



Todd Gray, Odysseus, 1984

FLUKINGER ON DRIVING AND DIALECTICS/FREELAND ON SHAVELSON/HOBBS ON RACISM AND OBJECTIFICATION/ISCHAR AND SIMON ON "THE OTHER"/LUKITSH, ROBINSON, AND ROSENBAUM ON VIDEO/MACKIN ON "SOUTHERN EXPOSURE"/RAPIER ON SUBSCRIBING TO FADS/SEKULA ON HUGUNIN/BOOKS: CLARK, HESTER, AND OSOWSKI

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STAFF

Editor: April Rapier

Design: Jim Tiebout

Contributing Editors: Cynthia Freeland, Julie Lee, Christine Lunceford, T.R. Mackin.

Writers: Michelle Barnes, Susan Clark, Roy Flukinger, Cynthia Freeland, Paul Hester, Robert Hobbs, Doug Ischar, Joanne Lukitsh, T.R. Mackin, Joan Morgenstern, Ed Osowski, April Rapier, Joan Seeman Robinson, Jenny Lenore Rosenbaum, Allan Sekula, William Simon.

Production: Jim Tiebout

Advertising Sales: April Rapier

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WHEN YOU PATRONIZE OUR ADVERTISERS, TELL THEM YOU SAW IT IN SPOT

August 13, 1987

Dear Richard Misrach:

This year the Birmingham Museum of Art has begun a major effort to acquire photographs of museum quality for our permanent collection. We recently organized a community support group, The Photography Guild, which has grown rapidly in just a few months, and we have designated a gallery exclusively for photography exhibitions. Some of our holdings include works by Muybridge, Stieglitz, W. H. Jackson, Lartigue, Abbott, Hine, Adams, Bravo, Evans, Lynes, Doisneau, Arbus, Erwit, Christenberry, Eggleston, and Mapplethorpe. As a result of this new interest, the museum is pleased to announce a grant from *The Birmingham News* to commemorate their one hundredth anniversary (1888-1988).

We plan to commission several major American artists to come to the Birmingham area and photograph whatever they choose of the rich variety of topographical locations and/or the people in the community. This will of necessity be organized during the next eight months. Your work is of particular interest to us and it would be a privilege [sic] to have it included in our permanent collection. Would you agree to visit this area with the understanding that five works by you would be chosen as part of this very exciting project? An exhibition and possible publication of this collection is planned for the spring of 1988.

As to the actual breakdown of fees and expenses, we will be most grateful to you for your suggestions. Our plan is to accommodate [sic] the wishes of you, the artist, and; [sic] therefore, we hope to hear from you in the near future. Slides and vita will be most welcomed, as will your fee schedule.

Thanking you in advance for your cooperation.

Very truly yours,
Ruth A. Appelhof
Curator of Paintings, Sculpture, and Graphic Arts
Birmingham Museum of Art

October 4, 1987

Dear Ms. Appelhof,

As one of the photographers chosen for the Birmingham Centennial Commission, I am truly honored and delighted. It promises to be a challenging and significant project. However, I am concerned that the commission is composed of only white male photographers.

I am aware that women and non-caucasians were considered in the original pool. I am also aware that some candidates have chosen not to participate for reasons of their own. Nonetheless, there are a number of superb photographers whom you have not contacted that are eminently qualified and able to participate in this project (see attached list). Not to remedy this inequity now, while it is still possible, is to invite great criticism that would eclipse even the most inspired efforts by the project's photographers.

This project will certainly attract national attention. It is an ambitious and admirable endeavor that will establish Birmingham as a leader and model for other cities. Without the immediate rectification of this problem, the potential greatness of this project stands to be overshadowed by negative controversy.

I sincerely hope you will give serious consideration to the problem set forth. I look forward to hearing from you and am very anxious to begin working.

Sincerely yours,
Richard Misrach

cc:
William Christenberry, Bruce Davidson, Robert Frank, Duane Michals, Philip Trager

Could an ironic and absurd crisis of this magnitude (a bunch of white guys marching into Birmingham to photographically commemorate a newspaper's one hundredth anniversary) really be taking place now, in such a symbolically loaded region? Was the problem a function of miscommunication, misunderstanding, shortsightedness, insufficient knowledge of contemporary photography underscored by an elitist, favoritist, good-old-boy network, or was it blinding ignorance (historical) perpetuated to date in such stereotypical bastions of racism as Birmingham ("the most thoroughly segregated city in the United States," according to Martin Luther King, Jr., *Letter from Birmingham Jail*, 1963)? Richard Misrach had commented to me about the original solicitation letter, "No Blacks, two women—both dead. Are there no minority photographers living that are worth collecting?"

During our first discussion regarding this matter, I was confident that Misrach, a respected colleague and friend (as well as a fine and highly-acclaimed photographic artist who, over the last few years, had become politically active in support of issues such as nuclear disarmament and women's rights) was overreacting or responding to something that simply couldn't be as bad as it looked. As he detailed the chain of events and the outcome, I felt an old rage surface; now, as I write this, I recall having thought that it couldn't be happening again. I received copies of correspondence between Misrach and Museum officials, which prompted an inquiry of my own. I had become an unwitting conspirator, but to no avail: the few times my calls were returned, it was mostly during inaccessible hours. The principal players were never in, and have never been reached. I consoled myself by imagining that what used to be standard procedure and not open for discussion or questioning—consistent and routine repression of minorities and women in the art world (abuse through denial or exclusion being as subversive a censorship device as any: remember that H. W. Janson's *History of Art*, a text widely used at university level did not contain a single reference, prior to his death, to any woman artist)—now occurred in rare, isolated incidences and were subject, in principle, to severe repercussions if brought to light. The tone of the Museum's correspondence, if one might generalize, was alternately conciliatory, contrite, a bit outraged, and defensive about the charges being assessed. *Suitable* excuses ("...complex undertaking..." "...on the list because they were photographers of great merit..." "...that this commission reflect the very best photography that is currently being produced in this country...") were offered in a subsequent letter from the Museum Director; he closed, the underlying message clear, by stating, "We appreciate your suggestions but feel we must proceed with our previous arrangements..." and by asking Misrach to "...let us know as soon as possible so that we can turn our attention to others who might be interested." It sounded increasingly like the same old no-win argument falling on precedent, using a well-established machinery to cover its tracks. (Diverse Works, an alternative Houston space, recently exhibited a challenging and enchanting multimedia installation by The Gorilla Girls, an anonymous group of "art terrorists." The installation dealt with contemporary applications of a similar ratio problem—uneven numbers/unbalanced representation of women artists by galleries and in publications—along with numerous other feminist issues. It is distressing to note that this topic, although routinely acknowledged and ritualistically debated, has yet to be resolved with any enduring measure of consistency.

In the end, Misrach resigned, saying "In good conscience I simply cannot support the project's intrinsic racial and sexual bias. I still hope that the monies thus saved will be applied towards the addition of at least one woman and one non-caucasian to the project." He forfeited a \$10,000 commission and engendered the eternal ill will of certain members of the curatorial and collecting world, not to mention insidious, between-the-lines ridicule and hostility from those (male) photographers who continue to operate within a guilty framework of avarice and insecurity. He did so simply by asking his colleagues and the organizers of a project of the magnitude to serve as a model for future commissions to extend the search beyond predictable boundaries: "Despite everyone's good intentions, this project reflects institutional inequity of the most serious nature. The photographers, the museum, the newspaper and the city of Birmingham will be better served by a commission that represents America's minorities" (from Misrach's letter to the sponsor of the project, *The Birmingham News*). There may have been moments when Richard felt like a jerk for biting hands that feed him (and his son, and other artists) or for potentially endangering his hard-fought career. One hopes not. His integrity intact, he acted unselfishly and courageously; pity those individuals who lack similar convictions.

Sakowitz (an upscale, locally owned Houston department store, currently operating under Chapter 11, traditionally associated with uncompromising standards of quality) ran a sizable ad in the December 20, 1987 issue of *The Houston Post* (Page 16, Section A) which prominently displayed an elegantly attired woman standing on a footstool, her mouth wide open in a silent shriek, her hair teased and sprayed so that it stood on end in the classic cartoon fright configuration, one hand touching the side of her face (to coy effect—as if to cue like-minded women readers to "let no opportunity go wasted"), the other lifting the hem of her dress ever-so-slightly ("at the drop of a hat..."). Although the largest, boldest caption reads "EEK!" this jokester (and joke of a woman) seems to be screaming "AAGH," or something to that effect. I find it hard to believe that there is anyone left on the planet who would find that hackneyed stereotype even remotely funny, much less *select* it for use in a one-half page major newspaper ad. To continue: in the crook of the arm held to her face rests a dainty and tasteful (but sturdy and reliable—"ladies: take note!") Sakowitz shopping bag. The source of her horror and anxiety, it would seem, is a small, elaborately wrapped Christmas present. What is the punchline/warning of this ineffectually stupid and vulgar drive? "ONLY 4 DAYS 'TILL CHRISTMAS." In summary, the implicit messages this sexist nonsense would have us hold true (and subliminally impart) are: 1. *Christmas [substitute: The Holiday Season] is a drag. 2. You screwed up by waiting so long to buy the perfect gift for everyone you know. What's wrong with you?* 3. *Why did you wait so long to make Christmas perfect?* 4. *Women are wimps—afraid of a little Christmas shopping!*

Examine, if you will, a few equally choice stereotypes: 1. *All Viet-Nam Vets are psycho, even the successful ones who hide it.* 2. *All unmarried, even remotely independent women are lesbian men-haters.* 3. *All gay men are promiscuous swishers, easily identifiable by short, perfect hair cuts.* 4. *Twins demonstrate unnaturally close bonding, resulting in unhealthy "alliances."* Bear in mind that these are not ignorant espousals from redneck conversations overheard. They are carefully quoted, unexpurgated statements made, in all sincerity, by "upstanding"

Continued on p. 24

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TRANPOSED NARRATIVES: LENI RIEFENSTAHL'S AND ROBERT MAPPLETHORPE'S FORAYS ON THE WILD SIDE

By Robert Hobbs

I originally planned to compare Leni Riefenstahl's *Vanishing Africa* (Harmony Books, 1982) with Robert Mapplethorpe's *Black Book* (St. Martin's Press, 1986) because two widely dissimilar photographers contemplating the meaning of racial blackness in Africa and in the United States would provide an excellent opportunity to consider the political nature of photographs and the value systems they assume. I wondered if Riefenstahl might possibly be reacting against her early Fascist propaganda film *Triumph of the Will* in *Vanishing Africa*. Was she conscience-stricken about her role as chief Nazi propagandist and doing penance by studying blacks in Africa? Or was she simply adhering to the same beliefs she espoused in the 1930s but finding a black version of the master race theory that would be acceptable to people in the late twentieth century? And I wondered how Mapplethorpe's study of black male models would compare to Riefenstahl's photographs. Was he truly involved in fashionable fascism, as I suspected? Or were his male models, which seemed to be informed by the idealism of Hitler's favorite sculptor, Arno Brecker, just a coincidence? My findings are not exactly what I anticipated because I found Riefenstahl's and Mapplethorpe's narratives more complex than I had expected. Instead of presenting one clear narrative, they knowingly or not create complex overlays of narrative schemes that permit contradictory readings.

An important subject of Riefenstahl's book is indicated on the first double-page spread which shows her in Tanzania holding a Leica: it is the adventures of a middle-aged German tourist in Africa. Although Riefenstahl takes great pains to distance herself from outsiders in her introduction by describing how she and her companion, the photographer Horst, gave Nubians medical aid instead of money and even hid in native huts when tourists appeared, her views of Africa are all the predictable scenes one might expect from having watched *The African Queen* and having read Hemingway's *Green Hills of Africa*, which incidentally is invoked as an epilogue to this volume. Riefenstahl is just as guilty of conjuring up an Edenic Africa as Edward Curtis was in posing American Indians so that they appeared to be unchanged by centuries of contact with whites. Although none of Riefenstahl's early errant Art Deco style, which informed her scenes of goose stepping Nazi troops and whirling searchlights in *Triumph of the Will*, is perpetuated in this book, her desire to picture supermen is still very much in evidence. And she finds a special way of making them larger than life by removing them from the present and transforming them into clichéd images wandering through timeless settings.

Riefenstahl primarily thinks as a filmmaker. She joins posed photographs with action scenes, and her out-of-focus photographs link the former two kinds of images and give the book a cinematic quality. *Vanishing Africa* can be compared to a trailer for a film which excites readers without giving away the story. The book is presented as a fragmentary narrative which is known only to Riefenstahl. In this manner her book becomes an exercise in maintaining power over her readers. She controls the scenes which readers are permitted to see, and she holds the keys to an

Africa which no longer is available to people even if they should choose to travel there. The book thus serves to propagandize the cause of the noble savage and to restrict Africans to a clichéd existence. Like all propaganda it gives readers only enough information to advertise its subject and not enough to understand and critique the world it presents. Riefenstahl's propaganda in *Triumph of the Will* aggrandizes Hitler and the Third Reich while her *Vanishing Africa* glorifies the photographer's power and her insights. *Vanishing Africa* is propaganda posing as anthropology; it attempts to prove Riefenstahl's liberalism, humanity, and insights.

In her introduction, though, Riefenstahl suggests a different narrative from the one presented in her photographs. She speaks with a disarming simplicity that borders on naiveté. Of particular interest is her reference to her failed attempt to make a film about the slave trade in East Africa. She mentions her desire to find Negroes who live up to her idealization of strong male slaves, and her disappointment in discovering the people of East Africa to be slender and gaunt. Riefenstahl's encounter with Jesse Owens during the 1936 Olympics no doubt influenced her approach to Africa. She seems to be looking for his tribal counterpart so that she can replace the Nazi quest for a master race of whites with a more up-to-date black version. Her goal also follows a tradition established in the first decade of the twentieth century by the Die Brücke artists who were intrigued with the mys-

tery and power of African sculptures which they had discovered in natural history museums. Although Hitler later declared the work by these German artists degenerate, their interest in African art became part of the tradition of modernism which may also have provided a basis for Riefenstahl's fascination with Owens. Her *Vanishing Africa* is a logical development, then, of this artistic tradition and also of her political attitudes of the 1930s. Although Riefenstahl may well have felt liberated by Africa—her narrative emphasizes her feelings of exhilaration and happiness—she joins in this book Nazi beliefs with modern art's interest in tribal art. Ultimately Riefenstahl does not move far from her 1930s political stance. She glorifies power now as she did then, and she wishes to embrace the strength of this continent and its inhabitants. Earlier she advertised power in her state-generated propaganda; now she affirms it through artistic imperialism: she metaphorically shoots her subjects with her Leica and brings them back as trophies to be printed on pages of a book rather than hung on the walls of her library.

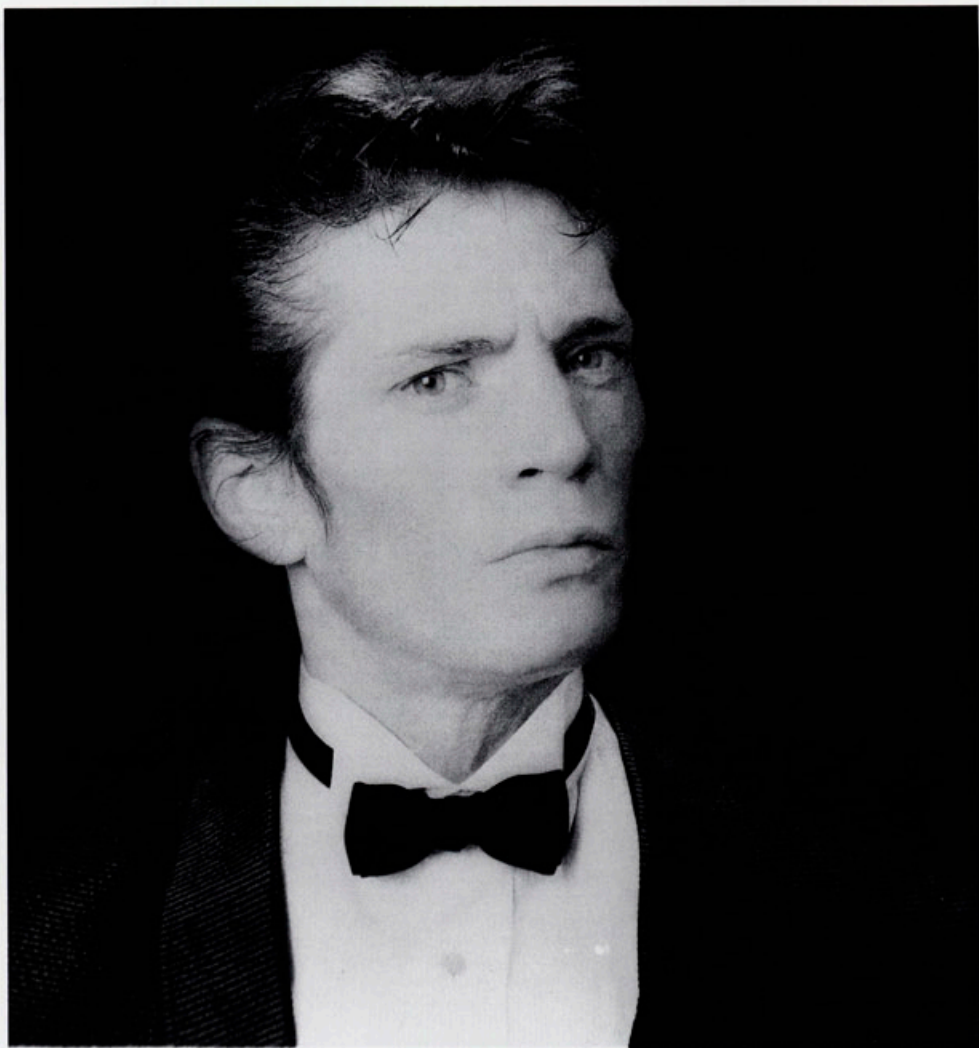
Robert Mapplethorpe's *Black Book* is remarkable for the way that it finesses moral issues and raises black men up as artistic subjects while placing them in demeaning positions. Although this publication appears to be concerned with photography as art, it actually presents a glamorous view of white supremacism that might appeal to a sadomasochistic Klu Klux Klan member and also to black and

white liberals of both sexes who might secretly be entranced with their darker sides. The beautifully written forward by Ntozake Shange, author of the classic "for colored girls who have considered suicide/ when the rainbow isn't enuf" attempts to lull one into thinking that the images in the book are a black woman's sexual fantasies, which only differ sexually and racially from the recumbent courtesans that Titian and Reubens painted. And Mapplethorpe's own self-portrait dressed in a tuxedo underscores the fact that this book is a formal and serious presentation—that the nude black men pictured in it are not to be considered merely naked or pornographic because they are dressed in the formality of fine art.

