angels Are My Only Love," Carol Everhart's interview with the French photographer Bernard Faucon, whose "delicacy of spirit passes over the impossibility of language"; and the specifications by David Teller on the text of the electronic book exemplified by Peter Dlaghtzoglou, Double You (end YTC). Is this the advancing technology that promises to alter the spatial and temporal categories of the spectator/advertiser's consciousness? "Desire of the Other" is more speculation, the time on the codes of difference that exist in gender-specific images and images of discourse taken from two exhibitions at HCP, Houston Photographers and Recording Society.

The festival of looking was a resounding success producing election, enhancement of confidence, and the inevitable temporary burnout that follows an intense schedule of exhibitions, lectures, international turnstiles of people from around the world, and an endless round of parties that would have alevered the envy of F. Scott Fitzgerald. Moreover, this great city, despite its distressed economic condition, continued to play host to a succession of spring festivals after Foto Fest embracing New Music America, The Houston Festival, The Orange Show, (a unique architectural tribute to the orange, the Rics work of Jeff McKissack), the inauguration of The Little and High Top Galer Scutare Garden designed by Isamu Naguchi for the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and the Houston International Film Festival.

LIGHT: Scenes varied from the congregation of more than a million people gathered together in the southwest sector of the city to celebrate the spectacle of Jean Michel Jarre's laser projection of light and sound against the sculptured skyline of downtown Houston to the six or seven dedicated spectators who spent two weekends at Diverse Works viewing a rare screening of Jean Luc Godard's eighteen hours of video made for French television. There are few artists in the late twentieth century who have had greater influence on the semantics of art (the complex system of signs that order our world) than Godard. Though hardly esoteric, the name of Godard encompasses most of the discoveries of the postmodern era. The modern era.

ACTION: One of the more remarkable achievements of The Houston Foto Fest was the ambition and desire of the artists' spaces and galleries to mount exhibitions of startling quality such as Contemporary Women in Documentary Photography featuring the politicized photographs of Wendy Harris and Ruth Gordon at The Firehouse Gallery; Painted Pictures curated by Andy Grundberg, The Hemost Center; Interns, Rice Media Center; Barbara Wiley's hand colored photographs, HadelRodriguez; Merrell Rubenstein: Liberlitos, Jack Maller Gallery, Alain Clement, New Photographs, Graham Gallery, Black, White & Color, Houston/Las Vegas, Diverse Works; Ply Hester: Joan Minumwito, Parish Gallery, Rice University, to name just a few of the exhibits some of which are reviewed in this issue of SPOT.

In addition to these, there are reviews of the larger exhibitions: Richard Wold's analysis of the retrospective, Robert Frank: New York to Now Scotia: "War," by David Fitter addressing the deep latent issues in the indelible image: Photographs of War—884 to Present, Rice Museum, Rice University: The review of the Contemporary Arts Museum, Robert Rauschenberg's Photographs—1949-1952 is made poignant by the presence of a single photograph by Joseph Beuys in West Berlin, 1983. The artist is recognizable as he stands in the shadow of an elaborate construction of white stations wearing the personal emblem seen throughout his controversial career. He got and overcoat. With his right hand, he makes the sign of greeting, or is it farewell, to the photographer whose vantage point is yours.

EDIT: The symposium, On Collecting, held at the Brown Auditorium, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, was especially interesting because of the will and sophistication of the panel led by Anne Tucker and consisting of Stephen White, Sam Wagstaff, Tom Hatfield, Pierre Auprine, Ann Honton, Robert Penky, and Daniel Wolf. Yet, it was the other symposium, Representations of Sex: Multiple Perspectives, organized by Esther de Veer, Director of the Sarah Campbell Blaffer Gallery, University of Houston, that stood out as a stimulating model of miscellaneous discourse.

The format of this symposium, which was held in conjunction with The Blaffer Gallery exhibition, Self-Portraits in the Age of Photography, explored "the many levels and stages of self perception and self depiction from the aspect of psychology, sociology, philosophy and theology."

The panel was composed of interdisciplinary specialists who were each given 20 minutes to formulate their positions. The audience was allowed to ask questions of clarification after each presentation. Issues of the body, self, memory and authority were joined to the problems of photography, specifically the genre of self portraiture. William Simon, Professor of Sociology, University of Houston, challenged the panel and the audience to show him where the self portraits in the exhibition went beyond the illustration of generic poses found in conventional photography. He equated the camera with its documentation of the photograph, generalizing the process as an expression of the "democracy of self," a representational system of "shared memory."

The presentation made by Elizabeth Glasmann, Cultural Planners and Art Historian, led to a pragmatic discussion of the value of cataloging expression through the art of physiognomy. Advertising was targeted as a source of visual communication in which pose and gesture are converted into signs constituting, in the words of Glasmann, "the language of visual representation." CLUT: As for the physiognomy of desire, it could have been seen on the faces of the photographers as they waited in the lobby of the Warwick Hotel, the 'Meeting Place' of Foto Fest, to meet 'many of the most creative minds in the field of photography (who) came together from all over the world to make themselves available to the photographic public for the exchange of ideas'.

The Co-Founders of The Houston Foto Fest, Peter Benterer and Frederik Baldwin, created a free-flowing context for the photographic arts that went far beyond anyone's expectations and they desire the necessary support to repeat the festival of looking again.

Lea Thomas

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PHOTOGRAPHY IN MEXICO
SUMMER 1986

Rice University will offer during the summer of 1986 a two-week guided excursion through central and southern Mexico for intermediates and advanced photographers. The dates of the trip are June 29 to July 13, 1986. Guide and instructor for the trip will be Geoff Waddell. Academic credits are available for qualified students. The itinerary will include the Yucatan, Mexico, Guanajuato, Morelia, Pátzcuaro, Puebla, Acolman, Acapulco, and Mexico City. There will be a limit of 10 registrants.

For full details write: Geoff Waddell, Rice University, Media Center, P.O. Box 1982, Houston, Texas 77251. Or call (713) 527-4994 or 527-6820, extension 2390 or 3343.
By Wendy Wasser

In search of an answer to the per-
sonal and anticipated criticality of
photography in Britain today, Martin
Parr conceived and curated the show
British Contemporary Photography—
Coming of Age, for Houston Fotofest. The six photographers have known each other for years,
but it was the first time they have
shown together the work for several
years. It was the first time they have had a major exhibition in the U.S. 

Paul Graham, Chris Killip, Graham Smith, Martin Parr, Brian Griffin, Jones.

The title of the show suggests greater breadth than may be merit-
ed because the focus of the work is documentary, but its purpose is to
define what these photographers believe is a new statement in British
today. Behind the de-
cisive, energetic format, their work (individually and collectively) con-
fronts the traditions which have dominated British and much of docu-
mentary photography in general for
nearly a century. As a visualisation of external realities, documentary photography everywhere is struggling against its own deeply embedded conventions and a sense of its own crisis—only be-
not only to art but, in many cases, even social reality. The decline of
conventions in photographic
media, the demands of the new forums (gallery, historical society, maga-
azines) concerning the traditional
views are more than just an act of 
acceptance have created the need for a
fresh approach, a new language.

Unlike other modern documentary
photographers who seek new lan-
guages by consciously deconstructing traditional imagery and themes with montage, multi-
media and text, these six photography
will never work with the image (itself). Rejecting the ‘high drama’ demands of postmodern disillusionment, these
conventional photo
essays, are seeking subjective forms of expression that play no
respect to formal aesthetics while focusing on external realities.

It is a problem that is still acting
excesses to all documentary photog-
raphy, but particularly in England, where a strong history of late 19th
and early 20th century social
documentary photography shaped
photographic expectations in Britain for many years. As a result, the
community of quality but because of its wide
popularity. Later, in the mid-
1990s and through much of postwar
England, photo magazines like the pic-
ture first dominated the photogra-
pia profession, it wasn’t until the
early 1970s that the emergence of
glasses, leather wallets and spe-
cial photography publications began to provide ways for young
photographers to work outside the
the editorial and advertising media. 

While all of the six photographers have shown their own journalistic and commercial work (Brian Griffin is one of England’s most successful
commercials for photographers), their commitment is to a long-term ex-
ploration of style and subject matter. As individuals, they show consider-
able range in style and approach, but they share a common concern (the
attraction) for formal beauty. All ex-
cept for Chris Killip have formal art
training and this gives them an
artistic and documentary provide a con-
sisent and continuous tension in their
life and work. “Beauty”, said British film documentarist Paul Rotha in
the 1930s, “is one of the greatest dangers of
documentation.” It is also one of the
most seductive. It is a poetic,
openly acknowledged and present in
the work of these photographers—

something that the viewer must also
acknowledge and engage in to un-
derstand this work. 

Graham Smith is committed to
documenting the industrialised north of
England which is his birthplace. He
rejects the romanticized human-

ism of social documentary tradition
and is profoundly concerned with the industrial process
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1. Anne Tucker, “Photographic Facts and Fibs America,” Quarto-
journals, Friends of Photography, 1984, p. 42

I want to break the rules. I try to
break myself. The photos I really
like are the ones when I was afraid.
Photographs which scared me. I
wouldn’t do anything, for all sorts of
reasons. It’s trying to

2. Brian Griffin, From the Last Resort

We are aware of the expansion of visual

3. Raul Graham, Roundabout, 1984


5. Brian Griffin’s work is similar to Smith’s in style and approach. His
photographs of the seashore camp at
Lyme Bay and the punk clubs in
Sunderland deal with even more marginal
lives than the factory workers of
Middlesbrough. Killip believes it is important
for us to stick it out in
northern England because that’s
where it’s happening—“the decay
districts of postindustrial culture.”
He never relents in depicting its
gloom and desolation. From his large-
format prints often bord-
er on the edge of the medium. “The
London photographer is going to
try to...” he says to his own point of
view. “How do you break the rules
and still express a common language,

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reasons. It’s trying to

By Richard Wollin

"To collect photographs is to collect the world," remarks Susan Sonn-
berg in the opening pages of On Pho-
tography. "Photographs really are ex-
erience-capturing," she continues, "and the camera is the ideal armament
of consciousness in its acquisitive mode... To photograph is to app-
propriate the thing photographed..." Yet these are far from the unambiv-
eral statements they seem to be. Who is doing the photographing and
for what ends? Why is the photo-
graphy snapped at this moment rather
than another? Photography, when it is
at its best— as it is in much of Robert
Frank’s work—strives to capture the
"significant instant"— the "decisive moment" as the great war photo-
grapher Robert Capa was fond of calling it.

The apparent charm or self-ev-
dorsement of photographic verisimilitude must be called into question. For
time itself is anything but a chain of pris-
ces chosen "significant instants." On the con-
trary, monotony and uneventfulness are more often the rule. More-
over, as it is lived, it is a process of con-
stant flux and movement. Photo-
graphs "become" (if this is the right
word) by bringing this process to an
uneventful and abrupt halt. The Ger-
man critic Walter Benjamin had a
phrase for this phenomenon: he called it "the disappearance of the
natural course of events in order to
strip them of their familiarity." Yes, this is a process that simultaneously
proves its point and flings it in our
face. We are compelled to abandon the
tendency with which we customarily view our en-
vironing world; we are urged to view it
with new eyes—the eyes of the
photographer.