Despite these trimmings and despite the elegant French fold on the book's wraparound cover and the rich clay-coated stock on which these images are printed, Robert Mapplethorpe's *Black Book* is a sadomasochistic exploit that is just as demeaning to its subject as the pulp sex novel *Mandingo* (Kyle Onstott, 1886), which describes the adventures of Negro slaves used for breeding, is to blacks. The title page of Mapplethorpe's book contains four views of a black man seated on a pedestal, which is draped with a wrinkled white fabric which looks like used bed linen. The man is objectified as a piece of living sculpture which has been turned in four directions for the viewer's benefit. And the viewer is cast in the role of an art collector, who is forced to assess the worth of human flesh and at the same time



Leni Riefenstahl, self-portrait, from *Vanishing Africa* (original in color)



Robert Mapplethorpe, self-portrait, from *Black Book*

the artistic merits of these photographs.

Mapplethorpe's photographs become a new form of slave market, and the human figure transformed into art appears to minimize the viewer's unjust attitude in assessing these bodies. The artistic aspect of the photograph, then, serves to justify the sexual aggression constituted by the observer's look. This approach is sustained in the photographs that immediately follow the title page: an abstracted muscular arm held out straight could belong to an athlete or a dancer but ultimately it is owned by the observer's gaze; a bowed, shaved head—a traditional image of a captive slave—reinforces the superior position of the viewer; abstracted buttocks and thighs again are objectified as is the photograph of the lower frontal torso so that a viewer can possess them as art without feeling any qualms about exploiting another human being. These images are followed by the even more servile positions of a lowered back, two feet touching in mid-air, another pair of buttocks, and finally the face of a black man who fulfills the expectations of the previous abstracted images of Negroes by sweating profusely and acting out the role of an ordinary laborer accustomed to being used by others for their profit or pleasure. Some of the images in this book appear to be intended strictly for S&M rites; on pages ten and eleven the recumbent buttocks of one figure are coupled with a picture of two arms, joined behind the back, that are waiting to be bound. The loosely clenched fists of the figure in this last photograph indicate the model's willing participation in a fantasy of subjugation and humiliation. Throughout the book, blacks are characterized as enlisted men

in the military, as pin-ups, and as objects. They are the underclass sexual fantasies of a dominant class symbolized by Mapplethorpe's own tuxedo, which allies him with those readers who paid \$40.00 for this art book. Even though one model wears a suit (page fifty-five), the garment is polyester and ill-fitting—the cuffs are too long—and thus the figure is characterized as a member of a low-income group.

Mapplethorpe's uneasy expression in his self-portrait may serve to mirror the disturbing contents of the book and may also clue viewers into their uncomfortable role as art collectors who are also voyeurs and exploiters. While this placement of viewers in the position of white supremacists might have the redemptive value of forcing them to deal with unacknowledged or totally unfamiliar attitudes, the book seems to be involved in too much gratuitous delight in subjugation. Its specious morality resembles the highly questionable ethics of a stag movie about Nazism, which might condemn torture at the same time that the camera lingers over suffering beautiful women in order to titillate male viewers.

Mapplethorpe's book constitutes a narrative of objectification, subjugation, and idealization. This narrative simulates stages of love-making by presenting first an idealized and objectified figure, then moving to a subjugated human being and finally to ordinary people that Mapplethorpe has made glamorous in photographs that call to mind Edward Weston's abstractions, George Platt Lynes' theatrical compositions, and Laszlo Moholy-Nagy's glowing soft light. The narrative builds to a crescendo on pages seventy-six and seventy-seven when one figure points a knife which can be read as a sym-

bolic phallus and the other prepares to retaliate with a karate kick. Pages seventy-eight and seventy-nine follow this symbolic sexual battle with a sublimated image of a figure which could be either black or white—a figure which represents a union of opposites and the conclusion of the sexual act. And the book ends with images of a black man with a shaved head, who is lit in such a manner that he is transfigured into a white person with negroid features. The model has thus merged with the white supremacist attitudes of the viewer and become a new hybrid.

Mapplethorpe's photographic narrative follows a tradition of pornographic cycles which are intended to appeal to the fantasies of either men or women. They are usually simple-minded stories whose main point is to portray the human body as an object which is forced to endure and/or enjoy a number of escapades. Although Mapplethorpe obviously intends to raise this type of narrative cycle to the level of art, he instead lowers art to the level of pornography. Art then becomes one narrative device, for Mapplethorpe, among many. He uses glamour to legitimize a sadomasochistic sequence and to heighten white supremacy. His work is most interesting when it questions the art viewer's role as a voyeur in disguise, but his absorption in his fantasies dulls his art and causes it ultimately to become slick pornography. What he has done is to transform *Playboy* into a racist, sadomasochistic book. It is regrettable that Ntozake Shange has fallen for these tactics.

I object to both Riefenstahl's book and Mapplethorpe's narrative sequence on the grounds that they co-opt their material, and that they ultimately support clichéd racist

attitudes. Riefenstahl forces her Africans to exist in an Edenic realm outside the strictures of the modern world. She then groups these images under the heading *Vanished Africa* and prevents readers from questioning the reality of her vision. In her book she adheres to a myth of the noble savage that is already two centuries old, and in her photographs she refuses to admit to the realities that African tribes are today forced to face. *Robert Mapplethorpe Black Book* is a minor work with great pretensions. Because of his close association with the innovative photography collector Samuel Wagstaff, Mapplethorpe is acquainted with the numinous quality of vintage photographs from the early years of this century which he replicates in his own work. His ambient light, soft focus, and radical abstraction all bespeak great sophistication and understanding of photographic history. Unfortunately these qualities are linked to sexual fantasies that trivialize human life and art. Both artists transpose narratives: they appear to conform to grand traditions—Riefenstahl's work seems to parallel anthropological studies and documentary photographs, and Mapplethorpe's appears to understand the rigor of Weston's and Moholy-Nagy's work—but ultimately their forays on the wild side are tame, unoriginal escapades: they are ego trips, not real journeys; and self-indulgent exercises rather than trenchant examinations of reality.

Robert Hobbs' most recent book is *Edward Hopper*, (Abrams, Inc.).

South Africa: The Cordoned Heart

By Paul Hester

South Africa: The Cordoned Heart, *Twenty South African Photographers*. Edited by Omar Badsha, Introduction and Text by Francis Wilson, Foreword by Bishop Desmond Tutu. Prepared for The Second Carnegie Inquiry into Poverty and Development in Southern Africa, The Gallery Press, Cape Town; W.W. Norton & Company, New York and London, in association with Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit, University of Cape Town; Center for Documentary Photography, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina. 186 pages, \$14.95 softbound.

The native should only be allowed to enter the urban areas which are essentially the white man's creation when he is willing to enter and to minister to the needs of the white man and should depart therefrom when he ceases to minister.
—Government Commission, 1922

Imagine that your home has been demolished and you have been forced to live in whatever housing is available in Shreveport, Louisiana. Because there are almost no employment opportunities there, you catch a bus each morning at 2:30 a.m. to reach work by 7 a.m. in Houston. You are not allowed to live in Houston and must return home each evening, arriving at 10:30 p.m.

The director of the government department responsible for your move reports that you moved to Shreveport because you wanted to.

What motivates these people to trek here like this? What motivated the Israelis to go to Israel after the Balfour Declaration? Idealism gripped them...It is all about the magnetism, the pulling power of a spiritual fatherland. They are streaming in and we just can't keep up with services there. They prefer to live there in their own community.

The same government pays a bus company a subsidy equivalent to more than 1000 dollars a year for each "commuter." "A negative social investment," as Joseph Lelyveld (*Move Your Shadow*, Times Books, New York, 1985) puts it, "that went up in gas fumes when it might just as easily have gone into new housing for the same black workers nearer the industrial centers if that had not violated the apartheid design."

If you juxtapose the information from this scenario of what actually exists in South Africa with a group of photographs of sleeping bus riders, included in this book *The Cordoned Heart*, you begin to realize the difficulties of making visible the reality of apartheid.

It is estimated that two out of every five African men working in the cities of South Africa have to live separated from their families. Most are housed in huge single-sex barracks, some of which accommodate over ten-thousand men. At the gold mines, which employ over half a million men, more than ninety-seven percent of black workers are prevented by law from living with their families. It is a crime for a woman to be in bed with her husband if he is a migrant laborer who should be staying in a single-sex hostel.

The origins of this migrant labor system lie in the laws restricting movement of people and the occupation or ownership of land. The immediate effect on individuals is to spend up to eleven



Paul Weinberg, Negotiations between management and workers, Pick 'N Pay strike, Johannesburg, 1984, from South Africa: The Cordoned Heart, 1986

months at a time in huge compounds, without privacy, seeing their families for as little as two or three weeks in the year. It is possible for a man to have spent thirty years working to provide for his wife and children, and be unable to live with them for more than a total of two years.

This situation is the result of deliberate policy. The Land Act of 1913 prohibits Africans from buying land in most of South Africa. The "homelands" or "black national states" that Africans have not lost by conquest, are "reserved" for them, and over half the African population has been crowded by government decree into that thirteen percent of the land. Various fragments scattered across three provinces became a "black national state." Black Africans gain citizenship of the appropriate ethnic state as it acquires independence and then South African citizenship is revoked. The logic of the policy is inexorable. As a senior government minister once explained in Parliament, its consequences are that, in due course, "there will be no black (African) South Africans." (A major step in this direction was taken in 1984 when a new constitution was introduced for the Republic of South Africa that made provision only for those classified "colored", "Indian", or "white." The majority of people were constitutionally excluded from the country of their birth.)

Ridiculous as the boundaries might appear to outside observers, their consequences are anything but amusing for all the people whom these apartheid borders exclude from the industrial economy, where the jobs and the wealth of the country are generated. The contradictions of a policy that requires African men to be in the cities as "labor units" and in the rural labor reserves as fathers and husbands result in more and more workers and their wives attempting to settle permanently near their place of work in the city.

There exist essentially three kinds of state intervention to prevent this black urbanization: pass laws (All Africans over the age of sixteen are required to carry at all times a pass which provides the proof of the bearer's right to be in a white area, to work there, or to live there); limitations on housing construction; and the outright destruction of black communities. It is estimated that 3.5 million people have been subject to forced removals in South Africa over the past twenty-five years. Stable communities have been destroyed for no other reason than the inhabi-

tants were the wrong color: "inappropriately situated." Solidly built churches and schools have been bulldozed into rubble as a prelude to moving people from land they had been able to buy before the Land Act of 1913 prohibited them.

I saw stone houses that the people had painstakingly built up over the years... I heard about the water pumps that had been removed... Still the people refused to move... Then Mogopa was surrounded by armed government police... leaders were handcuffed and put into police vans... Women were carried onto buses... Children were loaded with the furniture... People caught standing together outside their houses were beaten with batons... No outsiders were allowed into Mogopa, excepting the police, of course, and the white farmers who had free access in and out to buy the peoples' livestock at a tenth of its value.

—Surplus People Project, "Forced Removals in South Africa", Cape Town, 1983

The words, these statistics and stories, were part of over three hundred pages presented to The Second Carnegie Inquiry into Poverty and Development in Southern Africa. Along with the photographs in this book, they were prepared for a conference held in April, 1984 as part of the Inquiry, and have been published to accompany traveling exhibitions in Southern Africa, the United States, Great Britain, and Germany.

Many of the photographs in this book are from work completed prior to the Inquiry; other photographs were commissioned by the Inquiry. Afrapix, a photographers' collective, wanted to establish a comprehensive collection of photographs valuable not only for research but for serving the needs of numerous community-based projects and campaigns, and approached the director of the Inquiry about these possibilities.

Since August, 1985, thousands of people have been imprisoned under the state of emergency that was declared over most of the country. The government's response to the world outcry against the actions of its army and police in the townships has been to impose a strict censorship on the gathering and dissemination of news. To photograph or sketch in the so-called "unrest areas" without a police officer is now a criminal act. The penalty for breaking the censorship edicts is ten years imprisonment and/or a

fine of 20,000 rands.
—from the Preface
As of January 30, 1988, the exchange rate was 2.08 rands to the dollar.—Ed.

In light of these restrictions, it seems naive to criticize the images in this presentation without acknowledging the sincerity and the risks behind their making. The effort to make visible the conditions of apartheid is obviously difficult. It is doubtful we would have read the extensive text if the photographs had not been included. But it is the text that seems the most compelling, the most urgent. The facts contained in the words are so hideous that one turns away, searching through the photographs to find contrary information, hoping to find something to dispel the dismay that such a system of dehumanization could be erected by humans against humans. Unfortunately, the photographs do not relieve us. They are the visual evidence, the specificity behind the statistics. The photographs refuse our need to deny such a system. They particularize our fears.

Many of the photographs in the book are of conditions so primitive that it is difficult to believe they were all made within the last ten years. In contrast to these rural conditions, one image in particular profoundly places these results of apartheid in the twentieth century. The appearance of a woman on her hands and knees in the middle of a large conference table, surrounded by glass ashtrays and highback cushioned chairs, in a high-rise office building interior, is a disturbing jolt. We are suddenly and painfully reminded that South Africa is not just some third-world country defined by exotic travel posters. It is a functioning, modern industrial state, where a small minority retains its high standard of living through the harsh subjugation of people into unimaginable poverty.

This photograph of a service worker is the pivotal image in the book. Prior to its placement in the sequence, we are viewing the misery of passive victims. Pity and compassion are all that are asked of us. This photograph defines the subject of poverty as an object of corporate policy. It is a recognition of the source of subjugation. It is a clue, perhaps, to the stance of the economists, photographers, and others working so seriously to communicate these conditions. They were so intent to gather the information, they overlooked the dangers of our

sympathy. The distance between well-meaning journalists visiting the site of poverty and those dwelling behind the bars of poverty imposed by apartheid is a great distance to travel in a black and white photograph. In the effort to see the strength of individuals is the danger of romanticizing the effects of poverty.

The book begins by mourning the victims; gradually this misery is replaced by the vitality of an active community speaking for itself. It ends with an affirmation of the power and capacity of resistance. Significant differences exist between the images of passive, exhausted families awaiting forced removal to "reserves" and enthusiastic individuals speaking to other strikers from Alfa Romeo, BMW, and OK Bazaar factories. Perhaps the impact of unions in altering the balance of power on the factory floor can be seen in such images.

A photograph of "Negotiations between management and workers, Pick 'n Pay strike, Johannesburg" (1984) by Paul Weinberg, is a stunning description of the postures of white males in pin stripe suits speaking to black men and women. Notice whose arm and hand is raised; who dominates the space; and who stands patiently with hands together (as if to say, "We've heard that one before.")

Another group of photographs presents a variety of situations in which speakers of different levels of power attempt communication. A well-dressed black man uses a bullhorn to address several hundred residents of a shack settlement. In illegal suburbs, the people are subject to alarming health dangers and vulnerable to eviction. The speaker is identified as a chairman of a liaison committee. The photograph gives the appearance of someone chosen by the government to represent its interests. The distance between him and the residents makes it clear that he is not one of them.

A more official and disquieting presence of governmental authority appears in the final image of the book. "Mr. Paul David, member of Natal Indian Congress, arriving at the airport after his release from detention, Durban" (1982) by Omar Badsha. In this image, Mr. David is led by Mr. Potgieter in his camouflage uniform and military hat. The camera's flash has emphasized Mr. Potgieter's whiteness, and has placed a gleam in Mr. David's eye to accompany his smile. The camouflage is evidence of the government's war mentality and its desire to disguise and conceal the look of apartheid.

Who is the subject in these pictures? Ostensibly, poverty is the subject. The Afrapix photographers have shown what we would not otherwise have seen, and the text has defined and given meaning to what we are looking at. But who do the subjects see? They don't see middle-class white North Americans. They see these South African photographers. Are they white, black, or "colored?" The biographies list colleges, newspaper jobs, wire services represented, and gallery exhibitions; several refer to membership in an artists' collective that works in communities to encourage cultural activities. But the clues that would clarify the social status of the photographer are embedded within cultural differences that exclude us.

Are we seeing a white South African's sympathy for victims of poverty? How are the photographs used by community organizations? To what purpose beyond "data-gathering" are the photographs useful? How do we avoid a tourism of poverty? Look at the discomfort of several members of the congregation in an interior view of a church. The photographer is standing

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British Leyland, Press Release, Aldershot 1976



Leyland Vehicles. Nothing can stop us now.

Leyland advertising slogan

Hans Haacke, *A breed apart*, 1978, from *Cultures in Contention*, 1985

directly behind the altar, almost as if the camera had taken the place of the cross on the wall. Although it is an unusual view, and an "interesting" picture, what are we to make of the dynamics of the situation, the positioning of the photographer in such a place of authority?

The photographer remains faceless, just as the chairs in the corporate board room remain empty. The photographs have failed to identify the hidden realities behind apartheid, the sources of subjugation. The photographs have left it to the text to indicate why things look like they do. It is up to the words to clarify the nature of poverty. But even the text fails to name those who do not want to be named.

Look instead at the work of Hans Haacke, included in *Cultures of Contention* (edited by Douglas Kahn and Diane Neumaier, The Real Comet Press, 1985). The book

is an anthology of cultural activities motivated by the pursuit of social change. An interview with Haacke is accompanied by several examples of his work, three of which connect specific corporations to their activities in South Africa. Each piece was created for exhibition in art spaces in the hometown of each corporation. Alcan, the most important producer of aluminum in South Africa, has trained eight skilled workers from a nonwhite work force of twenty-three hundred. It sells semi-finished products to the South African government which can be used in police and military equipment, and it does not recognize the trade union of its black workers. This information was exhibited in Montreal, along with photographs of Montreal Opera productions that were funded by Alcan, and a photograph of Stephen Biko, a black leader who died from head wounds received during his detention by

the South African police. This rough description does not convey the full impact of six-foot tall aluminum windows containing the large blow-ups with superimposed text and topped by a large aluminum panel with Alcan's corporate logo.

The specificity of Haacke's work is accomplished by a great deal of research, much of it secured through research organizations that monitor the activities of multinational corporations. He also uses quotes from annual reports, newspaper articles, and press releases. When he was invited to have a show at the Museum of Modern Art, Oxford, he learned that the major employer in Oxford, besides the University, is British Leyland, a government-owned company that produces Jaguars and Land Rovers. He gathered his research about the company from anti-apartheid groups that monitor the activities of British companies in South Africa, from promotional

brochures for the cars, press releases, and letters he received from Leyland when he inquired about a few things down there.

He produced seven panels (one of which is reproduced here) which contrast British Leyland advertising slogans with images of Land Rovers in use during riots in South Africa and Jaguars parked in front of country estates. One aggressive, head-on, bumper-level shot of a Jaguar is coupled with text from a South African promotional brochure that proclaims,

Jaguar, a breed apart. The new-generation Jaguar Executive has been born. And it has opened the door to a new world... a world that, because of its sophistication and sheer class, only a select few will enter. It is a world that has been created for the leader, not the pack. For those who have made it and stand apart from the masses...