In sum, photography’s virtue lies
precisely in its transcendence of the world as simply lived—that is, the
world in its familiar, routinized guise. Photography’s goal is to redeem
the world from a condition of humdrum
sameness, to point out what is
meaningful, worthy of note, of sig-
nificant moment. Were it to aspire
toward some phantom objectivity—
a bland duplication of the green
photography would forsake its raison
d’etre. Consequently, it is the sub-
jects of a photography that we are
always asked to judge.

Robert Frank is still best known as the genius behind The Americans: the
brilliant fruit of a two-year, auto-
tour of the United States in 1955-56. The American edition appeared in
1959 with a memorable introduction
by Jack Kerouac. The virtue of Robert
Frank: New York to Nova Scotia is that it
features representative examples from
other phases of Frank’s photo-
graphic career—above all a haunt-
ingly beautiful series of photographs
pre-dating The Americans, taken in
while ceding pride of place to The
Americans, as should be the case.

Actually, its appearance in 1959 was
something else, a rather unfulfilled
view of Frank’s vision that remains
wholly unappraised by his mystical critics; the profound influence of Frank feels for his
subjects. To be sure, it is an un-
flamboyant affair of wit and humor.
In many respects, Frank has to
adequate itself to the level of his
juvenile" is a word that has been re-
used and marginalized by official
"glamourous" America. Yes, Frank has
presented us with a "sad poem," but
it is a poem nonetheless, possessed of
its own kind of truth. Frank is a
"photographic poet"—or at least the
last vestige of such a figure in the
world of photography.

Without the typicality of the
"photographic poet," the world of
photography might well become a
wasteland of cliches, of facile
repetition. Yet Robert Frank
proves that the world of photo-
graphy is not without substance—
that it is capable of being
"photographed" by a master
photographer—yet another proof of
the subjectivity of the medium.

Robert Frank, Hoboken, 1955

Robert Frank, Peru, 1948
of being dramatically altered and perhaps forever changed by such projects as Peter D'Agostino's interac-
tive facsimile installation DOUBLE 104 (and X.Y.Z.).

This is not meant to imply that this new, interactive environment begins with Peter D'Agostino's work or with the work of other video artists explo-
ing the new technologies. On the contrary, electronic phablet, video-
games, as well as multi-channel cable or direct satellite television, videoack-
corder recorders, and their respective remotes have given viewers new op-
portunities to control the pattern and content of their viewing ex-
pereince. Nevertheless, there is a trend toward the use of video in the creation of new, interactive environments. As the interactive video of the 1950's, which was limited to the television screen, to bridge a series of sequential pre-set displays in a user's environment with the projected image has been regulated by the formats that exist within these pre-set views. An electronic game, for instance, presents limited options. The unlimited programming options avail-
able on multi-channel television often follow predictable patterns. Rather than simply allowing the spectator to select the order of narrative rep-
lication, a video installation may use electronic video games, or to quan-
tify and expand their prescriptive viewing options, through cable, direct satellite and videocassette program-
s. The spectator has been helped, or at worst, not so much a "new" but more a return to an experienced tradition.

This novel experience can be par-
tially understood by looking at the "events" that transcend the distance between the spectator and the screen. With a limitless number of controls now available to the viewer to manipulate the program, playing, repetition, and velocity of selected images, there is a multiplicity of interactive moments that are not only non-hierarchical, they are susceptible to accidents in the viewer's perception. With the potential for 54,000 individual frames on the side of a thirty-minute video, the novelty of the interactive text is part of the digital age's potential for events, and this potential for "events" within a single work, rather than a measure of the duration of a single experience. Furthermore, there is also a difference in the measure of control that the spectator has in shaping a unique experience.

In their efforts to develop a consis-
tent, reflexive mode of perception, the "experimental" filmmakers in general were nearly always con-
cerned with the relationships be-
tween the filmmaker, the screen, and the audience. As a part of that concern, a fascination with the spectator's perception is certainly no new. What is different, however, is that there are the beginnings of an expanded sharing of control be-
 tween the film/video maker and the spectator. By allowing a recorded scene to be played forward, back-
ward, accelerated, decelerated, repeated, and selected perhaps at random, the filmmaker per-
mit the spectator to become in-
volved in a visual form of "writing."}

Unfortunately, the fascination and novelty of this participation may be short-lived. As a textual experience that is historically specific in its rela-
tionship to a new technology, growing familiar is likely to lead to an expanded range of applications where the interaction becomes in-
consistent. As technology is defined, this, of course, is specula-
tive. Nevertheless, this speculation is nonetheless valid.

In short, any new cinematic ex-
perience will alias and repeat events from a number of varying perspectives. Under the partial motivating premise of "events," "moments," and "travel," each choreographed variation of a specific scene is rendered from a different psychological angle. Meanwhile, graffiti fragments of film fragments, a series of his Hopak Logenmenero, is one of several efforts to represent multi-
channel television viewing as a jux-
pagination through a contemporary land-
scapes of iconically charged events. Every one of the above cited films forges the spectator to recontextual-
ize their relationship to their viewing

DOUBLE YOU (and X.Y.Z.):
VIDEO'S NEW INTERACTIVE FRONTIER

By David Tafer

Without the omniscience of an historical distance, it might seem presumptuous to refer to a contem-
porary instalation as a transient frontier between an old order and a new horizon. Nevertheless, the rel-
atively recent technology of the laser-
disc and the medium's adaptation into its use with computers promises a profound change in the relationship between"spectator" and a"facsimile visual presentation. Soon that relation-
ship has altered in such a way that is global-
cally defined and fluctuating distance, the spatial temporal frontier be-
tween the projection of a busi-
ness-processed image and the medi-
a tion of distance and time. In other

words, the implicit nomenclature that establishes the viewer and the medi-
a tion of the medium and the spectator controls the temporal di-
rection of their experience of these single

INTERRUPTIVE ENVIRONMENT

D'Agnostino's videocassette instal-
lation exhibited at The Houston Center for Photography, May 23-June 29, 1985.
The primary subject of this work is the interaction of a non-linear interactive video disk with the user. The non-linear structure of the work is based on a large number of possibilities and provides the user with a range of possibilities. The work is divided into several chapters, each of which focuses on a different aspect of the interaction. The user is encouraged to explore the various possibilities and to develop their own interpretations of the work.

The installation is a non-linear interactive video disk that provides viewers/participants with an array of choices, allowing them to explore different paths through the work. The interactive experience is designed to be both challenging and rewarding, offering a sense of discovery and personalization.

The installation is divided into several sections, each of which is designed to engage the user in a different way. The sections include:

- The Introduction: This section introduces the user to the basic concepts and functions of the video disk. It provides a brief overview of the work and sets the stage for the user's exploration.

- The Choice Menu: This section allows the user to select from a range of options, each of which leads to a different part of the work. The choices are designed to be both intuitive and challenging, providing the user with a sense of control and choice.

- The Exploration: This section is designed to be the core of the work, offering the user a range of possibilities and encouraging them to explore and develop their own interpretation of the work. The exploration is divided into several parts, each of which focuses on a different aspect of the work.

- The Reflection: This section is designed to allow the user to reflect on their experience and to consider the implications of their choices. It provides a space for the user to think about the work and to develop their own conclusions.

The work is designed to be accessible and engaging, offering a range of possibilities and encouraging the user to explore and develop their own interpretations of the work. The installation is a dynamic and interactive experience that is designed to engage the user in a meaningful way.

Peter D'Agostino
ANGELS ARE MY ONLY LOVE
The exhibition Fauves: Frenson Prints was shown at the Houston Center for Photography February 26-April 6. Bernard Frenson, took a lecture at the MCA on March 3.
Carol Ewings, a free-lance art critic, interviewed Mr. Frenson at the Whitney Hotel on March 6, 1986. The interview was conducted in French and translated by SPOF for Ms. Ewings.

By Carol J. Ewings
CE: What is "photography"?
BF: For me, I'm very attracted to the idea that high medium has its own peculiarities—and photography has a peculiarity which is not that of painting or of sculpture, or of film, or from photography, to me, it was a complete new medium and I have to say as much as possible to full this—
which is not intentionally to do a work which is "photographic". What I mean by "photographic" is a certain way of recording reality which is not the translation of the idea of painting, or of filming it or any other way—and I think that one cannot cross from one medium to another hard work in order to know what correspondents with this or that medium.
People often ask me "Why don't you realize that one day I turned to filmmaking. I would be doing something else—if there is no continuable and that seems to me very important to say what one has to say—within one medium by using each inch this medium has to offer. For photography is me a kind of abstraction of the real—a literalism in a literal sense—which means "pull from"—a kind of abstraction from reality which is totally original—a means of capturing, of recording reality—which is not that of any other medium.
From that point on, what I have to say concerns my "world"—which is singularly mine—but which is going to be told for me and which cannot be told in any other way.
CE: And your first photograph?
BF: Before doing "performance sets"—I had always done photography and painting together—portraits of children, landscapes, sunsets—and things like that which were very sentimental—but when I began a really get into photography—which happened very, very quickly—
BF: It was a great opportunity counter—which means I began to come across many questions and became intrigued by them, collect them and be surrounded by them, without knowing what would happen with all this—then the idea of the "flesh" hit.
CE: These are the real old mannequins?
BF: Yes, they are from the store window of the 1930s, 40s and 50s—I have a few—around 20—almost all—of mostly children—with lots of clothes.
CE: What is your procedure—from original concept right up to its realization—that is to say the "mise en scene" or "stage set"?
BF: The beginning of the photo is something very abstract—a mix of emotions, experiences and ideas in relation to the evolution of my work.
A photo shot never appears just in one big, uncooked idea of inspiration—just I don't suddenly find "the image"—but rather it begins as a sharing of some more conceptual concept which little by little takes form on its own, then solidifies.
What one sees in the photograph is actually the very end of the process—which is manageable, the most concrete—which in the end is the finishing touch—and the least important because I think that with different elements, one could make the same photograph.
CE: What is "realistic" for you?
BF: I have a strong sense of reality—and I say that the photograph for me is an experience (or experiment) where I rule the move. I always look at the angle of an experiment with reality—which in which I totally incorporate personal reality.
CE: And the mannequins with real people?
BF: From the beginning, human beings have been mixed with the mannequins—and the human figures, little by little, evolved to where, in my last photograph, there are no more real beings.
CE: Well, the start, I always had that desire to mix the living and the mannequins, to play them together—perhaps less for the pleasure of confrontation—but rather to show that the mannequins were much more alive than I imagined—and more to the photographic idea than the humans were—that the mannequins "felt the" the photo so completely that there was kind of apparatus between the mannequins and photograph which gives the energy of these pictures. CE: Which means that the mannequins are more alive than the real people.
BF: It's kind of crazy to say that the mannequins are "more alive"—for in all these photographs there is such searching—and in the beginning it was very unimportant and I didn't realize it—but there is the quest for the ideal subject of photography—which means that I don't use photography simply to make a reproduction of a world which interests me or touches me—of course, I am looking how to express a personal universe—to find a subject which is going to be the most appropriate to photography. I think that the idea of mannequins—which in the beginning was a fortuitous encounter—but it turned out to be the ideal subject for the photograph—as much a photograph of the living as a photograph of the dead.
CE: The color—in this mold which is "the flesh"—
BF: There was always fire with the mannequins—but after the mannequins there was a tremendous invi- dion of fire and explosion at the same time.
CE: And after fire?
BF: After the fires died down, there was a total period of transition during the photos of "The Waterlilies" and "Eternal Life"—where no longer I felt the need to use mannequins—or I just I had the desire to let light invade—without knowing what I was going to do with it—the end result being these of "Sombre Gourmand" or "Love Chambers"—during the years of hesitation—which was, in fact, the time in which the love chambers were in the process of taking form.
CE: What was the first "love chamber"?
BF: It is a room with two bodies in the Kerefont—two body abstractions—in a little white room with a white curtain and the floor covered with a material that one sees in sleep—a kind of haze.
CE: And the next?
BF: That is the exterior—a landscape of broken glass with an unseen explosion completely illuminating the ground floor.
CE: The flowers?
BF: The third love chamber is a landscape with flowers—where one can only make out traces of a record—a 45 rpm—shrieked up with burned images—and a blackened floor.
The fourth is an interior very luminous with a little red window which opens into the room—and a kind of light projection which falls while very on the floor.
The fifth is a little room covered with paper, webs, with a figure in the forecourt trying to disappear—trying to get out of the spot.
The sixth is what I call the "love cage"—a kind of cage made of wooden sticks and white tracing paper, with grass on the inside and some underworld touch, and a lot of crottling lying on the grass.
The seventh room is what I call "The Mirror of Milk"—a very white room with its floor covered in milk—three strips of lavender floating on the milk—and a profile of a small boy which is roughly drawn on the wall.
The eighth is a "First Time", with this interior looking like a bit of a barn with stalls of golden straw—one has the impression that the straw is raised up from underneath—and surrounded in a half magical way.
The ninth is a room with its floor covered with hot coals in a somber ambiance.
The tenth is the one where the floor is covered in feathers—in a blue, white, mauve and pink ambience.
The eleventh is the one with a face projected on the most hideous floor—with cameras sketched all over the walls.
The twelfth one has grass growing (the room—this is hardly, it room with deep snowy grass in the foreground.
The thirteenth room is one of my favorites—it's called "The Stained Glass Window"—a bed, some sheets, with a projection of a stained glass window in the corner—the colors disapearing very softly—
the same principle as the stained glass windows of a church.
The fourteenth is called "The Snow Storm"—it's the one I prefer—a little blue room with a palm branch—like what they used to give children in church during palms Sunday—branches made out of paper or cardboard to which candles were attached—this is here this palm branch hanging from a kind of piece of snow in the row—with a place where the snow has melted and one can see a few scattered tree leaves.
The fifteenth love chamber is the photographic one who are put together side by side in a very, very white room with a projection of light coming through, the window forming a kind of luminous cornice.
CE: Then, what is for you the difference between "interior" and "love chamber"?
BF: In creating these imaginary worlds—the impact of the interior on the eye and the eye inside and the outside—I like to go back to an experience which I had with a young—beginning in 1925—especially ex-