Haacke's third piece was exhibited in 1979 in Amsterdam, and presented three lightboxes, each with a large photograph and a few lines of text, very similar to airport advertising. The center color photograph of Frits Philips has a quote from his autobiography:

But I think you question my motives. You see me just as a man of capital. However, above all I really would like people to have the freedom to develop themselves as much as possible, to create possibilities for themselves, to take initiatives and carry the responsibility for them.

The two flanking photographs in black and white show two black South African workers. The left quote is from the managing director of Philips in South Africa:

We are businessmen and we look for business opportunities, which is the only factor governing our decisions. Political considerations don't come into it.

The right text reads:

The Employee Councils are advisory bodies. They are precluded from negotiating minimum wages or conditions of employment, and in fact wages are rarely discussed. The average black worker earns 229 rands a month. Blacks are excluded from apprentice training for radio TV technicians by the Job Reservation Act.

The strength of work such as this is its ability to disrupt our perception of existing conditions. The "naturalism" that on one hand makes the images of *The Cordoned Heart* more accessible to a broader audience at the same time contributes to an acceptance of the described conditions as inevitable, a *status quo* which cannot be altered.

The marketing of the book as a collection of essays by individual photographers threatens to

...transform the political struggle so that it ceases to be a compelling motive for decision and becomes an object of comfortable contemplation... It... becomes an article of consumption.

—Walter Benjamin, "The Author as Producer"

It seems unfair to such a thoughtful and well-intentioned book to criticize it for not doing even more. We would not understand as much from the Hans Haacke work without reading *The Cordoned Heart*. But we would not be aware of the hidden politics that prolong the poverty in South Africa without the work of Haacke; without it we would not know apartheid.

...it does not reproduce conditions; rather, it discloses, it uncovers them. This uncovering of the conditions is effected by interrupting... It brings the action to a standstill in mid-course and thereby compels the spectator to take up a position towards the action... It sets out, not so much to fill the audience with feeling... as to alienate the audience in a lasting manner, through thought, from the conditions in which it lives.

—Walter Benjamin, "The Author as Producer"

Paul Hester makes his living as a commercial photographer in Houston.

Lesley Lawson, *Office Cleaner, Johannesburg*, 1984, from *South Africa: The Cordoned Heart*, 1986



REVISING ROMANCE: NEW FEMINIST VIDEO

By Joanne Lukitsh

Revising Romance: New Feminist Video is a program of eleven video works united, according to co-curator, Linda Podheiser,

by the old question—what is the meaning of Romance?—which has found new urgency in the work of feminist art criticism and today might read, "What are the psychological, political and aesthetic consequences of popular ideals of eternal passion and transcendent love?"

Organized in 1984, *Revising Romance* considers this question by exploring the attractions of romance for the consumers of mass culture forms of "women's entertainment": soap operas, magazines, advertisements and popular fiction. The eleven videos in the program are categorized according to different narrative forms, enabling the viewer better to understand—and potentially subvert—them. In 1988 *Revising Romance* no longer consists of new feminist video (nine of the eleven tapes were produced between 1981 and 1984) and I am uncomfortable with the disparity between the consequences cited in Podheiser's question and the limited appeal of the parodying of romantic conventions which occurs frequently in the program. Despite changes in expectations between the early and late 1980s, *Revising Romance* attests to the continued significance of Podheiser's question.

Linda Podheiser, presently at the School for Environmental Architecture, Harvard University, and Bob Riley, of the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, curated *Revising Romance: New Feminist Video* for the American Federation of Arts; the program was first screened in Houston by the Women's Caucus for Art in 1985. The program is divided into four categories: "Domestic Drama," "Revisionist Romance," "The Double Bind," and "Video Picaresque." Videos within the categories differ in intention and complexity, but *Revising Romance* also traffics in the conventional limitations of its subject, with protagonists who are invariably white, middle-and-upper-middle-class, and American.



Deans Keppel, Soap, 1982, from *Revising Romance* (video still)



Cecelia Condit, Possibly in Michigan, 1983, from *Revising Romance* (video still)

In "Domestic Drama," the daily routine of the housewife is examined in relation to the fantasies of soap operas and advertising, but the tapes participate in the stereotypical view of the housewife as a somewhat simple-minded prisoner of domestic drudgery. In *Soap* Dean Keppel's self-pitying and self-mocking interior monologue on her breakup with her boyfriend is played against the audio of daytime soap opera. Keppel's tape mocks the passivity of her role, but she is also distinguished by her status as video maker. In Ann-Sargent Wooster's *House* an audio track consisting of accounts of dreams, excerpts from a sociology text on housework and television programs accompanies images of a pair of

woman's hands manipulating doll-house sized (and occasionally real-scale) household implements. I thought the use of miniature settings was indicative of a willingness to undermine the conventional condescension to the importance of housework, but the device becomes tiresome and limits the effectiveness of the audio track. Barbara Broughel's *Lesson I: Trouble in Paradise* is an ambitious narrative of a housewife whose home, reordered through the "logic and bad intentions of advertising," rises up and triumphs over her. Broughel's visual representation of objects

infiltrated by advertising lays open these conventions in a fascinating manner, but the conventional unhappy fate of her housewife-victim mitigates the impact of the tape.

In the four tapes of "Revisionist Romance" love stories are a broad target for parody. In *Lesson II: The Frigid Heiress*, Broughel examines the attractions of erotic advertisements within a narrative of a seduction, with compelling representations of the fetishism of such advertising commonplaces as perfume bottles, jewelry and make-up. *With Love from A to B* by Nancy Buchanan and Barbara Smith is a deliberately simple-minded account of the course of an unrequited love affair, related by a one-take (fixed camera) performance of two hands exchanging tiny gifts. Bruce and Norman Yonemoto's *Vault* is a funny, campy story of an ill-fated romance between a cowboy artist who loves and loses his pole-vaulting cellist girlfriend. *Why I Got Into TV and Other Stories* is a program of six autobiographical vignettes by Ilene Segalove, taken from a larger project examining how television has influenced her life. Segalove's pieces, with her ironic, deadpan narration and representation of the bodies, but not the faces, of her protagonists portend more than they deliver. This may be Segalove's point about the importance of television for her memories of her past, but it seems to expect the viewer to accept premises about the power of narratives challenged elsewhere in the program.

In the three tapes "The Double Bind," Podheiser considers romance "as a sadomasochistic exchange, part of a larger psycho/social dialectic of power, within which the protagonists are unwittingly trapped." This category is the most compelling of the program because of two tapes by Cecelia Condit, *Beneath the Skin* and *Possibly in Michigan*, complex and disconcerting narratives of violent crimes against and by women. The female narrator of *Beneath the Skin* discusses the arrest of her boyfriend for the murder of his previous girlfriend, whose decapitated body was hidden in his apartment. The matter-of-fact quality of the narrator's account is played off against layered images of skulls, a woman's head, flowers, long hair, and flashbacks to suggest the narrator's identification and fascination with her murdered predecessor. In *Possibly in Michi-*

gan two women at a shopping mall are pursued by a man who wears a succession of animal masks; he follows them home, where they kill him, eat him, and dispose of his bones in the neighborhood trash pickup. Condit describes the work as "an 'operatic' fairytale of modern romance," and her manipulation of the conventions of these forms is simultaneously engrossing, appalling and chilling. The third tape in the category, *Mother*, by John Knoop and Sharon Hennessey, successfully uses the conventions of film noir to tell the story of a woman who kills her unfaithful husband and buries him in the garden, only to become involved with a detective who uses his knowledge of the event to put her under his control.

Performance artist Eleanor Antin's 1976 *The Adventures of a Nurse* is the only video in the category, "Video Picaresque." In a solo performance, Antin uses a paper doll theatre set up on a bed to relate the adventures of Little Nurse Eleanor. Podheiser celebrates Antin's mastery of the "machinery of representation" in the narrative of Little Nurse Eleanor, but I didn't find the authority of Antin's performance communicated by the video. Instead, the limited range of visual action and squeaky voices of the different characters make the video very difficult to view to its conclusion.

In an appreciative review published in 1985, Marita Sturken considered *Revising Romance's* parodies of romance and failure to propose any alternative:

Perhaps these videotapes represent the first stage of a revisionist perspective: identify the structure of the opposition's hierarchy and the inherent vocabulary of his language, then attempt to replace it.²

I think a significant legacy of *Revising Romance* may be to indicate the continuing process of this revision.

Footnotes


¹*Revising Romance: New Feminist Video*, program notes by Linda Podheiser, 1984. All quotations by Podheiser are from this source.
²Marita Sturken, "Feminist Video: Reiterating the Difference," *Afterimage* 12 (April, 1985): page 9.

Joann Lukitsh is a Mellon Instructor in the History of Photography at Rice University



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April Rapier

WAVEFORMS: AVANT-GARDE VIDEO FROM JAPAN

By Jenny Lenore Rosenbaum

Waveforms, an unusual four-program festival of new video from Japan, will premiere in Texas at the Houston Center for Photography. Part I will be screened on June 6; Part II will follow on June 13. This ambitious series encompasses over sixty experimental works, ranging from eloquent nonverbal depictions of contemporary life in Japan to the most sophisticated use of computer graphics in generating dazzling abstract imagery. These videos showcase some of the most adventurous work currently being undertaken by Japanese artists in such fields as music, theater and computer technology. As such, the series provides a multitude of insights into the direction in which contemporary Japanese aesthetics are moving.

The two programs constituting Part I of Waveforms are a diverse selection of videos produced between 1983 and 1985, and curated by Barbara London of New York's Museum of Modern Art.

Part II, consisting of two additional programs, represents the fruits of an extensive tour of Japan by Carl Loeffler, founding Director of ART COM/La Mamelie, Inc., a San Francisco-based international distributor of independent video, among other video and software service functions. In contrast to the works constituting Part I, those in Part II are not dependent on spoken language, relying instead solely on visual imagery, gestures and music to convey meaning and mood. Loeffler decided upon this unifying feature primarily because it allows for universal communicability. Part II can also be distinguished from Part I by the larger time frame of works included; the earliest, *Double Identities*, dates from 1980 while twelve of the works were completed in 1986.

The dominant theme of Part II is the striking capacity of Japanese video artists to intertwine traditional artistic forms with an embrace both of technology and inventive aesthetic ideas. This assimilation and persistence of the revered past lends a depth to their search for ways of expanding the boundaries of art. The elegant interweaving of the old and the new is, in fact, a gift pervasive not only among video makers but among Japanese artists working in all spheres. It has become a distinguishing characteristic of contemporary Japanese aesthetics.

In 1984, spurred by a fascination with Japanese aesthetics and culture, Loeffler approached the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art with a proposal to arrange a program of new Japanese video at the Museum. By the fall of the following year, he traveled to Japan on a fifteen-stop, three-month cultural exchange tour sponsored by Arts America, a branch of the U.S. Information Services. At museums, art festivals, galleries and even at a Buddhist gathering, he both lectured on performance and video art in the U.S. and presented to enthusiastic Japanese audiences a sampling of the best American art videos.

But the other vital aspect of his tour was to collect the videos that would ultimately constitute Part II of Waveforms. In Japan's four major cities (Tokyo, Kyoto, Osaka and

Nagoya), Loeffler screened over one thousand recent Japanese videos. From this group, he selected one hundred of the most impressive and innovative to bring back to the States. Together with Beau Takahara, Director of the Education Department at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, he made a final choice of forty-three videos.

Alley of Alley (1984) by Akira Matsumoto is an engaging, non-narrative documentary foray into the back alleyways of Osaka's poorest quarter where the video maker was raised. American audiences are likely to be struck by the ambience of cleanliness and order here which would unquestionably be absent in a film portrait of any American ghetto. This sociological contrast makes the video a culturally illuminating sixteen-minute exploration.

Koto Buki (1985) is Tetsuo Sekimoto's mesmerizing documentation of a collaborative work of performance art enacted amidst the tidal pools and stone arches of Japan's Inland Sea. For Sekimoto, the reflection of the blue water on the faces of his parents is his dominant childhood memory. This poetic image became the springboard for a ritualistic homage to the sea. It fuses incantatory music with the primitivistic presence of an actor who, with his face hauntingly painted azure, slowly submerges himself in the sea's vastness.

With *XYZ*, the viewer is thrust into a high voltage arena reminiscent of the Talking Heads or The Rolling Stones. Radical TV, Japan's most popular video collective, created this riveting synthesis of robotics with pulsing rock, suggesting Japan's emerging fascination with the genre of MTV.

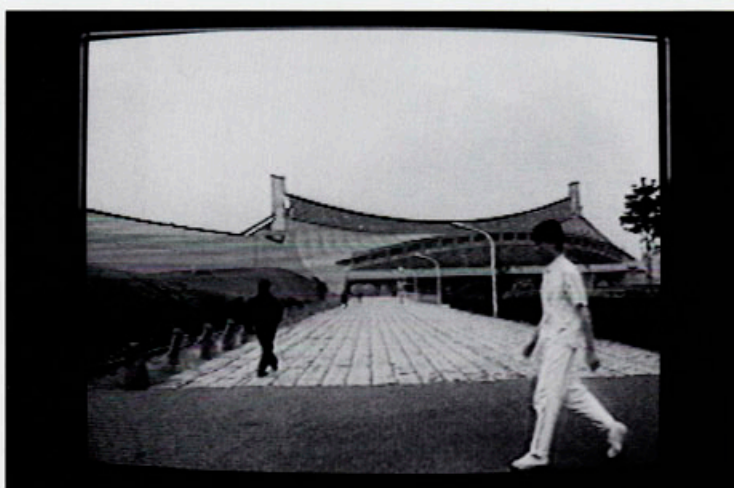
A playful inventiveness is the defining characteristic of Taeko Kitazima's *Dancing Gyokays* (Dancing Fish), a 1986 computer animation video which transforms shrimp, crabs, octopuses and lobsters into swirling, gyrating marine torsos.

Made in Japan (1986), a seductive work by Kouichi Tabata, employs advanced digital computer techniques in superimposing, intercutting and animating traditional Japanese fabric designs against dream-like, shimmering background patterns derived both from nature and from Buddhist iconography. It manifests the special talent of Japanese artists to fuse traditional sensibilities with the often captivating expressive powers of technology.

Flow (1984) by Shinsuke Ina is a video meditation on the rush and patterning of water. The work floods the viewer's senses with geometric slices of cascade imagery layered upon fields of yet more waterfalls. Despite its modernist aura, the video emanates from the traditional Japanese aesthetic that views nature as a sacred sphere.

Adelic Penguins (1986) offers another kind of overflowing. Here, state-of-the-art computer graphics and digital effects are put to the service of a relentless and exhilarating phantasmagoria. This work by American video artist Kit Fitzgerald is a continuum of evolving and dissolving electronic mandalas. It was created on the invitation of its producer, SONY, with hypnotic music composed by Ryuichi Sakamoto expressly for this project.

With *Views of Mt. Fuji* (1985), Ko Nakajima presents American audiences with a visionary masterpiece of video art, a work rooted in structural ingenuity and resonating with spiritual depth. He begins with a 3-D view into a room, the walls composed of myriad tableaux of Mt. Fuji from a variety of angles and in different seasons. Clearly, he is quoting from Hokusai's wonderful nineteenth-century color



Makoto Saitoh, A-R-K, 1984, from New Video: Japan (video still)



Shuntaro Tanikawa and Shuji Terayama, Video Letter, 1982-3, from New Video: Japan (video still)

woodblock prints, *One Hundred Views of Mt. Fuji*. But then, in the manner of a magician, he releases these tableaux like slats, transposing and resetting them as foils to further views of the august mountain. They become encircling segments of bamboo, sliding *shoji* screens opening onto mystical sinkieus or sublime visions which sink into the surrounding lake. Electronic music of ever-evolving moods intensifies the drama of this *tour de force* work. Throughout, one feels the eye and mind of a mature and inspired artist.

In a recent interview, Loeffler spoke of the common assumption that, because computer hardware is so prevalent in Japan, increasingly becoming a key aspect of the export economy, software for video production would also hold a dominant position. To the contrary, he explains, the state of video art, as a respected form of expression and as an integral part of broadcast television, is probably at the level it was in the U.S. during the early 1970s. MTV, he explains, is just getting started as are cable TV and the use of experimental video images on commercial TV. Surprisingly, even American TV in the 1960s utilized experimental effects more than Japanese television does today.

The explanation is rooted in the fact that video software development has not proven to be a commercially viable venture for the Japanese export economy. In Japan, software has been neglected in favor of the importance accorded to hardware. Some predict, however, that the introduction of robotics into Japanese technology will greatly enhance Japan's software productivity and competitiveness *vis-à-vis* other Asian nations.

Despite Japan's image as a technological giant, in many ways a close examination of the culture

reveals a conservatism in integrating technology into daily life. Very few Japanese homes have either VCRs or personal computers, Loeffler notes. Ironically, a preoccupation with the manufacturing of these products has been symptomatic of the priority placed on generating revenue in order to maintain the traditional culture, Loeffler believes.

He recalls an insightful anecdote which centered on his meeting with the chief marketing officer for SONY—a meeting to discuss SONY's role in sponsoring experimental video. Contrasting dramatically with the hi-tech, state-of-the-art associations of SONY, their talks were "incredibly ritualistic": both he and the officer were expected to replace their shoes with traditional slippers and the meeting was initiated by the drinking of green tea which plays the central role in the Buddhist tea ceremony. In addition, three preparatory sessions were required before they could enter into the core of their discussions.

For the video makers themselves, the primacy accorded to traditional culture has made artistic survival a tricky business. No National Endowment for the Arts or State Arts Council, as we have in the U.S., exists to fund their projects. Japan hosts only two or three video festivals annually and none are devoted exclusively to Japanese work. Further, the lofts, studios or office space enjoyed by many American artists are extremely rare or prohibitively expensive in Japan.

Even in the major cities, only a handful of museums or galleries show and distribute the work of video artists. In all of Japan, only two or three galleries and only six museums sponsor video events. In the case of these few receptive galleries, the artists generally must pay for the privilege of showcasing

their work. (Museums usually pay a nominal fee.)

Needless to say, for all these reasons, most experimental artists—in video as well as in other artistic fields—have little chance of supporting themselves through their art. Because of this struggle for exposure as well as economic survival, a pervasive mood of angst and alienation has come to exist among video makers, despite the sense of artistic community among themselves. Underlying the entire situation is the well-known Japanese cultural trait that values conformity. Experimental artists, as "nails that stick out and so must get pounded down" find it oppressively hard to emerge as creative forces.

Some hopeful signs do exist, however. First, Loeffler points to the fact that many of Japan's most famous department stores utilize video to draw attention to fashion and other products. One prestigious store actually installed a one-hundred channel TV to draw customers. Second, video is now being used as an integral and visually exciting aspect of architecture. Entire sides of some Tokyo buildings are constructed of video monitors. In an underground shopping mall in Osaka, twenty video monitors emitting images of rushing water convey the sense that the entire wall is a huge waterfall. Third, and perhaps most significant, Loeffler feels that with the recent advent of cable TV, video art is on the verge of exploding onto the scene. Given both the problematic and emerging context within which the Japanese experimental video artist exists, the arrival of Waveforms becomes an even more noteworthy event.