(Continued on page 10)
Par Carol J. Evelyngham

CE: Qu’est-ce que c’est la photo-

graphe?

PB: Mais c’est très attiré à l’idée que chaque pratique a une spécificité et la photographie a une spécificité qui n’est pas celle de la peinture — c’est à dire, quand je suis passé de la peinture à la photo, pour moi c’était un changement complet et j’ai essayé autant que possible de réaliser — ce n’est pas volontairement que je faisais la photo — mais qui soit photographique — ce que j’ai entendu par photographie c’est certainement une manière d’emmagasiner la réalité qui n’est pas celle de la tradi-

tion, de la peinture, qui n’est pas celle du cinéma ou celle de l’im-

poste qui est autre et moi je pense que l’on ne peut pas passer d’un genre à l’autre sans un véritable tra-

vail de sensibilisation qui correspond à tel ou tel genre.

On me demande souvent “pour-

quoi ne faites-vous pas du cinéma?” Si un jour je faisais du cinéma je ferai autre chose — c’est-à-dire que je ne prends pas de contin-

uité — mais il semble très important que ce qu’en dit — on le doute à l’in-

tégrité d’un moyen et en utilisant tout ce que je peux peut offrir.

La photo c’est pour moi un certain type d’abstraction de la réalité — abstraction au sens littéral — c’est-à-

dire, un certain genre d’abstrac-

tion de la réalité qui est tout à fait originale — une manière de capter, de décomposer le réel qui n’est ce-

te d’un autre genre.

A partir de là ce que je m’ap- 

elle “rien” — mais c’est aussi être dit en photographie — qu’il ne va pas être dit autrement.

CE: Et la première photo?

PB: Avant de faire des “mises en scène” — je voulais faire de la photographie, de la peinture, des portraits d’enfants, des paysages, des cœurs — comme des choses com-

me des traits de présence de peau et de peau qui se rencontrent in extremis — la première photo a commencé très vite — avec beaucoup d’énergie et beaucoup d’enthousiasme — on a eu beaucoup de plaisir — on a commencé la photo — je n’ai plus jamais eu de photo d’elle — elle est la même — mais c’est aussi d’être en photographie — on ne va pas être dit autrement.

CE: D’où vient l’idée des mannequins?

PB: C’était un hasard, une ren-

volte forte — c’est-à-dire que j’ai en-

commencé à trouver des mannequins, à m’adresser à eux, à les collecter, à les mémoire comme si j’avais appa-

tenir à ce qui j’avais vu — j’ai vu du photo — c’était le photo — puis je l’ai mis sous l’opinion du visage de marn }

CE: De ces vieux mannequins?

PB: Cui, c’est ces mannequins des années de guerre 30-45 — j’en ai beaucoup — je les ai perdu 250 — je les ai retrouvés pratiquement — avec leurs vêtements.

CE: Quel est ton protocole du conce-

cept jusqu’à la réalisation — c’est-

à-dire “la mise en scène”?

PB: Le point de départ de la photo est purement de choisir une des trois photos — qui est un mélange de sentiments, d’émotions, d’états que j’appellerais à l’évolution de mon travail.

Une photo s’apparente jamais com-

me un tableau dans un tableau — je ne trouverais pas un tout d’une peinture, je ne trouverais pas une chose d’abord trés abstrait, d’un ordre émotionnel et qui petit à petit (prend forme) et se développe et se développe.

Ce qu’on voit dans une photo c’est toujours un bâton de mon processus — le plus tangible, le plus concret — qu’enfin-

tement est le dernier arrivé dans le corpus — même si c’est le moins important, il y a quelque chose d’autre, d’autre, de plus de peine. car je pense qu’avec des el-

ments différents il pourrait faire la même photo.

CE: Quelle est la réalité pour toi?

PB: Je ne sais pas ce que c’est très fort du réel — je n’ose dire que la photo pour moi c’est l’expérience du réel — et d’ailleurs dans ma vie j’essaie de vivre tout sous l’angle de l’expérience du réel dans lequel je suis in-

corporé.

CE: Et les mannequins avec les

vies de fiction, d’images, mais une vie réelle — mais pour moi la photo de mannequins révèle quelque chose de ligre de la photo — le fait de photographier un man-

nequin — une personne dehors autrement — et de le photographier — de lui faire une image — et lui donner une vie — c’est quoi pour vous — c’est tout à fait autrement.

CE: Quelle est la signification du titre “Réel”?

PB: Le feu — dans tout ce travail, c’est quelque chose d’étroitement intimement lié avec le feu et le feu 

en tradition — toujours de ce qui est de l’image — il y a donc il y a une volonté de dire le plus — le plus simple, le plus décelable — que je vais faire — le feu dans le feu, le feu dans le feu.

CE: Dans le premier titre d’amour?

PB: Ce n’est pas encore un titre — pas encore un titre — mais d’un certain titre — et nous avons trouvé un titre — en même temps.

CE: C’est la possibilité de photographier un manne-

ce qui est quelque chose d’arrêté — au lieu de la feu — et de le photographier — de le faire autour — ce qui est le plus facile — mais qui s’avère être un sujet idéal — pour la photo — aussi la photo du vivant est une photo qui est de la vi-

e est c’est la possibilité de dire que la pho-

CE: Après, le feu — c’est-à-dire — il y a eu toute une période de transition dans laquelle des photos comme Les Parasites, La Vierge, où il n’avait pas plus amusé les man-

nequins, il n’avait plus d’image de l’eau — on le revoit de la terre, la terre, et la terre, et la terre.

CE: Quelle est la première chambre d’amour?

PB: La première chambre d’amour est une chambre avec deux corps en premier plan — deux corps très abstraits — la chambre blanche avec le rideau blanc et le sol recouvert de matière qu’on utilise pour les couverture de bébés — une espèce d’ui-

CE: Après, le feu — c’était — après ce qui est le feu — on l’attend — c’est le feu — on l’attend — c’est le feu — on l’attend.

CE: Comment est la troisième chambre d’amour?

PB: La troisième chambre d’amour est une chambre qui a brûlé — un ne voit plus que les vestiges avec un disque — un ne reconnait plus les images — les images brûlées — une espèce de sol n’importait.

CE: C’est un intérieur très lumineux avec une fenêtre de toutes les couleurs et puis un rameau de cerisier qui entre dans la pièce — et une espèce de projection de lumière sur le sol.

CE: C’est une petite chambre recouverte de toiles d’araignée, avec un pignon en premier plan en train de disparaître, en train de sortir de la photo.

CE: C’est ce que j’appelle “la cage d’amour” — c’est-à-dire cage d’amour en rigide de bois, en papier cica-

blanche, avec des herbes à l’intérieur, quelques linges et habits posés sur l’herbe.

CE: La première photo.

PB: Cette photo est la première photo. C’est une photo de l’intérieur — on y voit une expression de la vie du mur.

CE: La deuxième photo.

PB: C’est celle avec le sol recouvert de peluche — l’herbe — l’herbe — on a l’impression qu’ils sont sou-

levés par endroits — suspendus un peu comme un nuage.

CE: La chambre avec le sol recouvert de ces forêts dans une ambiance sombre.

CE: La troisième chambre — celle avec les herbes qui envahissent la chambre — chambre qui est la plus presque — et les herbes couvertes de gouttelettes de rosses.

CE: La quatrième chambre — celle que je préfère — qui s’appelle “Le Vital” — c’est le rameau de cerisier qui est la troisième chambre — chambre avec deux corps en premier plan — deux corps très abstraits — la chambre blanche avec le rideau blanc et le sol recouvert de matière qu’on utilise pour les couverture de bébés — une espèce d’ui-

CE: Après le feu — et après — après ce qui est le feu — après le feu — on le voit de nouveau.

PB: La deuxième chambre — celle qui correspond à la photo — c’est-à-dire — elle est celle qui correspond à la photo.

CE: C’est la première chambre d’amour.

CE: C’est celle que je préfère — c’est une petite chambre avec deux corps en premier plan — deux corps très abstraits — la chambre blanche avec le rideau blanc et le sol recouvert de matière qu’on utilise pour les couverture de bébés — une espèce de sol.

CE: La deuxième chambre — celle qui correspond à la photo — on y voit de nouveau — c’est-à-dire — elle est celle qui correspond à la photo.

CE: La troisième chambre — celle qui correspond à la photo — c’est-à-dire — elle est celle qui correspond à la photo.

CE: Le thème est celui de l’acuité — ceux qui semblent être les plus intérieurs d’une image — une espèce de docu-

CE: Et pour toi, quelle est la diffé-

rence entre l’extérieur et l’intérieur?

PB: En composant le monde im-

aginaire, le choc de l’extérieur et de l’intérieur est si gros — j’ai cru que j’allais — j’ai cru que j’allais perdre — j’ai cru que j’allais perdre — j’ai cru que j’allais perdre.

(Suite page 19)
it seems more natural — color—
— rather than in black and white—
— which is an abstraction notion greater
— than that of color.
CE: And form? What does that mean for you?
BF: What do you mean by "form"?
CE: What intrigues you to put artifi-
cial forms in a natural landscape?
BF: I'm not very susceptible to
"form." Sculpture, for example, is
something quite foreign to me.
On the other hand, I am very con-
scious to movement or the hallowing
of movement. I can't talk about other
mediums either—I am taken by the
outlines of things—a kind of spiritual
graphs that one can draw out with
objects and things.
MOVIES OR HANDS OUT—rather it is a
ritual work of everything—of eat-
ning, working, sleeping, dreaming, en-
tertaining—thus, an apartment is for
putting systems into place—rituals
and things like that which one wants
to see, or facilitating the movement
one wants to make in an apartment—
— it is an installation which happens
little by little.
Now the place where I live in Apt
is a small house which has been ex-
panded by adding rooms to the left
and the right—therefore, after a
number of years, it has become quite
a sight.
CE: How many years have you been
at Apt?
BF: I was born in Apt, but the
to-day dream—by which lets the
mind flow.
The biggest insult for me is to hear
that my photographs belong to sur-
realism—even though I do see the
realism and back then I was formed by
it, and existed by it.
BF: Your favorite authors?
BF: For a long time, I read the phi-
losophers—I studied philosophy and
read a list by a philosopher named
Jacques Maritain—who moreover
ought to have lived widely in the United
States during the 1950s and is quite well
known here—his books have been
translated into English—this
man.
More recently, there have been
people like Roland Barthes—and out
of that—of the more contem-
porary writers and novelists.
BF: Does it bug you to grow old?
BF: Of course, it's the biggest insult
to life—but I have come to terms
with growing old—no, actually I've
never come to terms with—but I
found it as fact. To tell the truth, when I was
small—I refused to grow up—in fact,
I've always been the one who
—the family doctor in order to ask
him for a prescription or some pills
for me.
CE: For you, not to grow was not
BF: Right. Then the question of
my life. It's not a narcissistic kind of
thing—it's something else.
CE: For you—photography is way of
savoring your youth?
CE: Have you grown through a real
emotional or religious experience?
BF: I was inspired by religion when I
was a child, a kid.
CE: Catholic?
BF: Yes, but that was a personal choice—
not inspired by the family—
but more a personal attraction
—which lead me to, in a way, to pursue
philosophy—and so to study Jacques
Maritain—who is still a Christian philos-
opher and theologian. But today, I'm
far away from these preoccupations—
although the deep movement is
still within.
CE: Were you shy when you were
BF: I was very shy, and I think I
remain so.
CE: Therefore you were obliged
to create your own little world?
BF: Not necessarily—my
shyness as a kid—I didn't suffer from it—
— I was a little bit alone—because
— I was very much integrated into
my family since I was born—I was a
happier little boy—because I
— was a little boy—because I
wasn't afraid of the outside world—
and I didn't need to find a solution—
since I could use all these
outlets, with a strange world—
but not one that I could
— with all my family, I had no need to
debate.
CE: Describe your mother.
BF: Ah, that's a formidable ques-
tion. She is beautiful, my mother—
seems a lot—I suffer from seeing
like her—she's not that—I don't
like her—Lucille—she's more like
awful thing to look like one's mother.
CE: Oh, yes—she's an idealist, even
a bit Puritan.
CE: Your father?
BF: He's different—he has a
marvellous understanding between
them—very different people—my mother is someone
whom I indirectly call mother—
— he and I are more like
— and my father is much more
humanistic.
CE: What does he do?
BF: My parents work—they run a
farmhouse—a vacation camp at Apt
for six months of the year.
CE: And your brothers?
BF: One of them is still trying
to find himself—he's quite young—and
— the other is a ceramicist—a whole
family, my mother's side—my
— grandfather, my great grandfather
— was famous reputable earthenware
craftsmen at Apt.
CE: That didn't interest you?
BF: No, they thought at one time
that I would be the successor to all
— that's why you are very young
— and I did not think that I would
grow up—no, actually I've
never come to terms with—but I
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de la naïveté—qu’un lair couler, ou est.

Et ta combi de galeries !

Il y a agité gallard à Paris et... C’est la photo que tu as vendue dans un appartement. C’est une installation qui se fait très progressivement.

Je pense, elle ont eu toujours du succès, et peut-être que...
by Lew Thomas

"Men should perhaps make an attempt to speak from women's subject position, because otherwise we must believe that people are totally determined by their biology, by their history, by their class (ix and so on)." (Gayatri Spivak, We Woman, 1986)

We live in a period of violent visual representation where the provenance of aggression is not limited to the commercial media. In photography, distortion of subject matter and manipulation of the photographic print has become the trend and substance of curatorial approval and the expectation of the spectator. The opportunity to organize two exhibitions at HCP (Houston Photographers' February 28 April 6 and Recording Society, May 3 June 29) provided a useful context for posing alternative models of photography.

Fundamental to representation is the issue of looking, the configuration of the collective gaze, where that which looks at you forces you to look back at it. The power of the gaze, projected continuously through photography and film, advertising and entertainment, binds us to a system of beliefs that is naturalized in representation.

One part of the Houston Photographers' exhibition was based on a structural concept of looking—women photographing men—the reversal of the dominant gaze of representation. The photographs were, for the most part, essentially feminine in the portrayal of women's desire. Softness of focus, passive position of the subject, the non-aggressive distancing of the photographer, tonal luminosity of the print, and the desire to narrate from the problematic postmodern space of subjectivity are some of the formal categories of gender-specific or feminine photography.

The recognition of the kind of photographic practice has found a marginal position in gallery and museum exhibitions. Its critical treatment lies outside the scope of serious discourse assuming the work's lack of credibility. The unspeakable message in the photography of women remains the silent language of the Other. "Not even recent psychoanalytic theory has taken account of the quite different constitution of the female subject—her radical alienation from the discourse which first constructs her body, and then supply her with an identity (already known as soul, feeling, consciousness, the unconscious) entirely congruent with that bodily construction." As gender-specific photography, this condition is circumscribed by the 'master narrative' which suppresses contradiction by trivializing the reality of feminine experience.

Paula Frick, Sally Gall, Mary Margaret Hansen, Marilyn Lubetskin, April Rappier, Debra Rueb, and Sharon Stewart, the female artists in the Houston Photographers' exhibition, shared a distinct enthusiasm for making their work appeal to the spectator as an invitation to the scene of the photograph. These pictures seem not to impose political opinions or inject an aggressive attitude towards the viewer. Yet, they are complex in their difference. Derrida's term for 'desire continually delayed.'

In comparison with this approach, the photography comprising Revealing Sexuality politicizes the photograph at the site of representation. The results often lead to a passionate critique of the symbolic: "the order of signs into which the individual enters upon acquiring language. Since the language system mediates all experience, the symbolic order structures reality. On leaving the mirror stage determined by Lacan's imaginary or Kristeva's Semiotic, it is language and the symbolic that specify relationships and difference, thus creating the distinc
tive self." The symbolic is encoded in culture through the male dominant agencies of economics, education, politics, law and the industries of art and entertainment. By returning the gaze of representation through quotation of media images the cherished codes of the system are exposed, particularly the language of sexuality. Soap operas, "music at the end of the movie," the "couple as copy" in ads, terrorist and the narrative climax, the POMZ ZZIP or BANG of the comic book, are just some of the sites of representation accounted for by the artists who are recording the language of sexuality. Linda Beach, Kasiyya Brooks, Minette Lamm and Eliza Tonaché.

Less overtly political, the Houston Photographers reveals a desire to narrate feminine experience in which the doubling of identification between the photographer and the subject plays an ancillary role in the psychological development of the image. "If the woman looks, the spectator provoke, it intrusion in the air, the Medusa's head is not far off; thus she must not look, is absorbed on the side of the seen, seeing herself seeing himself, Lacan's femininity ..." From their own unique, dialectic, unspoken language, is created a psycho-somatic schism of the phallic. Then the language of difference is the coded language of the unconscious. Looking at the work of the Houston Photographers, Ruebs Set Portrait Series, Mirror Me or Stewart's Beam of Eras IX, the intentions of the artists are seen in the erotic symbols of fruit or a strobic which create signs comprehensible to even the most insignificance. The portraits by Debra Rueb show an imbalance of the mirroring technique in which the self-assured attitude of the artist posing in front of the camera is comparatively different than that of the male subject whose tentative presence weakens the active masculine code.
cloudy displaying his beauty— reversing the code of objectification. Rapert: 1986 by Fredrick, reversing the code further in a series of 20 x 16" hand-colored photographs depicting the male gaze suspended in a state of innocence and passivity. The subject of the photographs is 'slower fly' from the position of three poses set in two rows of quadrants, projecting the subject's aura through the medium of the eye and hand of the artist. Rapert: no longer Rapert: he has become the decorated symbol of the artist's desire. Painted sardony colors, his images are aligned to the feminine gaze as a figure of masquerade.

The clearest manifestation of gender-specific photography can be seen in the work of Sally Gall. Her pictures blend the chemistry and optics of photography with equivalent images of the human body immersed in a pool of water fixing the wetness of the figure with the illuminated ground of the silver print. These are the motion-stills of a pictorial imagination enjoying the repose of capitalist leisure. Gall's portrait of "Laloo: Botanical Garden," 1982, shows a graceful looking man returning the gaze of the photographer unaware of the fetishizing play of light and shadow on his face as he stands beneath a high-lighted ceiling and arched leaves of a naturalized garden. "Laloo: Lipari," 1983, finds the same man, this time sitting in a boat reading a map illustrated with topographical drawings suggestive of anatomical shapes. These are strangely effective images of the feminine gaze, her other seen as though from the distance of a dream.

On the other hand, the dual portraits of men by April Rapert push the grieve to the threshold of language. From them one can glean subtle shifts of perspective and minute changes of facial expression providing still another use of doubling the shared 'imagery' of the feminine photographers and discourse in general. [Jacques Lacan's psychic analyst: Imagery is the realm of fantasy (as opposed to the symbol), born in the prelinguistic recognition of one's selfhood.] It is the objectified self in which normative social reality is inscribed by repression, socialization, language and ideology. It is therefore the state of misrecognition of psychic reality and real social conditions and is also the shared world of action and communication, i.e., of discourse."