Jenny Lenore Rosenbaum is a freelance writer who recently moved to San Francisco from New York City. She specializes in the arts and travel.

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THE OTHER: CURATOR'S STATEMENT

By Cynthia Freeland

In the tradition of Western thought, Man the subject has always needed some Other against whom he defines himself. "The Other" is the person or group or people who are strange and alien, unknown, repressed, not-quite-to-be-trusted. Historically for Western Europeans "The Other" has shifted, to include at various times and places the Moor or the Jew, the gypsy or the witch, the leper or the madman, the heathen or the barbarian. The Other may be the slave who bears the master's burden, a body actualizing the master's will. It may be the woman who is fleshly, particular, and irrational, in contrast to the coolly rational and universalizing male mind. The Other may be the black, brown or Asian person seen as "primitive," "native," "savage," "natural," "mysterious," or "inscrutable," in contrast to the civilizing genteel Western man. The Other enables certain white male subjects to recognize themselves as empowered by their placement in existing systems of language, reason, and social exchange.

In attending to an insight of Hegel and Marx, psychoanalysts emphasize that the subject needs and unconsciously desires his Other. The Other has qualities that are tempting—being more grounded and natural, more instinctual and intuitive, more sheerly physical. But to venture into this territory man must keep up his guard; the one who lets it down may lose control like Kurtz in *Heart of Darkness*, naming only "the horror".

Who is "The Other" really? Can "The Other" speak? How can the repressed be brought to light? Some theorists claim it is a misconceived goal to pursue some statement of identity about The Other, because the means and medium—rational categorization and traditional language—have

been co-opted by the traditional subject. Still, some expression and opening out into the light seem valuable. Writers as diverse as Luce Irigaray, Maxine Hong Kingston, and Ntozake Shange have used language in novel ways and new narrative structures to present their experiences as Other.

Can photographers avoid objectifying "The Other"? Even those sympathetically keen observers, Paul Strand and Walker Evans, who depict the oppressed, do so from the superior standpoint of spokesman, boldly aiming to portray the inherent dignity of some people who are, on their own, the "to-be-pitied," inferior. But photographers have adopted new techniques of appropriation and deconstruction to avoid stereotyped images of the Other and the myth of the camera's objective stare.

HCP issued a national call for artists to respond as Other, with no clear preconception about how they would show their experience. We see here work selected from 22 photographers from across the country. Some are black and some are Asian-Americans. There are many women, young or middle-aged, gay or straight. Systems of domination are diffuse, and the photographers in this exhibit have chosen diverse ways to highlight these systems. Many depict the traditional male subject as the newly foreign other, to be explored in erotic imagery focusing on his bodily parts by photographic dismemberment, in pungent satires about his sexuality, in witty reversals romanticizing him as beautiful. Some depict him as oppressor, as needy or boring spouse, as deluded builder or warmaker, as self-satisfied dominator. There is work here which speaks about being Other, about being an Afro-American man in a culture lionizing Greek mythological heroes, about being a Black or Asian or middle-aged woman in a culture subject to media images of beauty, about being a transsexual or Lesbian in a society with homogenized sexual ideals. Some work here depicts class experiences by setting the scene in an urban development, suburban kitchen, decaying mill town, or immigrant senior citizen community.

It is noteworthy that these images often aspire to a traditional goal, beauty, although they may reach it through novel means—in hand-coloring, zesty appropriation layering, sequencing with bits of text, even by the addition of the odd bit of commentary to be found on those childhood Valentine treats, candy hearts. This work is often mediated, interfered with, hand-inscribed, hand-made, individualized, personalized, autobiographical. It is also striking how frequently the emergence of the repressed is accompanied not by resentful bitterness but by forgiving (if cynical) humor.

What can we learn here about The Other? First and foremost: there is no one "Other." There is no single message, no universalizing of the range of experiences, thoughts, desires, reactions, feelings. There is no convenient alter ego against whom to conceptualize or concretize the subject. Within this grouping itself the differences are multiple: white and black, Caucasian and Asian, married, straight or gay, women or men; the Otherness is ramified. These artists are as distinct as artists as they are as individuals; we see here only small portions of larger bodies of work that each has in progress. The exhibit has large and lamentable gaps, perhaps indicative of further ranges of the repressed Other. But there is a shared commitment here to showing rather than hiding, to speaking rather than being-spoken-of or for—a beginning of a revelation of difference.

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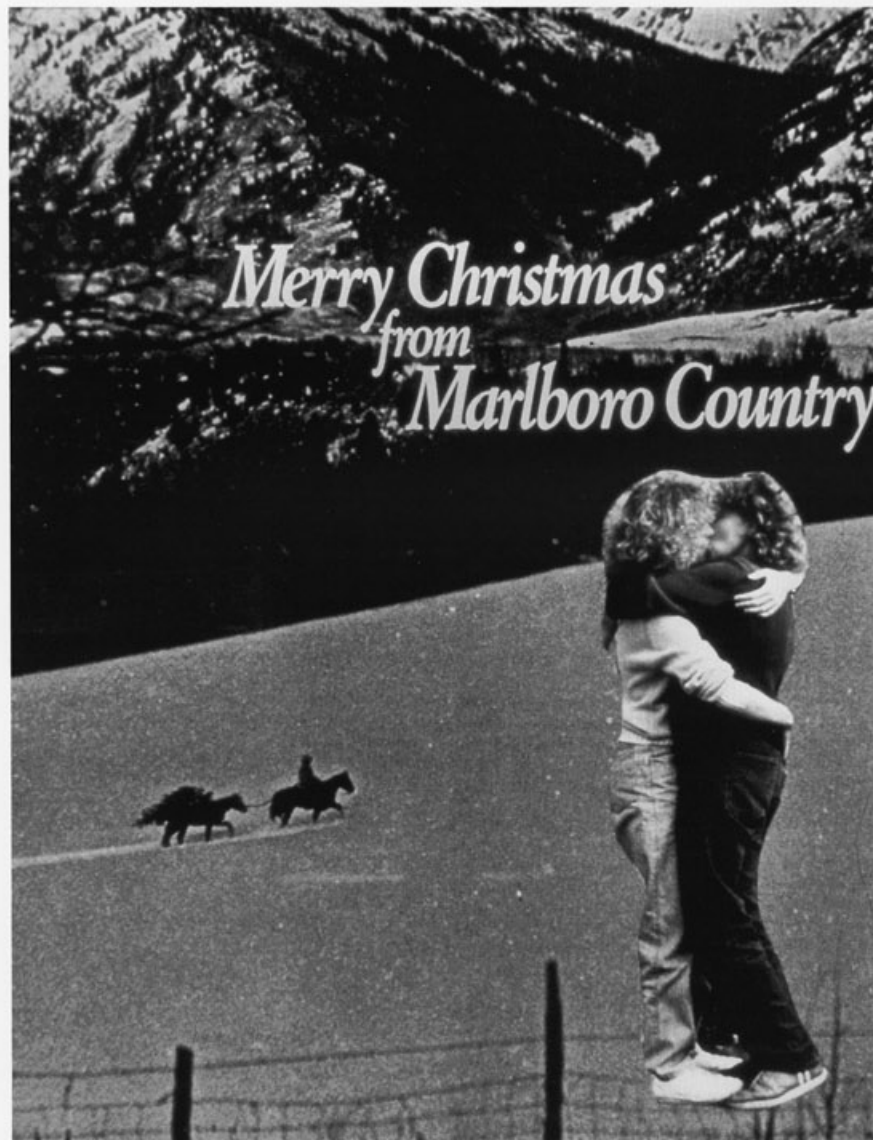
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Susan Ressler, *Expulsion*, 1983 (original in color)



Lynette Molnar, *Untitled* (original in color)

OPINIONS OF DIFFERENCE

By Doug Ischar

The *Other* is an exhibition at the Houston Center for Photography from January 22 through February 28, 1988. The work of twenty-two artists is included in the exhibition: Ann Chuatsky, Barbara Crawford, Barbara de Genevieve, Francis Giles, Todd Gray, Margaret Hicks, Ruth Humpton, Mary Koga, Betty Lee, Vivienne Maricevic, Maureen McKeon, Kayoko Medlin, Ann Meredith, Lynette Molnar, Susan Ressler, Joni Sternbach, Bambi Strieuski, Ruth Wallen, Carrie Mae Weems, Carlton Wilkinson, Nancy Wofford, and Barbara Zusman.

The Houston Center for Photography's exhibition, *The Other*, has a curious history. As originally conceived, it was to have been devoted to the work of minority ("other") artists who had turned the objectifying gaze back on its inventors (and still monopolizers)—artists who had usurped the tools of (mis)representation with deconstruction, vindication, or vengeance in mind. One assumes that the objects of this work would have been drawn from the ranks of all and sundry "others"—or at least those sufficiently empowered to conceive such projects and bring them off materially. But as fate and/or history would have it, not enough such work materialized. This fact and the odd ambivalence of the original call for work finally begot a show in which the artist/other variously images her/himself (or her/his subculture) or images and critiques the traditional male subject (and his past and present as [mis]representer).¹

While the idea of an exhibition based on all manner of photographic responses to otherness seems smart and viable at first glance, it is in fact far from problem free. To begin with, the two types (or directions) of response described above—self-imagining or "internal" representation and deconstruction or "table turning" representation—are very different projects with their own specific problems and divisions. They bespeak not only different priorities arising from diverse experiences of difference and exclusion but, to some extent, different levels of empowerment to respond as well. For the other/artist, the possible modes of response are not open ended. They are, rather, constrained by particular and often painful experiences of oppression, exclusion and difference and by the ways in which visual, literary and oral constructs have been used to impose and enforce those conditions.

The central problem with *The Other* is the way in which its catch-all diversity threatens to reduce and tokenize its artists' various responses to difference. In this regard, it risks reproducing the utility (for the straight white male dominant order) of the "other's" inferiority and mystery by reducing diverse experiences of oppression to a functionally determined generic category and serving them up, stew-like, for a mostly non-"other" audience.

This reduction could have been avoided either by establishing curatorial priorities based on specific (sub)cultural concerns rather than theoretical abstraction or by limiting the show to work which uses theoretically derived abstract concepts as clear points of departure. While theoretical models may have been useful to some of these artists in defining their individual posi-

tions, none of them foregrounds theory in their work. What is foregrounded in most of the work included in *The Other* are the particulars of exclusion and oppression based on, or prompted by, the individual artist's lived experience.

In addition to this (inadvertent, I believe) undermining of particular difference in the service of abstract "otherness," the curatorial and exhibition machinery employed in conceiving and assembling *The Other* is on two important accounts at odds with attempts by recent artist-photographers to construct and exhibit effectively oppositional works.²

Contemporary artist-photographers have become increasingly aware of the need to establish and control the context in which their work is shown and read. They have learned the lesson of the co-optability and contingency of photographic meaning in a number of ways: by seeing their own and other artists' work fail to communicate due to inappropriate exhibition contexts, by the study of recent critical writings about the construction of photographic meaning,³ and by a critical review of the history of photography. In their subsequent attempts to delimit and project meaning in their work ("anchor the chain of free-floating signifieds," to paraphrase Roland Barthes), these artists have employed a number of strategies. They include: the use of text—with varying degrees of image-text integration; the adoption of formats borrowed (in part) from other media such as slide-tape and installation and, relatedly, the development of large-scale integral works in which inter-frame syntax takes precedence over (or at least qualifies) the often obstinately ambiguous single image. Group shows like *The Other* in which large works by numerous artists are truncated and compacted together are clearly at odds with both the aims and methods of such artists. Instead of supportive forums for a few integral works dealing with related issues, they provide samplers of "highlights" from often dissimilar works. In the case of works that are redundant or in need of editing, this can be an ironic advantage. But as regards complex large-scale works where structure and scope are essential or series work where narrative, linear progression, or cumulative effect are essential, shows like *The Other* are detrimental. And in oppositional work where meaning is imperative, the loss is not merely one of "formal integrity" but rather one of coherent communication. Given the difficulty of showing such work under any circumstances these days, marginally positioned artists are often forced to swallow their intentions and take what exposure they can get.

Obstacle number two is the curatorial idea/theme show itself in all its myriad manifestations. More often than not with shows of this type, the idea/theme precedes the fact of the work(s) in a bafflingly unempirical way with the result that the work that turns up must be wrenched into varying states of subdued compliance. Even when this is not so, when exhibitions are based on a curator's *a priori* knowledge of existing work, the curatorial idea/theme frequently runs roughshod over the separate artist's intentions. In such cases, works which, considered on their own terms, were pointed and coherent become blunted elements in a curatorially determined syntax—often a very different syntax from the one they lost.

To reiterate, the syntax lost by the works included in *The Other* are those of specificity and particularity; the acquired syntax is

one which, by abstracting, distills a convenient "essence" of otherness from a throng of dissimilar experiences of difference, exclusion, oppression. But it could have been worse; here, at least, the overall dynamic of the various oppressive power relationships is maintained. *The Other* makes for a disharmonious chorus, in which the individual voices are obscured, but a loud and urgent chorus all the same.

Aside from these testy reservations, *The Other* needs to be considered in the light of current local alternative space exhibitions. In this context, it can be (guardedly) seen as a welcome step in the direction of real engagement with the work of oppositional artists. But for the first step to count at all, for it to go beyond a transient tokenness, it must be followed by other steps in the same direction. *The Other* should not be seen as a one-shot settling of consolidated overdue accounts but as an outline for future engagements.

¹ The original call for entries reads, in its entirety, *THE OTHER: The history of photography is dominated by the good intentions of photographers from Western culture who homogenize the differences of "the other," whether Female, Hispanic, Oriental, Black, or any other similarly repressed group. This exhibition will reverse the object of the pictorial gaze by showing photographs made by the Other in response to the dominant tradition of photography and its universalizing culture.*

CALL FOR ENTRIES: The Houston Center for Photography is looking for images made by the Other of "the other." Submit 10-20 slides by December 1, 1986 for an exhibition to be held January 30-March 13, 1987, at the Center. Any approach to photography is encouraged. Enclose SASE, media and dimensions, and STATEMENT for the work.

The work should reflect the political intentions of the photographer, although it does not need to be negative in its representation of the subject matter. However, work criticizing the white male-dominant Western culture or other repressive positions of power will represent the major concerns of the exhibit.

² Two particularly successful examples of recent large-scale photographic works are Conny Hatch's three part slide-tape *Serving the Status Quo*, and Alan Sekula's *Geography Lesson: Canadian Notes*.

³ In particular, see Roland Barthes' "The Rhetoric of the Image" in *Image Music Text*, Farrar, Strauss, Giroux; and, "Myth Today" in *Mythologies*, Hill and Wang.

Doug Ischar is a Visiting Assistant Professor of Photography at the University of Houston. He will be exhibiting his photographs at HCP in July 1988.

THE OTHER(S) AND THE US(S)

By William Simon

He had a sense when he joined the marines that the country he was skying out of was a known locale, with a character that was exact and coordinate and that maintained a patterned feel. A thing you could get back with if you had a reason. But that patterned feel had gotten disrupted somehow, as though everything whole had separated a little inch, and he had dropped back in between things, to being on the periphery without a peripheral perspective.

—Richard Ford, *The Ultimate Good Luck*

It is wholly appropriate that considerations of representation invariably lead to considerations of the other; representation as a generic phenomenon is created in the discovery of the other. The conflation of desire and judgment intrinsic to representation permanently taints all human experience with hierarchy, hierarchy being the transformation of the other into the difference. And it is this pervasive taint that provides the multiple axes that anchor the evolving images of the experience of the self.

The other, then, prefigures our personal identities and social solidarities, the "I(s)" and the "us(s)" of our being; by opposition, the other defines what we are by highlighting, if not rendering imperative, what we must prepare not to be/ must not be/must pretend not to be. The more dramatic the contrast between the "us" and the "them," as is often the case with reference to gender, class, ethnicity, and most importantly that which distinguishes the "conforming" from the "deviant," the more the definition of ourselves is given dimension by what we attribute to, and use to identify, the other.

The age of narcissism must of necessity obsess about the other. The de-centering of Man—from Copernicus to Darwin—was a crisis of ideas that immediately burdened relatively few individuals. The de-centering of the Human in postmodern societies, where the relevances of identity can shift abruptly with time and place and where the very conditions that create our sense of uniqueness increases our reliance upon a heterogeneity of ephemeral codes of recognition, impacts upon massive numbers. The modal representation for our times may be the public opinion poll, with its claims of deriving from a "representative" sample, with its history of mysterious fluctuation, and with its ability to transform historic groups into inarticulate aggregates.

One consequence of having to experience the traversing of the widening cracks between our various engagements with life, endemic to the postmodern condition, is that we become more persistently and cleverly sensitive to the issues of the other, if only because we so frequently must stage our own presence to meet the requirements of being the other of others.

All representations of the human objectify self and other as all representations of the human subjectify both self and other: representation of the human being as a reading of the other that dialogically anticipates the future of self. Partly this is an expression of what is a constantly posed, but rarely articulated question: Does the other feel as I



Barbara DeGenevieve, *The Jock Strap* (original hand-colored)

(would) feel? Does the other experience as I (would) experience? And, in part, this reflects our recognition that the other must be explained in terms of the same conceptual apparatus that explains me/us, even—or particularly—when explaining why the other/they is to be denied full human status and sometimes life itself.

All actors are subject to the rules by which judgment and desire are transformed into overt or fantasized sequences of behavior. The necessity for studied objectification increases when the confusing and sometimes conflicting versions of "me" and "us" in social life are mirrored in the growing confusions of the "I" and "we" of intrapsychic life; objectification becomes inevitable when predictable friends and relatives (the sharers of history and tradition) are replaced by equally predictable strangers (the sharers of the code).

Human interactions in postmodern settings are studies in objectification, an objectification that is subjugating in the double sense of being: first, an exercise in coordinating the complexities of social hierarchy as coded in the practices of everyday life; second, making possible a necessary but not necessarily accurate understanding of the other's subjective responses, e.g. the loyal servant or the sexually responsive partner. The application of judgment and desire to the other, implicit in representation objectifies both the other and the self—a scripting of the self that must follow the scripting of the other.

However, the multiple pluralisms of the contemporary world tend to require almost constant attention to what traditional and more formally hierarchic settings could commonly ignore: the other's acceptance of what they were expected to be. Responses to the other are increasingly contingent upon a reading of the other's motives and feelings. Typically, as we move from servants to services, the other becomes more complexly visible and a managed cordiality must mask our concern for their judgments far more than any claimed enlightenment.