Rapert's portraits depend on naming which is a function of language. Each of the dyads is given the proper name of the subject as a title. Besides reading the binary portrait for visual clues of identification, the spectator must deal with yet another set of choices subverting the authenticity of the subject, whose name are the portraits attributed, the proper name of the subject given as the title, or in the name of the photographer? Is the belief in a stable form of the self threatened by the laconically formatted signifying a potentially divided personhood? Is the doubling of images in the trustworthy genre of the photographic portrait, the revenge of the Other? Or is it simply ari where questions cease?

It is said of the "family" that the pictures of the world are made by men, and that women keep the albums of memory. This narrow ideology was overturned in Marilyn Lubkin's photo-installation. The gallery space, actuated by the oldest operating photo-booth in the South West, was filled with the humming sound of the exposures and the incessant popping and banging of the mechanical engine processing film strips from which latent images were turned into pictures of identity. Who could resist the attraction to return to the mirror stage of life, the original experience of self, and for only 25 cents from all this, people would sign and join their portrait strips to six foot by eight foot wall in the gallery. An adjoining wall was turned into a mosaic of faces created by Lubkin from more than a thousand strips of pictures taken over the last seven years. This wall highlighted friends, celebrities and society people who had entered the realm of the photo-booth while visiting her home. Even though the person inside the photo-booth looking into the mirror lens of the camera acted as performer and spectator, it was the hospitality of a feminine ex machina that made this fortunate experience possible—the only dependency on the male principle came from being useful as a part of the subject matter and for periodic servicing of the mechanical apparatus.

In Mary Margaret Hansen's series of photographs, "Mary, Polly and Ma," the art of appropriation is raised to the level of a mystery. Working from a glass-plate negative, the artist made five photographic isolating different aspects from an image of three women whose bathing suit style places them in the distant past. The first photo in the series shows the women holding hands as they walk away from the surf, a wedding ring visible on the left hand of the middle woman. The ring recalls Jane Gallop's theorizing of Roland Barthes' punctum where a minor detail can produce a reading of the photograph outside the frame of reference intended by the photographer or, in this case, the appropriator. Furthermore, one can theorize from the original photo that it was taken by
Bacher's most recent work, Sex with Strangers (Disposing, Missing, Dwelling) is taken from a sexually explicit paperback book (thirty) distilled by a scientific creative. Ripped from its context by the deconstructive power of photography to reconstruct the meaning of images through quotation/appropriation, the taboo subject of photography is overshadowed by the overt subject matter of female desire. The intimate space acceptable for voyeuristic pleasure is abolished by the mural scale of the photographs destroying the privacy of the spectator. This is the battle zone of representation. The subject matter of this work displayed at the Center would burn assuage the sensitive values coexisting in a members' organization like a blueprint of dynamite exploding at an art opening. Decoding the images as the exclusive showing by Bacher represents, in her own words, "the display of gendered subjectivity where sexuality is implied/falsely exchange or circulation between the terms: masculine/feminine, active/pasive, presence/absence." The work not shown at the center confronts the "colonized territory (of) what constitutes the pleasurable in sexually explicit display." These issues are featured in the tabloid/periodicals, "Flash Theory & It, organized principally by Bacher and a group of artists who are either teachers or recent graduates of San Francisco State University; one of the few critical and innovative publications dealing with photography in the Bay Area.

We daily consume a diet of popular culture on a scale that has produced a second collective unconscious of expendable information," says Elsa

Footnotes
3. ibid, p. 8
5. "Lexicon, op. cit., p. 7
PAINTED PHOTOGRAPHY: A MATTER OF FACT OR FICTION!

By Jill A. Kyle

The aggressiveness with which these works are painted, and the apparent relish with which photographic information is recontextualized or obliterated, suggest an artistic dislocation of photography with its inherent Renaissance perspective, in dour's distinctive, its lack of plasticity, and its perspicuity "democratic" presence in the world.

One could read the works gathered here as a spirited protest against the omnipotence and persuasiveness of photographic images.

—Andy Grundberg

If there has never been a mainstream in photography as there has been in other, older fields of visual arts; and if, as an art form, photography has never advanced consistently on a broad front (so much as it has relied on outstanding exhibits of work by isolated artists), it has nonetheless produced strong currents from time to time. One to mention is painted photography.

Painting on photographs is not new. From the first artists who want to enhance the camera image with the application of paint, at times to add color and at times in the name of art. (An early one was Edward Steichen, whose pigment print portraits ofnof were highly manipulated by hand retouching.) But the most recent wave of painting over camera-derived images couples an artistic pursuit for focused effects achieved by mingling photographic objectivity and painterly subjectivity with a very contemporary ambivalence about the function of both mediums in the life and art of today.

This can be seen in the works by seven young artists (6 Americans and 1 Frenchman) in Midtown Art Center's Painted Pictures exhibit. Though it cannot properly be called an "exhibit" of painted photographs, because the applied paint is more important than the photographic image in some works. Painted Pictures demonstrates, nevertheless, that the "intermediary" potential of the photographic medium as an artistic tool of broad and diverse applications can be exploited to yield stunning results.

Albeit at all with the same success, artists in this exhibit, by combining painterly expressiveness with an understanding of the power of camera images—and the subtle, disconcerting ways to use that power—give their art an intriguing relationship to photography that is far more than the sum of its parts.

In works by Dennis Farber, for instance, the question arises: "Is he a photographic innovator, or a painter with photographic sensibilities?" The same could be asked of Robert Rauschenberg, whose art like Farber's, stresses that the making of an image accords with the act of combination; but Rauschenberg is not meaning to plunge the viewer into confusion about the problematic existence of the real, and Farber is a strategy of representation on different levels. Guides Farber's process of fusion and juxtaposition. The result is an articulate visual idiom that cunningly pits the photographic real against the ideal, abstracted world of painting.

In "Space Heater," a large color photograph of a cluttered urban construction site, Farber resorts to a variety of manipulative devices in order to set up an unresolvable tension between formalist propaganda of the picture space and spatial depth. Hard-edge, geometric, colored areas and abstract surface patterns—the latter created by cutting through painted or pasted layers to unpainted photographic images below—adhere to a certain rigor of placement in shallow planes. As formal elements, they vie for attention with stretches of chain-link grid, in varying degrees of focus, that strongly suggest an illusionistic space. In "Boyhood Meltdown," windows in a cropped facade ("VT," Grant Building) is barely legible beneath overlapping strokes of translucent paint are real architectural features, but, cut loose from the sills, they rise to the surface as isolated elements. Not completely free from subject association, yet trying to be, the importance of the windows as abstract, graphic pattern follows the same order of truth as the black newspaper letters in Cubist poppies roles. Many of Holly Roberts' oil-painted, gelatin-silver photographs, like primitive art, subdue to prismatic feeling and mystery beyond the reach of our understanding. Beyond our grasp, too, is knowing what extent the underlying photograph inspires through veins of toned-down, but never dull, pigment: earthy red, pink, and blue with hints of gray blues. And when she gives full flesh to the immediacy and impulsiveness of her gestural painterliness, as she does in "Man with TL," the photographic touchstone in the work—in this case a man sprawled on a table—becomes foil to the rich, tactile surface in which it is embedded.

What Roberts well understands is that visual information from a tiny portion of photographic image can force us to perceive a painting in new ways. So that doctile subjects, like "Bird's Head" become sentient, archetypal images, taking on nuances as emblems of the subjective consciousness. In the profile head, a photographic image of frontal human eyes peer from behind a mask of paint, and like a piercing, "punctum," it disrupts our sense of the real. By using simple spatial structures—an isolated painted form within a broad, neutralized picture plane—the paradox that something can be so real and yet at the next moment an illusion becomes more poignant: so does the mystical dimension in Robert's work, which makes us a little anxious about the reality they represent.

The Barthesian assumption that the photographer does not create but merely copies his image appears to be a point of departure for Charles Clough's work. Emphasizing the effects of reproducibility in photography and painting, Clough teases with color shots of art journal illustrations which he enlarges and overprints in several stages. Ultimately, he completely obscures the photograph, except for a few areas of grid screen, Clough's vehement gestures with a loaded brush—important vehicles of self-reference—create a new artificial-looking surface, an overall image in itself of picture-making processes.

Spatial interaction, a common theme in Bayot Keefe's painted photographs. If not to true subject, doubles as the artist's primary means of integrating media. By clever manipulation of photography and paint, Keefe creates images that seem to flow simultaneously in and out of the

BAYOT KEEFFE: Arabedul Selene Yarner, 1984, courtesy Laurence Miller Gallery

Dennis Farber: Boyhood Meltdown, 1983, 30" x 40"; courtesy Laurence Miller Gallery, New York

SPOT

15 SUMMER 1986
ambiguously located between photographers and painters. Across these shadowy Giotto-like figures in "Anabase Selene Vomir", Keillolipps apart, an arc-shaped white paint that establishes a visual collaboration between images, in a photographic blur of motion and time, and movement of the brush. For the most part, Keillolipps used colored tones kept within a close range. Unanchored by dictates of form or place, the studio model movement moves fluidly between grounds and contours that are continually being painted and photographed together. Without disrupting the spatial flow, but introducing an intellectual counterpoint to it, Keillolipps black brushstrokes act as linear elements, but stability that define plane and volume. In fact, Keillolipps painted marks provide more information about subject and context than does the blown-up photograph—a shift in roles for the media, that in effect, lessens competition for presence between them.

Ellen Carey’s work seems less an attempt to balance or integrate photographic image with painted stroke than to free photographic information from the traditions of painting and distracting realism. The throng of dazzling marks over and beyond the underlying contours in "Figure" feed the action stance. But, devoid of emotional or psychological effect, the image is restricted to design alone.

In a few scenes with people from the "China Series" (1985) on display at Haider/Rodriguez Gallery, Keillolipps goes next to her sense of human character and contextual "Personal Effects," she amends the photographic print with material artifacts—colored glitter, gold leaf, paint, strips of metallic paper—to give it color and depth in feelings of personal political, as well as in the nature of the historical event recorded.

I find that judgements on the nature of a "geopolitical" place, proceeding by decades the curators’ dates of birth, will depend on certain ineluctable conclusions of the curators, through which they have represented or negated the fruits of their knowledge of photographic art history. Their willful insertion of make such works that are contrasted with their insistence to draw other conclusions not strictly within their scholarly ambit, as examined further on.

My hypothesis suggests that indistinct war photographs have the capacity to suspend upon themselves—perhaps like the photographs of other genres—the power to evoke and re-inscribe our own war photographs. I suggest that the literal meaning of war photographs often carries more weight than those derived from less consequential events, ie, standard war photographs which successfully subvert their literal meanings with alternatives achieve an audacious authority, sometimes perverse. Regardless of this, the ability to communicate multiple meanings is a quality highly valued in works of art, and rarely would appeal as a measure of indecency, to persons who live within the arts. I speculate that indistinct images chosen on the basis of their literal informativeness however might reintroduce much of the shocking seducted by PF. Fawcett’s parameters as stated in the second paragraph above. The images in the exhibition are indeed exceptional, but the photographic interpretations concurrent to their documentary sense. Those alternative solicitations of the viewer may even be categorized somewhat...

Some of the images qualify as "beauties/lyrics" in the early landscapes, the sun-dappled camp sites, massed material of war. Repugnant images are sometimes blunted by strangely classical allusions—a maully Pakistani corpse in a stone-stew puddle takes the appearance of an Egyptian mummy. Fy. Pop culture sometimes supplies dimensions of meaning which complicate a document. An SS trooper floating dead in a prison camp ditch possess the crucial structure of Frankensteins’ best. The US, miliarly absent, seated in ranks of death chairs to view the first nuclear test, resemble movie-goers in 3-D glasses and turned the screen. Religious twists are numerous: Gls perform calculus, while behind them, their shadows mimic crucifixes in equally ordered rows. A US soldier in Vietnam guides an unseen helicopter, lading to plug up the wounded. His arms are raised into the jungle light as if he were pleading for redemption from God. Pictures of victims are sometimes synegetic, such as one captioned “Mother and child shortly before being killed.” A pen- nable looking US soldier stands behind a toothless, stringy Vietnamese mother and her child. He will later kill her husband in a burned and would soon withdraw and call in shelling to level the zone. The pow in a photograph is sometimes boosted when the viewer cannot de- termine the facs. A Sol- dorman soldier is hailed away by other soldiers, his lifeguards unheeded but the flesh completely missing from his head. We must speculate about the horror death of the Russian paradi- sans Tanai; the photo reveals a tortured corpse which might have suffered a variety of deaths. The predominating mechanism which makes the photo resonate however, is irony. Some the irony is the photographer's conscious choice. Many of the photos men- tioned above are structured to sug- gest a meaning, directly or indirectly, to its documentary sense.

Some of the irony contained in the exhibition is created or accentuated by the curators. The very modern images are perhaps, disabled from participating in these ironies because we viewers have not reached unequivocal decisions on the depicted on- going wars. Irony depends to a great extent on mutually understood means. A large proportion of the photographs representing World War II had served as glib PR for the war effort, ironic in now view of that war's generally recognized destructive and near the loss of life. The ironies communicated through the exhibition's Nineteenth Century prints are generally a result of their combin- ation with text. Members of our cur- rent generation have no distinctive impressions of the wars more than 70 years distant—ironic reversals are less available to us. But we might be informed that the Civil War soldier who was pronounced cured by a Surgeon General’s Surgical Report died shortly after the same wound. Likewise a caption informs us that the Chinese men served about a garrison were killed by their own exploding powder magazine, from Kinugi Kinchi Hiroshima, 1945 (The patient’s skin is burned in a pattern corresponding to the dark poison of a kimonom worn at the time of the explosion).
Edward Clark: Soldiers on Leave, 1914, World War I

may be lost or observed. By the Viet nam era, free-lance photographers propelleled by any ideology, mission or ideology were permitted to enter that country and expand the coverage.11 It is common understanding that the coverage of that war influenced U.S. policy and finally the decision to withdraw. Photographers have also brought to light realities of the various conflicts in Central America. The presence of the international news media in El Salvador was asserted by the photo of the large group of新闻网 photographers gathered around the coffins of Héctor Llang, slain while covering that conflict in 1982. Responding to the newfound power of photographic information in the electronic media and press, the Reagan Administration banned photographers from the invasion of Grenada,15 gaining thereby the freedom to shape the event in an extremely favorable light.

The oldest images of the book reflected the predominating British imperialism—the Crimean War (1854-56), the Opium War (1856-60), the Indian Mutiny (1857-58), the Second Afghan War (1878-80), the Second Boer War (1899-1902), the Bosphorus Rebellion (1900), and the British adventures in Zululand (1879). In recent times however, with photographers covering nearly all fronts, the U.S. is more than adequately represented among the makers of war. There are reminders of our activities in Korea, our massive expenditure in Vietnam, our training of the Allied Battalion of the Salvadoran army (1982). Our part and profit in the war of the Middle East and our complicity with the white side of racial violence in Southern Africa are more suppressed, surmised perhaps for only the most informed viewers. Regardless of the attitudes and decision of the curators, the photographers suggest for the U.S. aggression and militarism, which should come as no surprise. The U.S. has rhetorically appointed itself the protector of freedom and the defender of the world, substantially protecting a sometimes reprehensible portion of the world's states and standing as its army, allies and arms than any nation.16 has more foreign military bases,17 prepares the Strategic Defense Initiative despite its extraordinarily destabilizing effect,18 and augments a legacy of military intervention in other nations' political affairs.19 

C. Looking at War is Not Necessarily Possible
divine intervention. The SS trooper, apparently a monster, is only a man. The military chiefs at the nuclear test suggest an attitude of leisure rather than the destructive momentousness of the event.

7. Jane Livingston, "Thoughts on War Photography," Indecible image, p.13. Ms. Livingston suggests that the sense of immediacy in photographs of war photograph of the wet plate epoch for psychological as well, but does not discuss in identifying them. Indecible image, p.34. Caption identifies felice Beato's The Interior of the Sensational Bush, Lucknow, photograph-1858 done during the Mutiny, as the earliest known photograph of our dead.


10. It is not clear that this prelude of pandemonium has been previously published, so the editors are credited: "From the Photograph," Gilles Peress. The Indecible Image, p.6.


18. Ibid., p.7.

19. Statements by Donald Reagan White House chief of George Schultze, Secretary of State, and William Kissinger, White House Press, as reported in the Honolulu Chronicle, Sec. p.1, the Boston Post, p. A, and the New York Times, p. 1. "Both the resistance and Hun- garian forces want to stop the round, but reinforcing attacks by up to four San- donista battalions can be expected within the next 24 hours" [Stato Department] spokesman Charles Redman said. The Houston Post, p.26 March 1986. On March 25, $20 million dollars in emergency mili- tary aid was granted to Honduras, the most militarily equipped country in Central America, and on March 29, 1986, the Senate approved a bill for $100 million of aid to the area, besides the matter dropped entirely from the newspapers, evidence ac- cumulated that the Reagan adminis- tration had exaggerated the size of an invasion by the Nicaraguan forces in pursuit of contra attackers, which was similar to many border ex- changes of the past, and had also ex- agerated the danger it posed to Honduras. See: The New York Times, p. 1, March 27, 1986.


22. See in II B and related text.
ARVERE YOU ENJOYING IT MORE BUT NOT ENJOYING IT LESS!

By Paul Hester

What does it mean to title an exhibition, Black, White and Color II: Houston (Artists and the Solar Camera), Los Angeles (Corinna and the Self Camera)? Is it all the work has in common? Is this the contextual basis for the selection of the work? What do we understand from the separation of the work from two cities into two different forms? Are we able to distinguish a place of difference from the geographical space of the collection of the exhibiton? Does the work from each city display any unifying principle, is there any value judgment implied by the placement of work from LA above that of Houston within the structure of the gallery? Is it significant that the first work you see on the Houston floor is by newcomer Lew Thomas from San Francisco? If little importance can be attached to these issues, and if we are unable to attribute qualities of the work derived from the place of their making, what purpose does the title serve? What useful analysis can we make that cross-cuts these declarative labels? Is it intentional within the curatorial space that the Houston work is diffused between the extremes of decorative abstraction and journalism to the solar camera, while the Californian work is engaged on the whole in the critical questioning of those same traditional models? It is an accurate reading that Houston is without any visible challenges to traditional art practices! Are we being subjected to another devaluation of home-grown products?


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FROM THE DARKNESS THERE AROSE
THE POINT. IT LIFTED THEM UP
AND THEY NO LONGER WaIVERED

...or to render (v) in such a spurious,
distorted, and inflated form that the
critique does not generate or confront any problem but a parodic
complacency with the system.

(georg lukacs)

At what moment did modern art cease to pose questions and constitute itself as the dominant, insti-
tutional art of defensive sentences? When did it forget its position of outrageous and provocative and be-
come the official culture of the status quo? Is this the moment it lost its ability to provoke thought?
Are the questions metrical? What is behind their approach? Is it to change society, or to change art? Where are the art practices that sig-
nificantly challenge the stereotypes of makan-doctor, female-muse, male- packager, female-package?

It is enough to encourage these artists in their anti-authority rebell-
ions against the clausrophobia of modern art and mass media? Should we also ask of each artist an aware-
ness of the sides they would be taking in the process of aesthetic identification and ideological representa-
tion? (buchloh)

"Softwearing is portrayed as a personal struggle, experienced by the individual in isolation. Alienation becomes a he-
roic disease. for which there is no social remedy. Iny masks resignation to a situation are not only clear or central. The human situation is seen as static, with certain external forms varying but the
""essential anguish remaining. Every political system is perceived to set some small group into power, so that changing the group will not affect our real (that is, primary) lives..."" Thus simply expressed, the elements of bourgeois ideology have a clear role in maintaining the status quo. Arriving out of a system that functions through corporate competition for profits, the ideas of the bourgeois imply the ultimate powerlessess of the individual, the futility of public action, and the necessary despair."

(Qouted by Buchloh from Lilian Robinson and lise vigel, "modemism and history" new literary history 3, no. 1 (autumn 1971): 196.

MIRROR
OF THE SELF

The exhibition, Self Portrait in the Age of Photography was displayed
at the Sarah Campbell Blaffer gallery, University of Houston, March 2-25.

By Sally Gail

It all started in Lasanone, Switzerland, with an exhibition of paintings and photographs, Self Par-
trait in the Age of Photography. Eric Billette, the organizer of the exhibi-
tion, set apart the photographic component with the intention of making it a separate, touring exhibi-
tion. However, only a small part of the original show reached Houston and San Antonio, Texas.

Self Portrait in the Age of Photogra-
phy (exhibition title remained the same) shown at the Blaffer gallery, University of Houston, left me feeling disappointed and bewildered. One expects from a thematic show of this kind to provide the viewer with a new analysis of the genre or a spec-
trum for comparing various metho-
dologies. One particularly expects this from an exhibition whose theme is so broad and all encompassing and which claims as its time period the 150 years of photography's exis-
tence. In this exhibition, there was neither a thesis nor a range of meas-
urable approaches.

Where are the self-portraits of Lee Friedlander, the auto-polaroids of stan tamaras, miniatures of Cindy Sherman, or the other obvi-
ous deceptions (past and present) un-
accountably absent in an exhibition of this scope. Only when examining the catalog at the end of my visit to the exhibition did I see the missing works, which led me to believe that I had accidentally visited a room in the gallery. But much of the work reproduced in the catalog (published expressly for the Blaffer gallery) was not in the exhibition, evidently due to a small staff in the organizing end and the inability to secure loans for the works involved. Should I have found that at least part of the exhibition traveled it is a difficult question to answer, not only because many
strong photographs did not arrive, but because without the missing photographs, the show is very in-
complete. There are too many gaps, too much missing light. So far as I can tell, to Eric Billette, this exhibition was in-
tended as part of a much larger display of the genre: however, I was not reviewing that exhibition which was seen only in Lasanone nor am I reviewing the catalog.