The definition of the other stabilizes our relationship to or place in the social order. At the same time, however, it also plays a critical role in the intrapsychic negotiations of the divided self. The very idea of the divided self, among the greatest of the legacies of Freud, suggests that at any moment aspects of the self are experienced, often with great distress, as belonging more to the other than to us. Some versions of the other tend to frighten us and never more so than when we suspect ourselves of harboring characteristics of the other within our own ecology of desire. Thus, the typical adolescent male's anxieties about homosexuality are anxieties about the possibility of not being heterosexual and even more so of not being a "man."

The problem of the politics of representation of the other emerges, then, not as a problem of objectification—that must be taken for granted—but as a problem of the explanations implicit in representa-

tion. Implicit in conventional art's representations of the other is the confirmation/re-creation of the values (judgments and desires) that shape such explanations, i.e. those points at which the difference becomes a matter of better or worse, superior or inferior, acceptable or unacceptable.

From this point of view, representations are not only complex texts that are products of social life, they also reproduce social life. Conventional representations of the other, particularly representations of what is described as the inferior, the devalued, and the stigmatized, tend to instruct and confirm the viewer in the naturalness and legitimacy of that inferiority, devaluation, and stigmatization, e.g. women, blacks, lesbians, gay men. Such representations tend to reek of *unarticulated* perception; the "represented other" insinuates all prior judgment and cautions the viewer to preserve the importance of being other than the other or, in the case of the other, to accept those judgments.

The art of the other challenges the naturalness and legitimacy of conventional representation, even, or especially, when utilizing the identical images. The art of the other articulates the judgment of inferiority, devaluation, and stigmatization; it problematizes the difference. At times it proudly accepts the difference and questions the significance conventionally accorded it; at times it compels the viewer to perceive the difference not as the desire of the other, but as what is coercively



Joni Sternbach, *Untitled*, 1983 (original in color)



Carlton Wilkinson, *Secret Service at Jesse Jackson Rally*, 1984 (original in color)



Betty Lee, *Clark Gable and Vivian Leigh*, 1985

desired for and imposed upon the other; at times it calls into question the reality of the difference by compelling the viewer to recognize not only how much is shared aside from the difference, but how much of the difference itself is shared by those other than the other.

What is called art is not privileged, nor is it immune from the reconstructions and deconstructions of history. Where once it may have provided models for life, it now must increasingly offer itself as a catalogue of different ways of living what are often virtually

identical lives. Art in this context, at its best, offers us the possibility of a "peripheral perspective," one that asserts what many fear: that there is no compelling, shared center, but only a constantly evolving and possibly enlarging totality of differences.

The peripheral perspective of the other is not merely a reverse or mirrored reflection. Even role reversal rarely merely reverses roles; rather, the very attempt tends to reveal either the inherent asymmetry of the relationship or alternative understandings of its operative mechanisms, and sometimes both. Thus Sternbach's sexually connected pair goes beyond compelling the viewer to confront not only the asymmetry of the relationship (the women's averted gaze, the passive, non-touching arm on the bed, the compliant hand upon her "partner's" shoulder contrasting with the man who appears buried in the action), but in the woman's dreamy expression we come to an awareness of how isolating such otherwise highly touted moments of intimacy turn out to be, reminding us of how often we are little more than dumb actors in one another's charades.

Further, the art of the other, by providing a sense of the content of the reciprocal gaze, serves to render concrete the degree to which the imaged idealizations of the "insider" are shaped over time by the reciprocal idealizations of the "outsider." The contents and crudities of the insider's view of the other create principles that shape the insider's mixture of judgment and desire even though they are as unrealistic as those that describe the view of the other. Thus, simplistic, crude, and distorted images of the female implicitly sustain comparable images of the male. This is epitomized in the working class young man represented in Chwatsky's "Men in the Street" series. It is remarkably insightful into the most fundamental ambivalence describing our views and expectations regarding ideals of masculinity: the identical attributes and posture that confirm his physical masculinity simultaneously establish his social unattractiveness and marginality. This is an ambivalence that remains unresolved for most men, and that finds expression most clearly in the selection of leisure costumes, fantasied heroes, and the persona of understandably nervous male artists from Pollock to Schnabel.

As all perception is comparative, the inclusion of the perceptions of the other alters all prior perception; the art of the other has the capacity to utterly transform what previously were experienced as self-evident virtues into questionable vanities or even certifiable pathologies. The image of two women embracing against the back-drop of Christmas time in Marlboro country, composed by Molnar, must permanently alter a vision of the Marlboro man and its implicit idealization of manhood. An outward heroic stoicism is now to be seen as a pathetically costly and inefficient defense against an inner panic; what is initially advertised as a wholesome need to experience intimacy with a raw nature becomes a confession of a crippled ability to confront the requirements of intimacies with human natures.

The art of the other, moreover, potentially brings an altered vision to those of the other as well as to those who initially experience the other as other. This affords altered visions that can be as disturbing to others as to those of the society's dominant majorities. The reversal presented by Crawford is more than a male being objectified: it is a male made submissive, made vulnerable, made sexually submissive, made sexually vulnerable. The representation of the Mailer-esque nightmare of anal rape suggests that, like all single explanations, "sexism" may serve better as an accusation than an explanation. The capacity to degrade or brutalize, as well as the toleration of the

capacity to degrade or brutalize, may require explanations beyond superficial distinctions of gender or race. Perhaps, like much of art, the art of the other does not point to solutions to problems of the human condition as it serves to deepen our perceptions of these problems.

Much the same insight waits beyond the immediacy of Wilkinson's "Secret Service at a Jackson Rally." The white male agent, indeed, adopts the posture of power and authority. But it is a posture that can be and has been adopted by black males as well as black or white females; it is a posture that follows from a social role. The problem of access to the role is distinct from the employment of the role or its very legitimacy. The contemporary forms of patriarchy indisputably have encouraged and have been sustained by broadly applied principles and practices of sexism and racism. However, sexism and racism may not be the most sustaining aspects of patriarchy; that role may be claimed by its inherent commitment to authoritarian methods of preserving the status quo.

Similarly, Lee's juxtaposition of an Asian woman with Clark Gable provides a contrast closer to central aspects of the Western stereotype of the feminine than may have been occasioned by Vivian Leigh. Gable's physical coarseness (he is not so much handsome as a caricature of handsomeness) and characteristic behavioral impulsivity is now matched with the stereotyped Asian woman's physical delicacy and obligatory compliance. The work makes obvious the degree to which one stereotype requires the other. These are aspects of masculinity and femininity that currently are increasingly questioned in social practice, making their appearance in art even more questionable and, at the same time, confirming psychic reality's sometimes absurdist conservatism.

The art of the other, in its very nature, becomes a response to the art that celebrates the status quo, rather than being an alternative to or a significant correction of realities represented by the art of the status quo. By inviting us to reconsider aspects of our collective present and past, it unsettles our considerations, pluralizing both past and present, unsettling, even more, considerations of our collective future—something less easily pluralized. Moreover, in doing so, the art of the other has the potential to make available possibilities of perception not previously available to either us or them—however us or them is constituted.

Lastly, it is clear that requirements of the art of the other are not at ease with the abstract, probably for the same reasons that the abstract so easily accommodates the art of the status quo. How else could exemplars of the aesthetic avant-garde serve corporate decor so effectively? The abstract serves to sustain the illusion that a social order that creates the other can also comprehend the sublime, an illusion that it can lift our eyes above the misery that sustains it, lift our eyes toward a heaven that may have been empty for the longest time. This, of course, is what happened for most of the past, which in less democratic times could speak of the other(s) as the inevitable cost of sustaining great, solidary cultures. This is a position more easily maintained when the other(s) are denied art, when they are silenced, muted, or harnessed to the art of the status quo. That, for our times, becomes increasingly difficult to do. However, it must be remembered, it is not impossible.

William Simon is Professor of Sociology at the University of Houston.

POETICS OF VISION

By Joan Seaman Robinson

Bill Viola: A Survey of a Decade, exhibited at the Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, from February 13 through April 17.

Years ago while using an electromagnetic device to neutralize magnetic buildups on the television screen, video artist Bill Viola impulsively placed his head in the instrument, expecting a consciousness-altering experience. Alarmed at what he had done, he thought, "Would I remember who I was?"¹

Fortunately nothing happened. And the question of his identity is secure. That sudden intuitive paralyzing of systems—the brain and the instrument and their image-making capacities—prefigured an experimental approach to the medium that has made Bill Viola one of the major video artists of the last ten years. It also clarified his intention to make the phenomenon of perception the subject of his work.

In *Bill Viola: Survey of a Decade* at the Contemporary Arts Museum we can see how he not only has enlarged the technical means by which imagery can be presented through the electronic eye but has shown us as well that the meditated act of perception can have a metaphysical dimension. The exhibition consists of seven video tapes and two separate installations produced from 1977-1986. His identification of universal and archetypal themes, and his ability to fuse them with the structural properties of his medium, have produced a body of work that has been characterized by one writer as a "poetics of vision."²

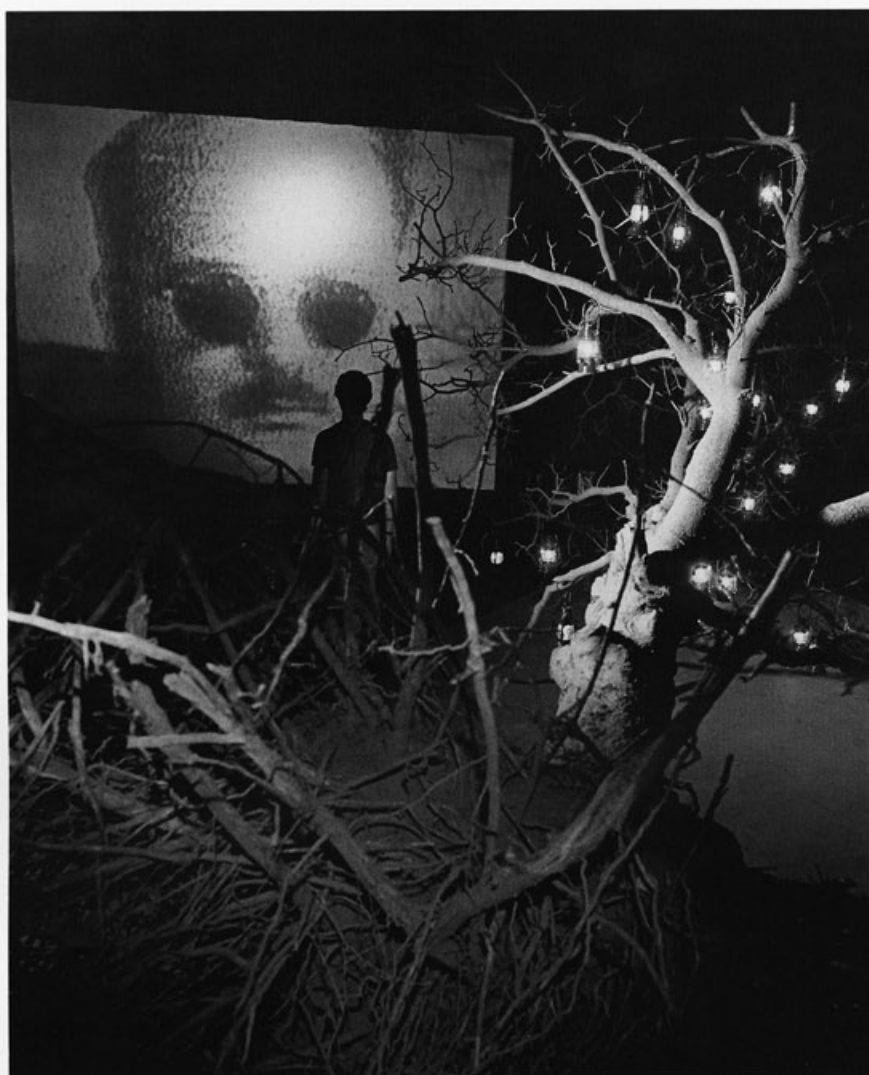
Fundamental to Viola's work is the belief that vision and cognition spring from, and bind us to, our surroundings. Our existence is expansive and infinite, but it is based on the empirical. Experience is specific and subjective, but all that happens is co-extensive with nature, and can be re-presented in video by simulating the rhythms of nature, diurnal, seasonal—and eternal, through the paradigm of regeneration.

Another anecdote. When Viola was a child he accidentally fell into a lake.

*I remember the amazing experience of this world I had no idea existed. I just broke through to it. It was incredibly beautiful, and I wasn't scared at all. There was this emerald green light everywhere, filtering down, and I could see the sandy bottom, and plants moving back and forth, and fish. Then a big hand came down, and gripped me, and yanked me right out of the water.*³

In *Reflecting Pool* the artist emerges from a woods and leaps above the edge of a pool. The camera freezes him high in mid-air in a fetal position, but the water below continues to move and reflections appear on it. Night falls, day comes. He has faded and reappears, rising out of the water to re-enter the trees. The split screen has abridged real time. Which time is real, which area do we watch? The event is archetypal; he is reborn through a sacramental cleansing.

Viola straightforwardly films newborns in a nursery ward in *Still Life*. In closeups he aims at their eyes as if to pierce their first sight, prolonging the shots until we absorb the implications. What is primal vision, what does entrance into the world look like when there are no previous imprints? Viola says that pre-verbal sight is the first stratum of knowledge, that language results from the need to



Bill Viola, *The Theater of Memory*, 1985 (video still; photo by Kira Perov)



Bill Viola, *Anthem*, 1983 (video still; photo by Kira Perov)

articulate what is first seen. "That is why a quest for purity of perception comes up in my work, a repositulating of the way to see."⁴

He flips to the panoramic in *Chott el-Djerid*, filmed in North American blizzards and the heat of the Sahara. He wanted, he says, to reach the limits of the visible. Depth is extinguished in these light-filled scenes; only incremental movements separate near from far. *Chott el-Djerid* is spell-binding to view. The washes of dancing color, the heat waves carrying rippling objects atop the horizon, are

unforgettable in themselves. They are seemingly hallucinatory yet genuinely optical, not video manipulations. He marries the landscape to the physical medium; waving bands of light fill the field of vision, invoking the awesome and the sublime and recalling visionary paintings.

Ancient of Days and *Hatsu Yume* treat the passage of time and the cycles of nature with elaborate interlaces of shifting focus, directional movement and alterations in tempo. He prolongs or shortens motion. He zooms from micro-

cosmic and mysterious detail to explicit and mundane resolution. He creates virtual zooms out of edited fragments based on mathematical units of many hours and many feet. In these and other works his panoramic scans are vertical, horizontal or giddily circumferential. His tapes are run forward or backward at real time or in fractional ratios—sometimes based on contrapuntal musical formats. Temporality is object-determined and symbolically structured, not mechanical and chronological, thus enhancing the

visual values and the spiritual ramifications.

Each of Viola's two installations, *Theater of Memory* and *Room for St. John of the Cross* is a meditation on the mystery and invisibility of thought, the one secular and the other sacred. In *Theater of Memory* an uprooted tree is strung with blinking lights behind which a large monitor displays intermittent imagery. The setting is warm and earthy, the lights and screen suggest the electrochemical processes of thought: illumination and images are separated by gaps of space and time like the synapses between nerve endings in the brain. *Room for St. John of the Cross* shows a chamber within a room, each with monitors showing mountains. The tiny one is still, lucid, clarified, while the outer one is noisy with winds and charged with turbulent skies, craggy peaks and a swooping eagle. This is an allegory of transcendence, the spiritual survival of the Christian heretic from nine months of torture in a cell by his inquisitors. His is a dual realm, with pain in the present and passion in the eternal, the two defined by the opposites of agitation and calm.

Viola's ranging quest for self-knowledge is not self-centered, not hermetic and inaccessible, although he demands much of the medium and often much of the viewer. In *I Do Not Know What It Is I Am Like* he sweeps through lakes, forests, caves, animal and bird sanctuaries, dog attacks and acts of violence, fire-walking rituals and back to a decayed and resurrected fish. Our assimilation of the sequences and recognition of the continuity may come retrospectively. He says of this tape, "I see it as a simultaneous whole, and that's why the most important place it exists is in the memory of someone who has seen it, rather than in the experience of viewing it."⁵

But what is the meaning of the aforementioned tape, his most recent? The pivotal segments present the artist, late at night and by the light of a lamp, at a "sacramental" supper, ceremoniously eating a silvered fish on a silvery platter. A water glass contains, in an illusionistic revelation, a "Tree of Life", and nearby a gilded toy ship bears a live snail, which emerges from it to slip away, across the table. Ultimately most of the works are about solitude. "The language I'm most interested in is the language of solitary experience."⁶ Central to this experience is a reverence for the eye, and for the capacity of the imagination to invent allegorical journeys which can be implemented by the technology of video.

Footnotes

¹ Bill Viola, notes for "Information," 1977, in *Bill Viola: Installations and Videotapes*, Museum of Modern Art, N.Y., 1987, p. 24.

² Deirdre Boyle, essay title, in *Bill Viola: A Survey of a Decade*, Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, 1988.

³ Quoted in Sterritt, David, "Bill Viola: Art demands creativity from viewers, too," *Christian Science Monitor*, December 21, 1987, p. 21.

⁴ Quoted in Michael Nash, "Bill Viola's Re-vision of Mortality," *High Performance*, Volume 37, 1987, p. 65.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

Joan Robinson has taught art history at Stanford University and the University of Houston. In March she will lecture on Wyeth's "Helga" paintings at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and at Rice University.

A SUMMER'S DAY

By Ed Osowski

Joel Meyerowitz: A Summer's Day was on exhibit at HCP from December 11-January 18.

Aaron Siskind, Edward Weston, Ansel Adams, and Harry Callahan are four photographers among others who, while very different in their approaches to the photographic subject, raise difficulty for the critic because of the almost unrelenting beauty of so many of their images. Their appeal to the senses is so direct, so immediate, so spectacular that at times one is forced to stand back, aware that to enter into a verbal dialogue with their photographs may end in defeat. Only by resorting to analogues with works from other artistic media—the abstractions of American painting from the fifties with Siskind and the writings of the American transcendentalists with Adams, for example—does it seem possible to write about them at all.

Selections from Joel Meyerowitz's book *A Summer's Day* were recently seen at HCP, in an exhibition organized by the Brooklyn Museum. The works challenge the viewer much like the works of the four photographers named above. The 52 photographs, some monumental in size, are breathtakingly beautiful, absolutely lovely in their colors, in many ways almost perfect in their composition. To one familiar with his book *Cape Light* (1978), the catalogue of superlatives applied to Meyerowitz should not surprise. Throughout his career he has worked at finding that "sense of wonder" he writes about in *Wild Flowers* (1983). But for the past decade he has moved away from the funky, active, somewhat humorous works collected in *Wild Flowers* to images which record stasis, calm, harmony.

The world Meyerowitz photographs is a dreamlike construction where one finds peace and happiness, where illness and death hold no power. If the title of a Matisse work, *Luxe, Calme, Volupté*, comes to mind when looking at Meyerowitz, it is deliberate because he photographs a Matissean world of fullness and ripeness, a world where nature and man co-exist.