The gaps in the exhibition come in all the sections which
it is organized: "the image," "the camera, the photographer's half-
mark," "portrait in the group," "arrangement and distancing," "cur-
riculum vitae," "the present: instant camera, polaroid," "the present: artists using their cameras," for, in the
case of, does "arrangement and distancing" mean why are Lee Friedlander and Duane Michals included in that category as opposed to the "present: artists using their cameras," what does that all encompassing word "image means as a category in the exhibition? Why are Robert Mapplethorpe and Ralph Gibson included in "the image?" As far as I can tell, "Curriculum vitae" refers to artists who have made many self-portraits over their lifetimes, whose work is published in the catalog, but not included in the show so that the category totally loses its meaning in the exhibition. Perhaps the categories lose some-
thing in the translation, for they are non-metonymical, and create confusion when viewing the exhibition.

What is a self-portrait? What is the impact for an artist to create some-
thing using the self as subject matter? A self portrait is the way an artist sees him or herself, the way an artist projects himself or herself to the world. A self portrait is a recording of the self, an interpretation of the self, and invention of the self. It is through a self-portrait that the mak-
er faces the double bind of preserving one's image while documenting the mortality of the self. A question involved in organizing any thematic show is how the parameters of inclusion are set. It
seems reasonable to suggest that many artists have at one time or another made a self-portrait, just as many artists have made a landscape, or a still life in their leisure moments. Are these one-time-only images included, or does the exhibition concentrate on artists who have consciously pursued self-portraiture as a thematic concern in their creative efforts? Self-portrait is often a document; an artist with a multiplicity of self-portraiture is usually exploring the genre. It is the latter which I imagine in the exhibition. Robert Mapplethorpe is a good example. There is one photograph by Mapplethorpe in the exhibition which depicts a cropped head and shoulders with a hand and finger extended—appearing simultaneously tense and fragile. Whatever subtlety the seriousness of this image is Mapplethorpe's growing face. There is a playful quality to the photograph as well as a projection of the artist's identity and power. What impact has this photograph made in 1975 had on the later Mapplethorpe self-portraits: the analogous, Mapplethorpe, Mapplethorpe with machine gun in hand, or, best of all, Mapplethorpe with an all-knowing grin and devil's eyes growing out of his head—and what of the less innocent croppings of portraits of recent years? To know how the viewer looked, the viewing ten years would tell us much more about his specific concerns. This long-standing interest in preserving and illuminating the personal and cultural issues at an artist who has consciously pursued self-portraits in photography for many years is confined to a single photograph. And, of course, this applies to many other artists in the exhibition.

Metaphor and disguise are areas of portraiture interestingly touched on in this exhibition, and there are the Diane Arbus's sequences concerning the mystery of human mortality. But where are the many Man Ray self-portraits made throughout his life in various states of disguise? Where is Duchamp as Rose Sélavy, his anima alter ego? Where are the Cindy Sherman photographs which seem to lack a self because of her ability to take on any pose, any identity, thereby losing all sense of a unitary self? These charmeur-like self-portraits are literally self-portraits that she directs, stages, and acts, taking on the persona of various "types." Her photographs which are ultimately about personality call into question the authenticity of self-portraiture and the facility of photography to reveal the self in a seemingly endless series of copies. The absence of her work weakens the structural associations useful for understanding the other contemporary work in the exhibition. In my view, Weegee's "family snapshots," photographs made by superimposing negatives of his mother and his face, or his father's face and his face, that culminate in a triple negative superimposition of the family, and what about the most bizarre of all dull photographs, a late 19th century by J. H. Holland, transforming himself into Christ, complete with crown of thorns, cutting out the Lord's last days on earth. A strong area of the exhibition was the section titled, "The Artist, and the Camera." The photographs are not all intended with camera and the lens as a means to an end, or as a symbol for the act of seeing. The camera lens either becomes the eye, or as a symbol for the act of seeing. The camera lens either becomes the eye, or as a symbol for the act of seeing. The camera lens either becomes the eye, or as a symbol for the act of seeing. The camera lens either becomes the eye, or as a symbol for the act of seeing. These photographs stress the fact that the camera is not between the artist and the world or between the artist and the world, but is an extension of the eye, and perhaps thus an extension of the artist's self. Isky Bing's '93 self-portrait looking through a camera with a mirror at the side, is simultaneously a frontal view and a profile. In the profile view we see one eye, the eye which is not visible looks through the mirror. In the frontal view, one eye is visible to the side of the world and there is an uncanny sense of "eye" disengaged from the rest of the viewer. There is a wonderful photograph by Unbo Harnois holding a 12mm camera with viewing frame to his face which frames the camera as the frame of a photographs. There is a dark, Kafkian sense German Kroll self-portrait in which the camera replaces the eyes and merges with the face. A metaphorism of instrument transformed into person or parison into instrument. To complete both historically and conceptually this section one wants to see the marvelous 1924 El Lissitzky self-portrait of his head, with a camera hanging a coming down directly over his eyes—a direct reference to the tools of creative power.

Speaking about eyes leads to one of the most fascinating photographs in the exhibition, the self-portrait by Michael Seuphor. The subject of the photograph is his eyes, which are hypnotic and all-consuming. Nothing else exists. One eye is right, the other eye partially enters into it and emerges out of darkness. The viewer looks into but through the eyes at the same time the artist looks out at the viewer. It is a state and it is also an exchange. However, the exhibition is not an exchange, but a state.

by the catalog, self-portraiture is an area rich and full of potential for artistic imagination and intelligence, so it seems a paradox that self-portraits in the Age of Photography is so Heiress. MONUMENTS OF CONTRADICTION

Ed Osowski

Photographs of Texas Monuments by Paul Hester was exhibited at Rice University's Fondren Gallery, February 19-March 19. The exhibition will travel to the Dallas Museum of Art, Spring 1987.

The fifty-four photographs by Paul Hester, seen as a part of Foto First, were displayed under the title of Texas Monuments. Relatively small in format (the images never exceeded B. O. inches) their size indicates an approach to their subject matter that is especially anti-heroic, anti-monumental. There are three contexts, at least, in which the work can be read. The School of Architecture, the sponsor, intended them to provide teaching examples of how public art in spaces, centered on civic monuments, are organized. The Sesquicentennial celebration of Texas provided the opportunity to catalogue of documents these monuments as memorials to the state's struggle for independence during the Centennial celebration fifty years ago. There are these meanings, the most obvious, are less interesting than the third, played down by the exhibition's curator, David Turner. These monuments to the Texas spirit, Hester reminds us, must be seen within the political arena of the second term of President Ronald Reagan. The monuments are heavy with economic, social, and sexual contradictions which society itself has to confront. I have known Paul Hester's work for some time. Night hanging a small gallery employed as Project Director for Houston Public Library, I helped to arrange the first of a series of photographic surveys of Houston which Hester completed for the Library. I knew the pieces in these surveys well and have followed his commercial projects with great interest. But it has been his recent non-commercial work (the two series Vuco Vuco Do Lide Dofirção serie lies behind a number of the images in this exhibition. When he finds women in this survey they are usually sentimentally stereotypes, images of material warmth and comfort. When Hester finds a woman he is not interested in making a well appointed woman she has been made to degrade her. In the turnad around of his stage school master is relegated to a spot between two trash receptacles. This is the context in which Hester reminds us. And in what may be the two most effective and beautiful photographs in the exhibition, "Joanna Truman," on the grounds that the photographs form a self-reflexing pair, looking out on an unexposed landscape, the viewer will see through the viewer at her's self. Both share a sensibility which seems through the ploddingly state-ly, which finds hypocrissy in the posturing of a society that has not lived up to the symbols it has been given by these monuments, and which, finally, dominates an ironic wit that takes pleasure in recording certain markers from their most debilitating angle. In the photographs of "George Washington-in the Background," a Student at Rusk campus with fifteen figures surrounding the statue. Flood like statues themselves, the students are indifferent to the figure who overlooks them. One sees that is the case of the blustering, gesticulating, and slightly humor- ous "Arms of H.H. Ainswil" also on the campus. Hester does not regard the students' indifference as inappropriate. If there is a certain irony that emerges from their indifference in these two examples, one turns to the photographic "St. Paul's Cathedral, Boston Rooled." In the burst of the president watches into the shriek bellowing around it. Erected as a sign of gratitude and esteem by a Mexican-American political organization in San Antonio in the 1930s, the statue appropriately vanishes in the 1980s as.
the distancing of the social programs initiated by Roosevelt continues with out interruption.

Lox dominates Hester's understanding of how these monuments fit into the cultural landscape. He invites the viewer to consider with him how and whether patriotic values can survive in such a pious, inflexible time, whether there is any credibility left to all the myths of independence, the soaring self-definition. In the studio of the sculptor Elizabeth Neel, in Austin, he finds that the statues of Texas heroes—like figures in a Warehouse, cold, neglected—hungry for attention and that they possess the power to shape our imaginations: or motivate our struggles. In the hands of one of the most brazen pieces of sculpture on the University of Texas campus, the roar ing war Memorial, he looks back at and comment, ironically, on the mini drama taking place in front of it as a camera crew and photographer prepare for a shoot.

Within the gap between the message of a monument and its context is that great irony, anger and sympathyenter Hester's vision. A solitary black man sits at the base of the monument, a monument to certain thematic—State Cemetery, State Park, the campus of University Texas, the monument at Gonzales—were not grouped. One wandered from cubicle to cubicle locating photographs that largely relayed the story. Yet, for all the hard work, more disturbing was the hesitancy to make the photographic and textual elements in the exhibition. In a conversation with me, Hester made clear which photographs he thought had been used: of the photograph that he thought least effective. He had left the base of the monument, over the years, some of the most magical and appa rent parings. Laurie Anderson in baking suit and goggles, Mary Decker in shorts in the desert, nude, John wrapped fivelongly around clothed folks, Beate Moller swallowed in roses. Lauren Hutton in the mud.

The audiences' staying power however, was clearly with Wasser and Morgan, whose black and white pictures provided an intense experience that compelled lingering, returning, and a great deal of thought. Wasser hands the viewer, in spite of her convictions, a fairly neutral (journalistically speaking) piece of information, a methodology that assumes an audience's intelligence, and allows it to draw its own inevitable conclusions. There is enormous power and credibility in this presentation of opinion (and way of being in the world). There is Wasser extraordinary ability to construct a stance that holds the viewer's attention, not just reflexive thought, and not just reflexive thought, but also, balancing emotional weight with honesty and fairness. The images, center the audience over the Vietnam Vete ran Memorial in Washington, DC, and are an outgrowth of Wasser's work with agent orange victims (sy mpathy with Viet Nam vet), symbols and iconology of the Memorial are expressedly balanced with emotions and remembrances—from flowers to letters and tears—that arise in a continuous stream. Wasser gives life to the contradictions of the Memorial and its congregation.