Consider the photograph titled "Eric." In it a young boy offers raspberries from a glass bowl tilted toward the viewer, a gift. Light lovingly plays across his body. Like the other photographs of older children in the exhibition, "Eric" tells us that youth faces no dangers, that one can offer a stranger (the viewer) raspberries knowing that his gift will be graciously received. Meyerowitz's young girls pose with their arms crossed to cover their chests not to protect themselves from a threat but out of modesty.

What gives a Meyerowitz photograph its special appeal, its easy grace, stems from what is noticeably absent, the weight of metaphor. His photographs are, at their essence, closely viewed observations. So "Dinner Table," which shows the remains of a meal, flower petals fallen onto the table, wine glasses and dessert bowls nearly empty, carries none of the resonance of a Dutch still life painting, none of the hints or warnings that death lurks around the corner and hides in the middle of pleasure. Similarly, Meyerowitz's empty rooms, washed by rich shades of color and light, are without the heavy burden of meaning.

A brief essay, titled "Summer Time," appears at the conclusion of the book *A Summer's Day*. In it Meyerowitz recalls the summers of



Joel Meyerowitz, Eric, 1983, from *A Summer's Day*, 1985

his childhood. His memories are telling because they are of a time before life took on any threats. He recalls, especially, those pre-sexual moments before the distinctions of gender emerged. What he has carried with him to this project is a memory of a time before the world would become the hostile territory for the battle between the sexes. At the beach his mother brings him to the women's locker room to change. He writes,

I looked up at these naked women above me, stretching into and pulling on their suits and caps, and saw their abundant bodies rolling and swaying in the slivered light and shadow coming through the Dutch door. My first image of women. Although I yearned to be in the men's lockers, I found it delicious to be invisible among the women. I raced to the cool of the water.

It would seem that Meyerowitz owes debts to certain American painters. The works titled "Bay/Sky," which depict the same spot, where ocean, land, and sky come together in a variety of different lights, seem connected to the paintings of the nineteenth century luminists. Informing his works is the example of Milton Avery, the great interpreter of Henri Matisse. "Longnook Beach" strikes one as especially close to an Avery painting in format and feel.

The HCP space did not encourage viewing the photographs as they are arranged in the book. These are not photographs taken on one summer's day but are, Meyerowitz writes, "The distillation of seven summers. They are my way of taking in and examining with a finer hand the effects that moments in time have had on me." Their effect is to abandon time, to create a new type of time, much as Thoreau did in *Walden* by condensing and rearranging the events he described. Meyerowitz writes, "Time is flexible if you care to see it that way." In the book the photographs are arranged from the first light of early dawn to the dark, inky blackness of late night.

Certainly the photographs on view at HCP are never boring. Twenty years ago when Meyerowitz was just beginning to publish his work, the influence of Robert Frank was great. Over the years Frank's influence has waned as Meyerowitz has emerged to create images free

of the anxieties and tensions Frank so well observes. Meyerowitz's photographs hold out the promise of a world of sanity, safety, and grace.

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I'M NOT CRAZY, I'M JUST A PHOTOGRAPHER

By Cynthia Freeland

I'm Not Crazy, I Just Lost My Glasses, an exhibition of photographs by Lonny Shavelson, was shown at HCP, January 22-February 28, 1988. A book of the same title was published in 1986 by De Novo Press, Berkeley CA, with an Introduction by A.D. Coleman and a Foreword by Sheldon J. Korchin.

Lonny Shavelson's book and exhibition present "portraits and oral histories of people who have been in and out of mental institutions." The project radiates moral sincerity. In his Afterword, Shavelson says that he "wanted to find a way around this insane public view of what crazy people are all about." Professor of Psychology Korchin testifies to Shavelson's "perceptiveness, sympathy, and skill." Photography critic and historian Coleman sees the book as "making a real contribution to the public debate on issues of mental health." To top it all off, we can read in the fine print before the Library of Congress bibliographic data that the book is available at a discount to those involved in self-help efforts for those with "with mental disabilities."

In the book we find about three dozen black and white portraits of the "mentally ill." On the page facing each portrait is printed a bit of self-narration by the subject. (The exhibition includes 24 portraits and audiotaped versions of the self-narratives.) Shavelson says his procedure was to find people (though sometimes they found him), gain their trust and get them to describe their experiences, edit the resulting tape and discuss the final version with each subject, and only then make the portrait with the "message we wanted to convey." Now, even someone with a moderate knowledge of photographic techniques may not be sure how he or she will look when photographed by someone in some way; but, giving Shavelson the benefit of the doubt, we must conclude that a lot of these people wanted to be photographed in blank or empty environments (especially in corners) where shadows would loom up behind them, with staring eyes or vacant gazes, wearing shabby clothes, and so on. The "oral histories" themselves are quite varied. Some people will strike the reader as sounding perfectly sane; they reflect interestingly on their experience as something they've learned from, been motivated by, or regard as in the past. Others seem simple-minded, confused, or pathetically resigned to severe limitations. Several people confess to a previous history of violence, but seem distanced from it now, so I suppose that the project does combat what Shavelson wished it to, "media-propagated images of droolers, screamers, freaks, drugged-out zombies, psychotic killers and mind-scrambled lunatics." This is why Coleman can say of it that it "makes accessible and humanizes the experience of madness and the treatment thereof."

Perhaps I am by nature simply too cynical to be swept away by moral earnestness. Perhaps something deeper bothered me about Shavelson's project of "humanizing" the mentally ill. At any rate, to get a broader reaction to this selection of images and texts, I sought out the opinions of two acquaintances who fit into Shavelson's category of people who have "been in and out of mental institu-

tions." They asked me not to use their real names; I'll refer to them as "Julie" and "Bob." Julie has been diagnosed as suffering from dissociative disorder; she now considers herself well and does not take any medication. Bob, a manic-depressive, refers to himself as a "loony"; he takes anti-psychotic medication daily. Both are in their 20s, and both are pursuing professional careers. They had sharply different reactions to the book.

Julie said, "It's not a bad book, but I don't think he did what he set out to accomplish. These people do look really different from 'normal' people. A lot of them have staring eyes, or look drugged; something about the pictures makes them look creepy, like a 50s 'B' horror movie. (We later decided that this effect was due in part to the book's frequent harsh large shadows, as well as the empty settings.) There were a lot more middle-class people in the mental hospital where I was, and some of them, I wondered why they were there. They were really similar to average people. They had just gotten a little more depressed, a little more paranoid, a little more nervous, or a little more upset than usual. This book doesn't emphasize these people's similarities to other people, but their differences. It creates a kind of freak show."

Bob disagreed. "I reacted as though they were humans who had never had a chance to express themselves. I wish there were more opportunities for people in mental institutions to express themselves. When I was in the hospital, I had therapy sessions in basketweaving, candle-making, making key chains or coffee mugs—nothing so creative as writing down your problems. They treat you like children in there. (Julie agreed emphatically.) I think it's a good book—I'd like to be in it and tell about my experiences. It makes me think there should be some sort of "Loony Weekly" where people could write in."

Julie: "But I'd have included more of the success stories in here—people who look normal. These people—you can tell they're all crazy. They look nice and crazy."

Bob: "Well, you can argue about the demographics of loonies, but at least it's a start. The more successful people can't be in a book like this because of bad p.r."

Julie: "That's true, and that's why I would never want to be in this book; I wouldn't want to be classified like that." (Julie's worries about bad p.r. prompted her request for anonymity; Bob, though not so concerned, preferred it as well.)

On a different subject, Julie discussed the people's attitudes toward their illnesses and their doctors. "A lot of these people seem resigned to their illness. They feel like they'll be crazy forever. That's how the mental health system works. On the one hand they tell you you'll get better, but to do that they say you need them and that you'll always need them. I think a lot of these people are too trusting of their doctors."

Bob: "Yes, but that's the horrible thing about mental illness, you put yourself more in the hands of your doctor than you do in the case of physical illness, hoping for a cure—but there is no definitive cure. I think that probably these people did choose to look crazy—they're confronting you. And they probably do stare, because if you've been mentally ill, you do really have to look at things—you're staring across the abyss. We treat the mentally ill as worse than refuse, as insects. It's good they got to tell their own stories. And I like the fact that so many of them have that dark sense of humor, like that man who said he was a "born-again lesbian"—that's the element

needed for survival under the torment of being mentally ill."

I asked their opinions about Shavelson's remarks in his Afterword about his motivation for doing this project. He speaks about a desire to combat stereotypes, but says, "Mostly, I wanted to overcome my own fear." Julie said, "After fear comes fascination, and that's where I feel he is in this book. Fascination implies distance. I'm put off by the element of 'These cases are fascinating' in this book—I know what it's like to be a 'fascinating case'."

Bob again disagreed: "I think it's a sensitive approach; you're not a guinea pig in here."

Julie: "But that is how they're being treated—you get to enjoy it. They get taught to enjoy being exploited."

Bob: "Well, some of them, maybe, enjoy the attention, probably due to a lack of support from their so-called loved ones."

Julie raised questions about the editing of the narratives. She pointed out that a number of people in mental institutions are very inarticulate, and said it's important to hear their own words. Even if it was agreed to by the subjects—who after all might be suggestible, eager to please, or "enjoy being exploited"—the editing was Shavelson's work, not their own. (Julie and Bob did not hear the audiotaped narratives. My sense was that these were oddly constructed, since people read the Shavelson-edited version of their own statements. Some seemed too smooth to be lifelike; some read haltingly and stumbled over their own words, producing an alienated effect.)

On another point, the two said that the fact that the portraits were done in a more or less "objective" black and white format reminded them of clinical tapes they had seen. But they associated color pictures of the mentally ill, on the other hand, with lavishly produced and sugary advertising imagery put out by expensive mental health treatment centers. Such ads often depict happy families full of "normal-looking" individuals. This prompted more thoughts about the fairly consistent isolation of Shavelson's subjects. Bob thought this was appropriate; Julie said she might have done it differently, perhaps showing people with their families, not indicating who was "normal" and who was not. (In the exhibition, Shavelson did not include some of the portraits we all found the most intriguing, depicting the subjects with lovers or family members. This emphasized the "isolation effect.")

This conversation covering some of the good and bad points of Shavelson's project enabled me to clarify an overall reaction that was still vaguely negative. On one level, I am dubious about the moral subtext of this series of portraits. Julie's "freak show" remark serves as a reminder that there has been a lengthy history of exhibiting the insane, whether on "ships of fools" for moral enlightenment, or in asylums, for entertainment.

Foucault, in *Madness and Civilization*, cites the amazing statistic of 96,000 visitors per year to the asylum at Bethelhem Hospital in England, in the early 1800s. There is also, of course, a venerable photographic tradition of exhibiting victims; in this tradition, the photographer functions as Hero arousing our moral indignation. This approach has problems of its own; most notably, it fails to address broader social and political conditions contributing to the victimization we witness.² Even discounting these, Shavelson's position is weak. He explicitly disavows having "skill, knowledge, or desire" to enter into debates about mental illness and related social issues.



Lonny Shavelson, Brandie Johnson, from *I'm Not Crazy, I Just Lost My Glasses*, 1986



Lonny Shavelson, Karen Moore from *I'm Not Crazy, I Just Lost My Glasses*, 1986

The book makes no concrete political suggestions. Coleman's Introduction comforts us by suggesting that these people will be healed ("what could be more healing?") by being listened to. This imports an exaggerated sense of our role and attitudes, as well as presenting a simplistic notion of the nature of mental illness. His belief that this book will help family members or others closely involved with a mentally ill person is similarly outrageous—these stories are simply too sketchy and too individualized. We may agree with Darwin Dias, who says that "the system is a madness machine," or feel outraged with Sam Watts when he says, "There's going to be over a hundred thousand crazy people on the streets because of Reagan's cuts," but will such indignation prompt social action? In fact, the "freak show" aspects of this show may very well perpetuate attitudes of doubt and distrust about, say, allowing a halfway house into one's neighborhood. After all, it does depict a variety of strange and aggressive-looking transsexuals, a man who displays a "Hinckley for President" poster, and various people who hear voices or have hallucinations. Sometimes the full front-on, harshly lit photographs link Shavelson more to Arbus and Avedon than to Riis, Evans, or Hine. Arbus too, we are told, was able to gain the confidence, trust

and voluntary cooperation of her subjects; but does that make them any less freaky? (And if they told their own stories, would that make them less freaky—or more?) Isn't this just how we regard someone like Brad Lichtenstein, who is sure he is the Messiah: "The medicine cut off the voices immediately. I was impressed. But I was still the Messiah. I've had too many profound experiences to not believe that I am the Messiah." We can set this man aside, in amusement perhaps, as a classic stereotype of the madman, someone deluded into thinking he's the King or the Messiah. Nothing Shavelson does in words or pictures encourages us to consider that maybe the man's experiences really have been profound. (Bob's reaction was different. He said, "You can be crazy and still be socially acceptable. It's the difference between 'I'm God's gift to women' and 'I'm the Messiah.' Who could do the human race more good? One is totally self-centered and one feels he has something to offer.")

This brings me to a second level of critical reaction to this project. Shavelson's procedure of editing his subjects' narratives reflects a more general act of appropriation, making people who are "different" speak "our" language, "humanizing" them. Isn't this already to deny validity to their difference? What's intriguing in here are the

hints of another whole kind of experience. Clementina Thirty-Seven says, "I have uncommon knowledge that needs to be shared." Karen Moore says, "I want to be psychotic again. You strip bare this rotten personality and rebuild a new one." Anne Boldt says, "Everyone has the possibility to have out of the body experiences. But people are so afraid that they block their ability. And when it does happen, they say it's a sickness." These hints aren't so much evocations of experiences as allusions to them. It's like a war photographer taking pictures of war victims who tell him "War is hell," when he hasn't ever himself been near the scene of battle. Shavelson's project is flat-footedly conceived as art. He is an objective, if sympathetic, recorder of madness, its documenter in both photos and words. Like a clinician, he nods his head while taking notes. In no sense is there any convergence here of madness with art.

Foucault's complex history of madness from the 1500s to the 1800s emphasizes the gap between the experience of unreason and the naturalized phenomenon of madness. "Madness" is the comfortable terrain of a designated pathology, an illness, a deviation from the norm. It is open territory for controlled (objective, scientific) psychiatric exploration. Psychiatric photography has followed suit. "Unreason" is what threatens to break out of the boundaries of this circumscribed terrain, challenging all categorizations and even the world itself. Foucault calls his own history a narrative about silence in relation to this experience of "unreason"; there is a gap here objective language does not cross:

*As for a common language, there is no such thing; or rather, there is no such thing any longer; the constitution of madness as a mental illness, at the end of the eighteenth century, affords the evidence of a broken dialogue, posits the separation as already effected, and thrusts into oblivion all those stammered, imperfect words without fixed syntax in which the exchange between madness and reason was made.*³

Since the rise of scientific psychiatry, then, it has been left to some few artists to represent that unknown, threatening realm of unreason—Foucault cites such examples as Goya, de Sade, Nietzsche, Artaud, and Van Gogh. Has there ever been a great mad photographer? Is photography the medium for the experience of unreason? Without an example, the possibility seems unlikely. The limitations on photographic narrative in particular seem too severe. I do not know of any photographic equivalent, for example, to the full-blown narrative of madness told in Mark Vonnegut's autobiographical *Eden Express*. This book, because it is composed in both personal and artistic terms, manages to convey something of the inside of the unreason experience—it takes us to the scene of war, telling us what it's like to lose reason, assume cosmic responsibilities, achieve insight into the universe, have "astral sex," and so on. The representation is frightening and harrowing, not comfortably humanizing, like Shavelson's.

Footnotes

¹ Michael Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), p. 68.

² See Martha Rosler, "In, Around and Afterthoughts (on Documentary Photography)," in *3 Works* (Halifax, Nova Scotia: The Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1981); also Allan Sekula,

Photography Against the Grain, especially "Dismantling Modernism, Reinventing Documentary (Notes on the Politics of Representation)," (Halifax, Nova Scotia: The Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1984). Some radical photographic writing which criticizes the documentary tradition of showing victims ironically reproduces the kind of victimization it opposes, by assuming a vanguard position of knowing what is best for these very victims, who once again fail to speak for themselves.

³ Foucault, op. cit., p. x

Cynthia Freeland is Associate Professor of Philosophy at the University of Houston and a frequent contributor to SPOT Magazine.

BOOK OF DICK

Peter Weiermair, *Das Verborgene Bild*, (190 pages, 95 photographs) Wein Germany; Ariadne, 1987.

By T.R. Mackin

Speaking of the other, out of Germany comes an ambitious collection of nude photography—*Das Verborgene Bild* (The Hidden Picture) attempts an historical representation of male nudes in 19th and 20th century photography.

Photographic genres presented are many and varied. Noticeably absent are images which incorporate text or other signs which attempt to reconstruct male sexuality and related myths in a less traditional way. Joel Peter Witkin's "Androgyny Breastfeeding a Fetus, 1981" and "Bacchus amelus, 1986" are the last two images in the book. While their presence can be seen as redefinition or at least challenge to traditional depictions of male sexuality, it is much more likely that they are included under the broader heading of The Curious, subhead The Grotesque (my heading, subheading, not Weiermair's).

Also included under The Curious: The Beautiful would be Sandi Fellman's "Trust and Ornament, 1983" in which two bodies, photographed from breasts to below knees, are colorfully, ornately tattooed—including genitals (exclaim and grimace here).

Man as Natural Form, where a sand encrusted nude contorts within and becomes part of an eroded rock formation, describes "Emergences V, 1984" by Gilbert Gormezano and Pierre Minot. Imogen Cunningham has rendered "John Bovington 2, 1929" as Asexual Form. He is not the object of feminine desire inasmuch as I am a woman responding to the image. His beauty and his discreetly hidden genitals might however—because of the nature of desire—inspire lust in someone. There is also Man as Abstract Form; John Coplan's "Back with Arms above," 1984, presents a somewhat hairy, surprisingly rectangular block of flesh with two smallish (in proportion to the immensity of the rectangle) fists adorning the upper end.

There are Role Reversals which render man as a romantic object of either sex. In a Marsha Burns' image, c. 1975, a reclining seminude male draped in a dark kimono strategically opened to reveal his softly lit member, appears to be saying, "Not tonight dear...." There are images with homosexual overtones and without—torn between meaning and beauty or seeking one within the other. There are images of erections alluding to masturbation or narcissism. Some appeal to prurient interest and others do not. Some nudes are castrated by the bottom frame of the photograph. One of the photographers responsible for the castrations is a woman (Eva Rubenstein, "Nick, New York, 1981") and other such castrations have been done by men. One of the book's most exciting portraits is Mark Morrisroe's "Self Portrait, 1982" in which he has castrated himself (figuratively and in color) by the photo's bottom edge. It is not just the idea of his self-castration which engages the viewer's interest.

Narratives and Fantasies abound from Hippolyte Bayard's "Autoportrait, le Noyé, 1840" to Ben Hansen's image of a man writhing



Roger Rutherford, Oil and Water, 1984



Marsha Burns, c. 1975

in distant, dark overgrowth, genitals obscured (1978). Also served—Beefcake (Jim French, 1987) or Couch Potato (Herbert Tobias, Hamburg, 1979).

With ninety-five photographs (without headings), there is much in this book for any voyeur or artist to contemplate and/or to assimilate.

Editor's note: The cover photograph of this book, George Platt-Lynes, c. 1935, is remarkably like Barbara de Genevieve's image from "True Life Novelette" which may be seen elsewhere in this issue of SPOT.

T.R. Mackin is a writer/photographer seeking a patron in the spirit of the Renaissance.

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PHOTOGRAPHY DRIVES: I45 SOUTH TO GALVESTON

By Roy Flukinger

Don't be afraid to try the greatest sport around,
Catch a wave,
Catch a wave,
Those who don't just gotta put it down.
You paddle out, turn and raise,
And Baby,
That's all there is to the coastline craze,
You gotta,
Catch a wave and you're sitting' on top of the world...

"Wixtsy zsht arxsop cqzdltpi, roaut tri?"

"What?" I yelled into the rear view mirror.

"Wixtsy zsht arxsop cqzdltpi, roaut tri?"

Sekula was throwing out another question for us. I guessed that the flat out we had won with the Highway Patrol this side of League City had pumped him up. I hated to shut down Brian and The Boys since they made the miles go faster, but I popped the tape out anyway, settled the Woodie back to a comfortable 95, and threw him another "What?"

"I said, this whole question of the ultimate influence of the I. D.¹ turns upon Moholy's² teachings, don't you see?"

I saw Crane's large white sun hat turn as she shifted to face him. "No," she said. "Help shed the scales from my eyes."

"Look," said Sekula. "It all goes back to an interview he gave in 1946."

"In *Playboy*?³" asked Young, turning to join Crane in shooting Sekula a glance.

"Unimportant. What does matter is what he was able to observe: 'When I was young I was always very annoyed. But now I realize how important it is to be always patient.'"

"Great man," said Crane.

"Great sentiment," I said.

"Didn't he kick in '46?" asked Young.

"Yes," said Sekula.

"Great timing, too."



Roy Flukinger, Toad Hall, 1984 (original in color)

"Look, you're missing the point. What I said earlier still stands..."

Crane continued to get the Ping-Pong table view of their debate, but I tuned out for a minute. The comment about timing reminded me of the vibrations we had hit when we'd leveled off at 120 earlier in the chase. If the 380 V-8 we'd dropped into the Woodie was going to give us more trouble, I wanted to know about it.

I stomped on it to get us out of a pocket with a Peterbilt. At the same time I leaned over and yelled out to Ollman, who was sitting in the passenger window: "You got the boards tied down yet?"

I got a grunt and then Ollman slid back into the shotgun seat. "Ready for the wild surf," he said. "We got the tools to hang eleven."⁴

Pedal to metal time. The Hurst shifter was as smooth as Fred Baldwin asking for money for FotoPhest. The supercharged eight under the hood gave a cough and then cooperated until I topped out. No more bad vibrations.

By the time I got the Woody back down to 95 the city of La Marque had become less of a blur and Ollman had wandered into the discussion: "I know you're pushing for some universal rule of photo-education—teachers beget similar pupils and so on. But it doesn't hold water."

"But it must," countered Sekula, "or else what does education truly do?"

"It provides the opportunity—not the formula—for personal growth," said Young.

"And it nourishes the impetus to learn and create," added Crane.

"But it must do more," added Sekula. "It must provide the basic theoretical and technical structures upon which each artistic generation builds. As Moholy created the slots-formalist, Constructivist, experimentalist, documentarian—so each student came along, filled their particular slot, added their own pieces, and made way for the new."

"Hey, B. C.," said Ollman, "which layer of creative sediment are you?"

"None," she said, fishing through her bag and hauling out the tanning lotion. "When Callahan⁵ took us beyond texture and tone he gave us experience and creative breathing space, not a rule book. Nobody in the I. D. needed another Stieglitz⁶ world view."

"But you deny the basic structuralism which students and critics need to interpret and understand and write worthwhile papers or articles!"

Up ahead the lanes narrowed for some road repairs. I coasted into the construction area at 85, found

the row of orange cones, cracked the car door open and sent them flying. I also called back over my shoulder: "So you're saying that photographs should exist for the critic or the essayist, but not for the artist?"

"No," said Sekula, rolling up his window to dodge any loose flying cones. "You're thinking of Andy's assumption of Berger's theory of Ante-Postmodernism: the anything-that-fits syndrome.⁷ Not so here. But there can be direct growth based upon the educational institution's founders and their philosophies. Thus, Connor, Larson, Josephson and Metzker⁸—even B. C. here—are all little Moholys:⁹ extending his vision as he would if he were alive today."

"Sunblock?" asked Crane, sticking the bottle up to his nose.

The flagman leapt out of our way as we sped out of the construction zone. Ahead lay four nearly empty lanes. No police in sight.

"Ten minutes to the beach!" I yelled.

"Well, what about Santa Fe?"¹⁰ asked Young. "We don't teach there. We just attract artists and lead the state in plague cases."

"What, the Elephant's Graveyard of Contemporary Photography?"

We're talking sunrise here, not sunset," said Sekula.

"So what's the best thing to come out of the New Bauhaus¹¹ photo program?" asked Crane. "RISD?"¹²

"No, I've read the Rapier Thesis.¹³ It's munificent in its predisposed regionalism and egocentric in its inclusiveness." Sekula spread some sunblock on his legs, careful not to stain his baggies.¹⁴ "The I. D. is just the clearest example among many teaching institutions, past and present. It's all very simple: Moholy..."

"Universal design..." added Young.

"...begat Siegel..."

"Theoreticism and Commercialism..."

"...begat Callahan..."

"Precisionism..."

"...begat Siskind..."

"Abstract Expressionism..."

"...begat..."

"Broads!" yelled Ollman.

"Where?" yelled Young.

"Red Firebird convertible. Outside lane!"

"Docking maneuver!"

I slid the Woody over one lane and slowed down to 80 to match the speed of the ragtop. Ollman and Young kept up the alert: "Babes! Beach Bunnies! Blonde Bods in Bikinis!"

"See if they've got a friend," added Sekula.

"Hell, see if they've got a hunk!" added Crane.

We slid along the causeway, Oll-

man and Young hanging out of the windows, making the introductions and inviting the girls to come to San Diego and Santa Fe to see their collections, or to California to watch Sekula think. I wondered if their pick-up technique was derived from their teachers. Another question for another time. "You know," mused Crane, "sometimes you need teaching and sometimes you need discipline and sometimes you need practice and sometimes you need patience. But there's always time for rock 'n' roll."

She didn't need the wink to get the message across. I pumped the Woody alongside the convertible, checked the sky for clouds and the horizon for police, and punched the Beach Boys back into the machine.

Be true to your school,
Just like you would to your girl or guy
Be true to your school,
Let your colors fly
Be true to your schoooooooll...

Footnotes

¹ I. D. stands for Chicago's Institute of Design. This is not to be confused with the *ID*. Photographers, as a rule, are not terribly confused by the *ID*, but a number have a problem with the *EGO*.

² Laszlo Moholy-Nagy (who really cares-1946) was an important artist, designer and teacher. No undergraduate photography student can spell his name correctly. No one anywhere can pronounce it correctly.

³ A major American photomag. Right up there with *People* and the *S. I.* swimsuit issue.

⁴ Not a dirty joke. Honest.

⁵ Harry Callahan (b. yes) is a master photographer and teacher. Not to be confused with "Dirty Harry" Callahan, with the single exception that both have the common ability to score a direct hit upon whatever they aim at.

⁶ Alfred Stieglitz (1864-1946) was a major connoisseur and photographer, often confused with Edward Steichen. Actually, prerevisionist photohistorians are very clear upon their difference: Steichen only thought he was God, but Stieglitz *knew* that he was.

⁷ See his: "I Said It Second But I Meant It First!", *Popular Photography* (September, 1988), pp. 6, 123 & 227.

⁸ Not to be confused with the copyright and criminal negligence law firm of Connor, Larson, Josephson, Metzker and Clark.

⁹ Not to be confused with the Little Moholys, the new rock group formed by David Byrne, Andy Summers and Wierd Al Yankovick.

¹⁰ A Hopi word meaning "Place of happy retirement and price raising."

¹¹ The New Bauhaus was derived from the Old Bauhaus when some faculty from the Old Bauhaus established the School of Design, which is the name by which the New Bauhaus was known until it became the Institute of Design which is what the New Bauhaus became after it was known as the School of Design. Got it? Good. Quiz in ten minutes.

¹² The Rhode Island School of Design. Not to be confused with the Rochester Institute's School of Dance, which doesn't exist anyway.

¹³ See: April Rapier. *The Rapier Thesis and Other Earthshaking Stuff*. Vol. XVI, in *The Collected 1983 Writings of April Rapier*. Aperature, 1984.

¹⁴ But he did get it on the leather seats!

Roy Flukinger is curator of the Gernsheim Photography Collection at the Harry Ransom Research Center, University of Texas, Austin.

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SOUTHERN REVIVALIST PHOTOGRAPHY

By T.R. Mackin

The exhibition, *Southern Exposure*, at Benteler-Morgan Galleries from January 7 through February 12, 1988, is a collection of photographs of the American South by women photographers: Debbie Fleming Caffery, Michelle Campbell, Sandra Russell Clark, Mary Peck and Sharon Stewart.

In the show, *Southern Exposure*, the most unforgettable images are several more recent ones by Debbie Fleming Caffery—remarkable portraits which convey not only the artist's feelings for the place and the people but also a sense of what these people feel about themselves. Fifteen pictures from her ten year documentation of the sugarcane industry are all that one has to go on in this exhibit.

"Shaving Mug," (1987) and "Roadrunner/Harvesting," (1983) are portraits without faces. These portraits are obscure—not just because of the lack of face but because of the way in which the face is obscured. In the latter image, a nicely made, striped t-shirt is revealed and framed by a triangular opening in a window screen. The wearer of the t-shirt rests his black hands tentatively on the wooden window sill. His bandana is identifiable through the screen—the form of a nose—are those two eyes?—the rest is lost.

In the other portrait one contemplates bristles protruding from a shaving mug long before noticing that the old-fashioned shaving utensils sit in front of bent and crumpled wire window screen. The fabric of the screen absorbs one's interest and leads it up to notice a delicate black hand gingerly holding the top of the screen.

"In Summer," (1985) young legs with bare feet extend out of a blanket which is not just gathered about the body but growing bell shaped as if in imitation of the flower children in those distant childhood fairy tales. The child's stance and vulnerability in her blindness remind one of the Halloween-costumed Scout in *To Kill A Mockingbird*.

None of these three, nor the project as is available for viewing, can be said to rob these people of dignity or even to speak for them. There is no attempt here to load these photographs with signs of poverty or desperation. These images speak more of a continuity of life, a consistency in cultural tradition which is not to be judged. This culture exists, persists without readily identifiable signs of current mass market mediation.

Four of the earlier portraits are documentary, straight photography in the FSA project style. These are poor black people photographed amidst the humbleness of their surroundings. There is not, however, a sense of exploitation, neither incidental nor inherent. Caffery does not feel sorry for these people nor do they feel sorry for themselves. There is no feeling of oppression.

Two landscapes are definitely not of that straight photography school. "Enterprise Sugar Mill," (1985) and "Sugar Warehouse" give abstract form and little detail. Within the context of the other photographs, the effect of these landscapes is romantic: quiet, mysterious and elusive.

Two more of the portraits can

also be called romantic; and they court sentimentality. Of "Polly" one sees her fluttery, blurry hands gently cupping an equally blurry, fluttery chick. The photograph's soft qualities (graininess, slight out of focus) are projected by the viewer to the subject. "Harry's Hands on a Tub," (1984) does not rely upon the photo's physical properties—in fact it has more in common with the straight photography of the four previously mentioned. His hands rest on the circular bottom of an overturned, large galvanized wash tub. Focus is sharp enough to reveal ridges and splits in Harry's very worn hands. This portrait revels in detail much as the above mentioned FSA photos. The viewer responds to the dignity implied by the tweed cuffs of his good jacket—just visible over the roughness of his aged hands.

Michelle Campbell's nine photographs in this exhibit are of Hispanic culture in Austin, Texas. Her style is straight, more photo-journalistic. These images are loaded with signs that produce bias. In one image a young boy sits on an old, previously ornate dresser which resides on a bare wooden porch. Beside the dresser and at one end of its base, is a baseball mitt. At the other end half a saucer is visible. The spoon or fork sitting in it suggest that it held a person's not a pet's food. The young boy is holding a large boom box. This new age icon—a portable radio/tape player with large speakers—appears to have replaced or at least superceded in importance the baseball glove and the saucer. Any image with these particular signs provides a viewer whose value systems differ from those portrayed, a predisposition to judge the value system of the Hispanic culture as it is represented. In another image, a young woman wears her clothing too tight, confronts us soberly if not slightly warily (one hand is clenched), and stands against a bleak wall with the graffiti, *MI VIDA LOCA* (My Crazy Life), visible to her side. A bare to the waist man exhibits two ornate and two meager tattoos. His gaze does not imply trust any more than the aforementioned woman's; his arms are folded and he is turned slightly away. Other of the photographs refer to the tendency of some Hispanic households to load their environment with Catholic ritual and religious icons. In the eight photographs here it would appear that the documentation of this segment of Hispanic culture is narrow and suffers from bias imposed by distance.

In Sharon Stewart's *Magic Valley Series V*, (1987/88), she has produced an animated landscape of one surreal sunflower shooting into the horizon to the wide-eyed astonishment of the field of sunflowers growing uniformly below and behind it.

Mary Peck has six panoramic landscapes of the Florida Everglades. Although beautiful, little happens in these photographs other than the intrusion of tropical plants into woody underbrush.

Sandra Russell Clark hand colors (pastel pink and green predominate) infrared landscapes which are titled, *Louisiana Dreamscape*.

Debbie Fleming Caffery, Praying



Sandra R. Clark, Louisiana Dreamscape, (original hand-colored)



Sharon Stewart, Magic Valley Sunflower, 1987



Marilyn French, *Her Mother's Daughter*, New York: Summit Books, 1987, \$21.95.

By Susan L. Clark

The concept of photography in its necessary relation to literary image/visualization fundamentally informs and gives clues for reading/seeing/understanding Marilyn French's new novel, *Her Mother's Daughter*. This is so not only in the overt imaging/repetition of inherited patterns over the generations promised by the title, but also in the novel's unique narrative technique and perspective, and in the spreads of photo montages that separate major sections of the work. Author French inserts the photographs to make a telling point about imaging in general. To make words is, in effect, to make pictures, and French thus chooses a heroine who looks back over her past life as if it were a family album. Trying to find words to express what she has experienced, she shrinks at making overly-explicit pictures of those around her, while she can shoot, with compassion, those who may suffer the same plights—poverty, under-valuation of women's work—but who are distanced from her. French knows how to portray a heroine's feeling of displacement extraordinarily well, and she does it by creating characters who are always seeking to capture likenesses; they may make synonyms or bake cookies or hang wet prints to dry over bathtubs, but they are always reproducing something. Accordingly, French's *Her Mother's Daughter* de-constructs the language and actions that surround what it is to be an artist, whether a photographer, writer, or mother. An extraordinary novel, *Her Mother's Daughter* is shot through with the intermingled images of photography, written text, creativity, language, and memory. It actually becomes a picture-in-a-text in every chapter or subchapter, told primarily by a photographer, but retold, from different literary and camera angles, over four generations.

The primary focus of this modern-day family saga—depicted through photographs and through what are in effect "literary snapshots"—narrows in on Polish-descended Anastasia who, as New York-based professional photographer Stacy Stevens, shoots



photo from the author's collection, *Her Mother's Daughter*, by Marilyn French

everything from impoverished Indian mothers and children to the kind of art-shot children's pictures Houstonians can find and coo over in places like the Edloe Deli. In the former case, Anastasia, while dazzled by "the golden-skinned women in their brilliant saris, red, blue, yellow, against the sienna-colored sand, the pale green scrub trees, the sky that stretched unbroken blue for miles," still cannot help but see the hunger and fatigue and always must talk with her subjects: "that way it seems less like rape and more like encounter." In the latter case, Anastasia uses her camera's eye as a way out of poverty and as a way of trying to understand what family pictures reveal. When she and her first husband quarrel and eventually divorce, she confronts poverty, as did her mother and grandmother,

and parlays her success with the camera into income in order to survive by capturing engaging likenesses of cute toddlers (and saving the less appealing negatives for private contemplation) for upwardly-mobile young mothers in her 1950's New York suburban neighborhood.

Anastasia comes by her love of capturing images, French contends, by studying family photographs and making up fantasies ("his face in the wedding picture is fine and sensitive, even noble") and by fitting her personal history into those images chronicled by, among others, Jacob Riis, who works to show the realities of poverty. Riis' photographs of homeless boys sleeping in alleys are supposed to reflect Anastasia's family history, since her uncles and aunt were for a time wards of the state. Even the camera

Uncle Eddie buys has "accordion pleats" that reflect Aunt Eugenia's "blue chiffon dress with accordion pleats." They do mesh: how Anastasia sees is an encapsulation of how she has been taught to see—she has been groomed as a child prodigy in everything from piano to drawing to photography—and of what possibilities language offers her. Anastasia grows up with all the word-pictures her embittered mother gives her, yet, in the interlaced narrative's segments, the reader finds the mother's narrative, as well as her mother's tales, and Anastasia's daughter's tales, all of which are "shot" from different perspectives. The images on film become words in the texts that these multiple narrators tell, sometimes in first-person narrative, and quite often in third-person, mirroring in literary terms again the photographic process, so that a person in front of the camera is an object, just as a text becomes an object to be "read."

These are female/feminist texts in *Her Mother's Daughter*, and photography offers Anastasia just as much satisfaction as writing novels offers a writer. Moreover, photography gives Anastasia as an artist more female role models than she finds in painting or sculpture:

I discovered Man Ray and Cecil Beaton and George Rodger; Cartier-Bresson, and Eliot Porter and Walker Evans. And then, oh heavens! I'd known about Margaret Bourke-White, but now I discovered Imogen Cunningham and Berenice Abbott, and Eve Arnold! WOMEN! Lots of them, not just one Cécile Chaminade, the way there was in music, a fact that so disheartened me when I was eleven that I abandoned (wisely) my ambition to become a composer."