Ruth Morgan spent four years (as both sociologist, her former profession, and photographer) documenting maximum security at San Quentin Prison. The resulting 4 x 4 foot mural detail the claustrophobic, hopeless, and obsession (mis quering as a measure of control in a no-control, out-of-control situation) that constitute prison life. One won des, flawed with the predictable anti sociability of such a situation, security being an overriding concern, how any degree of communication necessary to and evident in the pictures, occurred. The images are piercing with a startling directness; the possible result of four repetitive years; none of the classic subtlety (resignation, self-pity, glimpsing the cruel)

**BOUNDARIES AND LIFELINES**

By April Rapier

Photography—New Boundaries: Booth, Blandeo, Habel and Faber

The Drawing Room gathered a strange and mostly wonderful group for a solo, with some well-known and fairly obscure work included: Sandy Halper's long and narrow Type C photographs, vibrant with Mediterranean light and color, reminded one as much of painting as anything else, down to the titles ("Harlem Morning", "1988", "Pink Flowers and Claycoat," 1988), the pictures were layered, a function of multiple exposure, and quite enchanting. Barbara Brandeis long, very narrow fractured studies in movement, of landscapes and buildings in time are by now well-established in photographic history, yet continue to intrigue. Some are colored, in the case of a nude figure dancing across a black field, with a sweeping gravity that carries the viewer into the notion of movement, when they come to "Dismantled" series, are video-imitative incorporating bands of light in rhythmic patterns, the pulsations create a
OMNIVEROUS INCLUSIVITY: THE PHOTOGRAPHS OF ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG

Robert Rauschenberg: Photographs 1949-1983 was shown at the Contem-
porary Arts Museum, Houston, February 28-April 30.

By Robert Estep and Liz Mengel

After close to 40 years of ac-
vactive artistic achievement, Robert Rauschenberg seems to have
reached a plateau similar to that oc-
cupied by Francis Bacon or the Roll-
ing Stones: retrospectives abound and Heine recognition awards tum-
ble in, as with any retrospective con-
ducted during an artist’s lifetime a
show such as this is necessarily ten-
tative, less of a summing up than a
catching of breath in the midst of the
continuing work itself. In Rauschen-
berg’s case that work is vigorously prolific, the stuff of near
monstrous legend, and yet for all its
mass and energy, the oeuvre is only
arguably proportionate. Most dubious
perhaps, is in view of the telescoping of
decades which a retrospective allows to
be the absence of any discernible
phases, either in motifs or recur-
rent obsession.

While the earliest photo in
the show dates from 1949, during
Rauschenberg’s time at Black Ha-
ven College, the remainder are
predominantly from the early 1960s
with a scattering from the ’50s and
late ’70s. For Rauschenberg, pure
photography was relegated to fringe
status during the ’50s through the
’70s in favor of the painting and
mixed media projects that essentially
established his reputation. In 1979,
while working with Trudi Brown’s
comic company, the necessity of produ-
cing over 1,000 photographs as part of the Dallas Hall wall of
moving images, Rauschenberg be-
taine “activated.”

These photographs serve to
delicately Rauschenberg’s continuing
and unparalleled concentration on the
most pressing problems in art:
time, space, proportion, and picture
plane with little or no regard to
either documentation or the ques-
tion of time. Two striking examples
are the study of balcony sea, tree,
and dog’s head’s from 1980 and the cloudbustings and fabric

In somewhat surprising contrast to
much of his recent mixed media
work Rauschenberg’s photographs are
straight and unaltered, seen
head-on with 20/20 vision. Nowhere

which show Rauschenberg’s warmth
as well as his characteristic wit.

ALAN CLEMENT

ALAN CLEMENT: New Photographs. Graham Gallery, February 27, March 22

By April Rapier

Alain Clement exhibited during Fotofest at the Graham Gallery, a space ideally suited to his pictures’ aesthetic intellectualism. A great many philosophical, iconographical and ethereal concepts form a com-
plex and often abstruse web that surrounds and cushions the images, sending out signals and clues. Tel-
the work is accessible on numerous other levels, should the viewer be discerned to participate as fully as Clement requests.

A physical description of the pho-
tograph’s content does the images justice. The technical level of Clement’s work, however, is of interest on several counts. Its basis is sculptural, miniature realities con-
structed in a straightforward manner (as often as not, little if any attempts are made to hide wires and support structures that suspend piano and the like, enabling them to float). Thematic issues such as recurring motifs and the use of photographs (which, in conjunction with large formal photographs, art quite re-
move from the genre) tangentially create illusion, reforming historical applications of elemental associ-
ations. Subtle gold chloride and selenium toning processes account for the starting beauty and range of tones, from peels to browns. Shadow

CALENDAR

JUNE, JULY, AUGUST

EXHIBITIONS

Through June 22, Museum of Fine Arts, XXX Bissell, the So-
Ho-Marina West Art Collect-

ion, Tue-Thu 12-5, Sun 12-12, Thu
12-9, 526-4818.

Through June 29, Houston Center for Photography, 441 West Alabama, “Recoding Sexuality” and Peter Driben Inter-
active Video Installation, Double “You and I,” Z-2. For FRI: 4-6, SAT: 10-5, 529-4753.


Through Sept. 7, Museum of Fine Arts, 100 Bissell, “Texas Landscape,” 410 West Alabama, Photography, painting, and sculpture, Tue-
Sat 10-5, SUN 12-5-6, THR 11-9,
526-4818.

July 3 through August 3, House-
ton Center for Photography, 441 West Alabama, “Grand Blu-
es, Color and Black and White,” and “RHS Fellowship Winner:


July 12 through August 7, Gra-
ham Gallery, 441 West Alabama, “Dale Blau. Scenes from Wisconsin.” Tue-FRI 10-5, SAT 12-4, VCR Film Still Series, Tue-SAT 10-5-6, 528-4952.

July 12 through August 9, Toni Jones Gallery, 1919 Texas Ave., “John Ellis, Photographs & Monotypes.” Mon-Sat 11-6, 528-7998.


WORKSHOPS/ CLASSES


Thursday, June 12, “Copyright Basics,” Ralph Lackner, Foster Place School, 505 Montrose, 7-9:30 p.m., 527-7699. Free, $3.

Thursday, July 31, “Preparing for Pottery: Estate Planning for Art-
ists.” Foster Place School, 7-9:30 p.m, 527-7699. Fee, $3.

Saturday, June 21, “There’s No Success Without Failures: No Success At All.” Diverse Works, 24 Travis, 6-8 p.m., 223-8346. Free.

LECTURES

June 3: Roy Flukinger, Curator of the Guggenheim. 7:30 p.m., to present examples of current work in photography by Austin artists. At HCC, 441 W. Alabama, 7-8 p.m. 529-4753.

TELEVISION

June 23, 10:30 pm: ”Ando Kan-
ji,” an hour special with Art дел of
hour special, produced and directed by Houstonian Bela Ugrinis, channel 8, AT

July 16, 7:00 pm: “Something out of Nothing,” portrait of the Houston Artists, including ED Hill and Suzanne Brown (Manuel), produced and directed by Peter Driben. Channel 8. Repeat July 20, 6 pm.
The Houston Center for Photography wishes to thank the following, who gave to the initial Three-Year Fund Capital Campaign, 1983-1986:

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PHOTOGRAPHERS

By Visionary Joe

One currently has to take risks in the following photographic genres: lasersculpted gemstones, non-Anglo Culture psychodramas, and certain extremes of abstract expressionist clutters. Amateurs may still find risks by printing on temperamental papers, placing plastic toys in tableaux and filming videos while peering Reagan saying “countless.” There are no risks left for anyone in architectural abstractions, text, or picaresque, still life, narrative sequence (there never was) and relatives who aren’t perfectly related. There is still a slight risk in odd-edged frames.

Photographers find it hard to take risks because there is so little of it in recent history. The famous “shooting a gunhosing a camera” analogy is wrong with respect to risk: shooting at a target brings down less wise. Most photographers only risk that they can run out of batteries. News photographers risk that they catch a stray bullet, but worry over troubles with their cars. The photographers who feel they are taking any risks are the artist. The artist makes his work this crucible of its identity, then scrounges for signs of approval among the blind. The artist thinks she takes a risk by earning a position within a society that respects only posthumous deaths. Artists also think there are risks in art politics, and that it’s possible to take risks in the actual context of their work.

But consider the paradox of finding a livelihood through the photographic arts. Photography, a simple adolescent in the gazette of art, is set on the vanguard of the Humanism, in the fortunate oxidization of Academicians, and the variable false throne, idealized visions of Montefiore and Albus. In those mean places powerful gyroscopic axes issue the dictates of real life and death, in phrases of fractured syntax. Bullets do not take risks, avalanches, superpowers, do not take many, and those in absolute power, theoretically, risk not one bit. By contrast, the arts are nearly empty of risk too, for being uncompetitive. Now how do the photographers take some risks, the way it is in Houston? If you don’t restate a Salvador Dali, you could be flying south by morning, and an IRS official would be learning how to use your flask. Now in the nurses of the Houston Cops, the odds are twenty to one, good chance of gunfire, but you’re safe if there’s only fifteen officers, and they’re not certain whether you know the mayor. If you photograph weddings, you risk being attractive to the press. Mr. copyright works the bulwark blow out, or blow a fuse, and half your gadgets’ insurmountable inspiration. In nature photography you risk offending God, by misrepresenting flowers. Heaven help you if the Greeks had it right, so that the myths were literal fact, and you are charged to a lighting bug rather than by dowsers.

In crafting photographic content, the risks are more remote. Risky photographs are those that would present you from running for President of the United States, all other things being equal. If you didn’t think you had a future, risk would be nothing to you. An uncommitted person is a dangerous person. But say you’ll be an artist all your life. You need to be thinking of your retirement.

If you generate something about which no one knows what to say, and then you are followed by countless mistakers, you know you have taken risk. But we want a way of recognizing risk while it is being taken. You can threaten human survival as a species. Poisonous mistakes on the picture surface rush toward the viewer as the viewer jumps back, polluted with Thanatos. A visual form of Hesten is another good risk, but it’s hard to get a show to prevent it. I am certainly you have not seen nihilism revealed in a platinum print.

Photographers perceive a risk in knowing nothing of Walter Benjamin or Roland Barthes, but such persons are, after all, rare. A five-foot tall friend of mine says that all risk is rooted in the phallic, and the fear of castration. That a five foot tall man would say this is risk.

You didn’t see too much risk during Fotofest. I thought the HCP took risks by mailing bad shoes, but I was wrong: they got good results. Geoff Winningham took risks by showing bad hair. He is the artist who makes his living out of downers. Manual and law take risks by attaching their photography to philisocopic concepts too vast to understand. But rearing for things you don’t understand is good, compared to communicating things you understand, which is prosaic or pointing our snippets of beauty, which could take all night. Cakiewitz nudes in body stocking robbery risk offending the twenty percent who are openness enough enough to look at, by George Kraushaar’s standards, the twenty percent who count.

You are an artist, and the person you have just offended was the most important person to your career. It was the person who saw himself in you, or saw herself in your work, at any rate identified a legacy of influence in you, and prized you to the sky. You made a comment, took a risk, and you got spamed. Your patron’s benevolence shields a core of misanthropes as like a rotten candied apple is a red sugar glaze.

Photography’s only recent dell is that of personally offering the overs of art history’s mistrust. You won’t transmogrify the purgatory of alternative spaces unless you are very good, that is, very discrete. In hell there is no place to set your impact. But in Houston’s photographic art history heaven, such as I can glimpse.

Peter Brown has a foliotting director’s chair with his name on it. Gay Block has a coach. And there is the Queen she is back from Europe. The devil’s forces are disorganized, dismembered, and disolute. Their forked tongues flick restlessly with nearly imperceptible speed. They hide among the bins at the next print auction. They are slightly suspicious of art.
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