Anastasia prides herself on having developed "a more informed eye" when she studies the photographs of her family, but she takes her time in figuring out how she fits into the picture, as it were. Shouldn't her image be different from that of her mother and her grandmother? But why, then, does she sit up late at night, smoking, as her mother did, resenting a philanthropic husband, and why does she feel rage toward her own independent and sullen daughter, as both her grandmother and mother did to their daughters, whom they characterized in the same way? And why, then, does she face the same unemployment and under-valuation of her abilities that her foremothers did?

Getting the picture is what Anastasia's personal and professional life is about, and author French sensitively uses the link between the camera eye and the literary image to show how life-patterns repeat over generations:

The truth is not the sins of the fathers that descend unto the third generation, but the sorrows of the mothers. But when I was a young woman, I believed I could break this chain by sheer will."

Anastasia doesn't break the chain, but she learns, as do her literary forebears in the *Bildungsroman* tradition (and this novel is very like the early Hermann Hesse and like Günther Grass's *The Tin Drum*, except that it is much more extensive and more woman-oriented) that knowledge comes through scrutiny, and survival comes through labor, and that dealing with images—whether they are photographic or literary ones—comes by examining which ones are chosen to be made, which ones, once made, ought to be and perhaps are examined, and which unmade ones need to be made.

Susan Clark is a Professor of German and Slavic Studies at Rice University, where she also teaches courses in Women's Studies.

Wing and Wing by Jeff Debevec

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BOOKS

Carol Schloss, *In Visible Light*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1987. 308 pages. \$24.95.

J.A. Ward, *American Silences*, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1985. 210 pages. \$20.00

By Ed Osowski

Photography... doesn't really interest me. I do know that I want to do something with it though... I thought photography was a substitute for something else—well, for one thing, I wanted to write.
Walker Evans

For the writer, a problem, perhaps the problem, that repeats itself is how to approach the body of events—the flux of human activity and the fluidity of emotional interaction—and then shape that material into a coherent whole. The act of shaping is, of course, the act of creating something that is fiction, not unreal, but different from those fluid events. The framing and the shaping, the act of imposing a willful order, is what makes fiction fiction. Two recent books by students of American literature, Carol Schloss and J. A. Ward, suggest that for certain writers the aesthetic question of how to write was answered by their knowledge of certain photographers. Both books are nothing short of major efforts to bring photography into the mainstream of aesthetic criticism and to place photography on equal footing with other arts—writing and painting, for example. Both writers argue brilliantly that photography itself has brought about subtle shifts in perception which have allowed the writer to go on and write as he did. Schloss explains it thus:

It is impossible not to continue to see that one of the most pressing problems in our literary history is the problem revealed to us by the camera. The problem of coming-upon, of approach, of the politics enacted in and through art.

That the writer of fiction was a somewhat diabolical figure troubled Nathaniel Hawthorne, the first writer Schloss examines. The writer of fiction stood apart, spying, uncovering truths perhaps best left unrecorded, Hawthorne held. In the daguerrotypist Hawthorne found the perfect analogue for the situation of the writer. Between 1840 and 1860, Schloss reports, over 100 daguerrotypists practiced in Boston. Hawthorne visited several. And, in the pages of *Atlantic Monthly*, he read essays on this new medium. In his *House of the Seven Gables* Hawthorne creates a situation in which nothing is as it seems, and only through the secret craft of the daguerrotypist does truth emerge. Hawthorne's anxiety about the probing and prying in which the writer engages, almost medical in its terminology, finds expression in the realization that the daguerrotype is not just a simple mechanical recording of the sitter, but that certain psychological truths, "a web of ambivalences," in Schloss' words, are revealed in it and weigh down the photograph.

Schloss goes on to examine the writers Henry James, Theodore Dreiser, John Dos Passos, John Steinbeck, and Norman Mailer and their photographic contemporaries, Alvin Langdon Coburn, Alfred Stieglitz, Jacob Riis, Dorothea Lange, and the Soviet cinema. But the team, if that word can be used,

of Walker Evans and James Agee is the best example of one approach expressed through two media—photography and writing. Their *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* represents a union of approaches about which it cannot be said that the photographs merely "illustrate" the text or, conversely, that the text merely "captions" the images. Rather, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* is the result of a shared way of seeing, expressed through words and photographic images, neither exclusive of the other, one reinforcing the other. Ward writes that the very techniques one associates with prose—narrative, chronology, dialogue, historical exposition—Agee rejected in an effort to "push language in the direction of photography." He goes on:

Agee not only abolishes from his writing those techniques impossible or uncongenial to photography but he seems to wish that writing itself could be photography

Ward and Schloss devote their longest analyses to Evans and Agee and to their *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* because that document rests at the very center of a cluster of aesthetic/philosophical issues. The sense of the real or the concrete is never absent from *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*. Evans' photographs insist upon the "thiness" of what they record. And Agee's linguistic trick, the catalogue of words he offers when he surveys a room, is the verbal equivalent of Evans' emphasis on what is real and concrete. But the effect of the close renderings is to make the specific into something else, something different, that which is "famous" (or sublime). Evans and Agee thus demonstrate what is characteristic of so much American writing, the movement from the real to the abstract. Their vision is, in a sense, Emersonian, transcendental. Their words and their images freeze time and thus erase time. That their works appear to be documentary is part of their artifice, Ward's sharp, insightful reading reveals.

It would be unfair to Ward and Schloss not to point out how their books differ. *In Visible Light* impressively sweeps across one-hundred years of literature and photography. And, in its claims for how certain writers and photographers addressed key artistic questions, it attempts to place photography firmly at the center of intellectual debate. But Schloss at times reaches too far. Her discussion of John Dos Passos, for example, seems burdened by the weight of academic jargon and struggles to convince the reader that Dos Passos' experiments with shifting voices and montage effects owe much to experiments in Russian *avant-garde* cinema. Ward, almost too casually, suggests that one can understand Dos Passos by knowing Walker Evans, and that photographs like Evans' "Penny Picture Display, Savannah," which depicts dozens of different but interchangeable faces, captures the proletariat feel and multiplicity of voice for which Dos Passos is known.

Schloss breaks the hundred year time frame of her book to examine the works of Norman Mailer and Cindy Sherman. She is surprisingly unobtrusive as she links the narrative perspective of Mailer's *Naked and the Dead* to his experiences of surveillance photography during World War II. She concludes *In Visible Light* with a quick glance at Cindy Sherman but fails to understand how Sherman's manipulation of the "props" of culture (myth, the movies, etc.) are based on an inability to sustain narrative argument.

American Silences is much less a bravura performance than *In Vis-*



Walker Evans, Floyd Burrows and Tenge Children, 1936, from *Invisible Light* by Carol Schloss

ible Light. Ward's stated goal—to examine the theme of "silence" in certain American realist artists—narrows his focus considerably. But his close readings of Evans, Agee, and the painter Edward Hopper are never narrow themselves. Rather, they are examples of the rewards that emerge from close "textual" analysis. His analysis of Evans' photography, for example, shows that he has looked at these works for an extended period of time. That chapter alone deserves to be read by anyone who believes that the photograph is a text and that

the printed image can be examined for patterns of meaning, for theme and idea. Ward and Schloss suggest approaches to the interactions of photography with fiction that are rich and challenging.

Ed Osowski is a librarian with the Houston Public Library System. A frequent contributor to SPOT, he occasionally reviews books for the HOUSTON POST.

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BLACK HISTORY MONTH: A TRIBUTE TO TEXAS' BLACK JAZZ MUSICIANS

By April Rapier

The exhibit *I Got The Jazz*, with photographs by Gregory Gerran and Inge Larrey, was on display from February 2-28 in the Central and Julia Ideson Buildings, Houston Public Library.

February is Black History Month, and the Houston Public Library is participating by displaying, in celebratory tribute to a most vital and profound sociological aspect of Black heritage and culture, an exhibit titled, *I Got The Jazz*. These black and white and color photographs were made in the 1980s, during various musical performances ranging from festivals to lesser venues and informal sessions. They feature Black jazz and blues musicians from Houston and throughout the state.

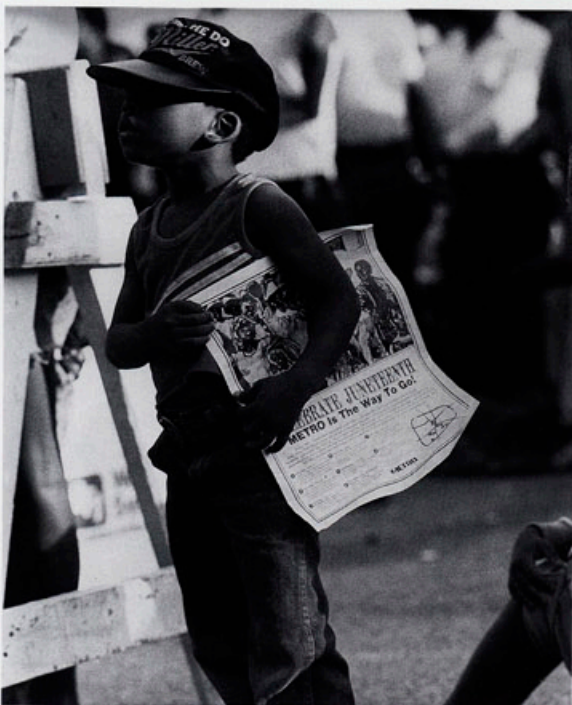
One presumes Gerran's involvement with the project began as an act of respect and love, as much as from a desire to document the mortal element of an immortal medium. A musician himself, Gerran portrays fellow musicians, whether legendary or otherwise, as archetypal, larger-than-life, yet warm and accessible, in a series of luminous black and white, formally-structured portraits. Other

images, made during performances, have an uncanny spontaneity, remarkably free of premeditated camera-pandering on the part of the musicians, attributable to Gerran's careful (read: fortuitous) timing and familiarity with the other end of the business—from cadence to requisite charisma-on-command. His restraint in seeking out the overly dramatic, too-flattering, or otherwise predictable moment (factoring too much "act" into the performance is a hazard inherent to visual representation of the music business) is admirable: the results are all-the-more memorable for it.

Larrey became involved with her interpretation of the project in response to writer Lorenzo Thomas' call for photographers to capture the essence of Black music in Houston. Her work is underwritten by a conceptual shading, substantiated by quirky and hip use of color. Often editorial in content and authoritative in voice, portions of the portfolio deal with decisive, poignant moments, after a journalistic style and movement through the terrain being investigated. Larrey, too, brings homage, as well as curiosity, to this collaboration between visual and musical arts.

Both photographers will donate selected photographs from the series to the recently established Texas Jazz Archives, a part of the Archives Department (Houston Metropolitan Research Center) of the Houston Public Library.

April Rapier is an artist, educator, and writer, and is the Acting Executive Director of the Houston Center for Photography.



Inge Larrey, Celebrate Juneteenth, 1985

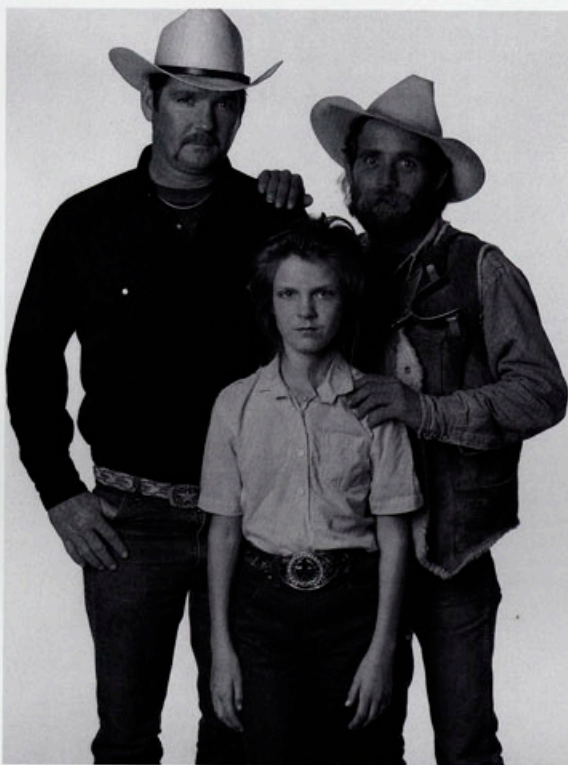
Gregory B. Gerran, Charles Rhinehart, Jr., 1987



RUTGER ten BROEKE: LOOKING AT STRANGERS

By April Rapier

Dutch photographer Rutger ten Broeke travelled to various cities in the U.S. during the latter part of 1987, continuing an international portrait project (which had originated in December, 1985) whereby he photographs strangers who seek him out wherever his temporary storefront studio might be set up. Accompanied and assisted by his wife Blanka, he made portraits, within the bounds of formal constructs (white background paper, traditional studio lighting, subject placement just so), at Gilley's one Saturday night last December. Two of the images made that evening (selected from nearly one hundred) are reproduced here.



Rutger ten Broeke, 1988

Rutger ten Broeke's innate wanderlust spends its down time couched in insatiable curiosity, one functional and demonstrable result of which is ongoing inquiry; subsequent debates (which seem to occur spontaneously) are characterized by attitudes of freshness and openness. All arguments, positions, and data are considered with an equal measure of seriousness and respect—a style of discussion, whether applied to teaching or to conversations with one's peers, which draws out the most reticent opinions and encourages an extended and lively exchange. He photographs in much the same way, gently extracting bits and pieces of informational treasures, mostly by listening and waiting with patience appropriate to a somewhat less frenetic travel itinerary.

This project began as a publicity campaign for the f/32 Gallery in Amsterdam where ten Broeke is Director and Co-Founder (in addition to his position with the gallery, he teaches photography and maintains an extensive exhibition schedule). He noted a population of gallery-goers who habitually snatched fleeting but appreciative glances while walking by the space, and he began to wonder if that population might become more conclusively involved if individuals were exhibited as subjects, and engaged as passersby.

Directives are scant during the course of a sitting: one is asked to pose in precisely the state in which he or she arrived, complete with stuff being carried, work paraphernalia, or bulky and often-concealing winter wear. ten Broeke requested of the subjects that they not laugh, laughter a diversionary tactic which drains authenticity from the moment. His intentionality, and the strength that underlies knowing exactly what to wait for, move the sessions effortlessly. I noticed that once the crowd's attention was diverted to his performance, increasing numbers wanted to participate. Perhaps a voyeuristic aspect of the project overrides his appearance as philanthropic, empathetic, and interested, with slightly-supernatural applications in attendance for good measure. He exerts an unholy amount of energy, generating a force field that by all appearances is difficult for potential sitters to resist.

ten Broeke speaks of the "rich spectrum of behavioral, sociological, and demographic information" which emerges from an exhibition of the work. More importantly, he allows and encourages the sitter his or her own fantasies, thereby creating a space where the legend in one's head might take over, if only



Rutger ten Broeke, 1988

for that fleeting increment of a second when time is flashed to a stop and reality is up for grabs. As one might hope (but never expect from a collaboration between strangers), the moments are intricate and emblematic, narrowing what humans perceive as insurmountable and unfathomable gaps between each other or between the recognizable and the new. They are also terrifically entertaining: it is as though only one's best characteristics surface during these sittings. Interestingly, regional and cultural differences, encoded within dress, mannerisms, and other stylistic clues, diminish; it is rather difficult to determine origin and nationality, which seem to be altogether superseded by other, more generically indigenous, cross-representational structures.

The project has since taken ten Broeke over Europe and across the U.S., with an end being set for the summer of 1988. Kodak has sponsored the project since 1987; in addition, KLM Airlines subsidizes his travel. A book tentatively entitled *Rutger ten Broeke's 5000 Portraits* is being underwritten by Kodak Rochester, to be published in 1989-90.

THE PHOTO FORUM

By Joan Morgenstern

The Photo Forum is a new group, formed as a part of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, in conjunction with the twelfth anniversary of the Museum's permanent photography collection. It has been designed as a response to growth of the Museum's permanent collection, in order to increase members' knowledge of fine art photography and further expand the collection. Photo Forum members will have the opportunity to discuss contemporary issues in photography, such as its emergence as an art form, with leaders in the field. The Photo Forum will provide an opportunity for greater numbers of Houstonians interested in photography and collecting to participate in the department, its programs, and acquisitions, as members will vote on photographs to be purchased for the collection at the final meeting of each year.

There will be four meetings per year, and bonus events, including a discussion of several of the exhibits presented during FotoFest '88. The dates and times will be announced in the MFA, Houston *Calendar* and *Neus* bulletin. The first meeting will be a preview and tour of *Evocative Presence: Twentieth Century Photographs in the Museum Collection*, conducted by Anne Tucker, Gus and Lyndall Wortham Curator at the Museum and curator of the exhibition. The second meeting will be a tour of the Museum Print Room. In addition, the group will tour private collections not open to the public. The last meeting of the year will be a presentation of photographs that the Museum wishes to acquire. In order to join, membership must be current. An additional \$150 fee, for one or two people, is required. Funds raised through membership in the Photo Forum will be used to purchase photographs for the Museum collection.

For further information please contact the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston at 526-1361.

Joan Morgenstern is the first President of the Photo Forum. She is an active supporter and collector of fine art photography.

THE OTHER GALLERY: NOT JUST ANOTHER PRETTY SPACE

The Director of the Barnes-Blackman Gallery was asked, by the Editor of SPOT, for a description of her gallery, and a "Director's Statement," which is printed below:

By Michelle Barnes

Five Contemporary Black Houston Photographers, an exhibit featuring the work of Geary Broadnax, Raymond Grosrand, Earlie Hudnall, Jeffrey St. Mary and Louise Martin, is on display at the Barnes-Blackman Galleries from February 26 through March 27, in conjunction with FotoFest '88.

Jacob Lawrence, in his forward written for Art: African American, stated that

In the history of American art, the contributions made by Black people are significant and little understood or appreciated. There is the need to make known the uniquely creative, artistic, and philosophical aspirations, social motivation, and scope of the Black artist throughout the development of arts in the United States.

Samella Lewis, author/editor, affirms, in the text of that book, and with each issue of her quarterly publication *African-American Art*, that "Black artists have been given too little attention. The source of the attention must come from within the community." By focusing attention on Black artists through the gallery, fanfares are sounded for the community and culture which has nurtured them. A similar fanfare is played for any public showcase that brings together a cross-section of the Houston community for positive good, but our society applauds more loudly and consistently for those who take care of their own.

Inasmuch as the Barnes-Blackman Galleries is a commercial space, and although it has physically existed for less than two years, the gallery tries to represent well its artists on and off the premises. However, the gallery is constantly seeking opportunities for its artists to gain recognition and broadened exposure outside the gallery.

It never ceases to amaze me that other people are constantly surprised by the ever-growing list of those who choose to show their work. Having choices suggests that there are alternatives. For too long, those choices have been limited to not showing rather than selecting from several galleries.

A gallery should be more for the artist than walls and lights. A meeting place is provided by the Barnes-Blackman Galleries for the artists and "others." It is a home base and conduit through which ideas are exchanged, support is offered. The gallery helps the work of local Black artists, in particular, to become immediately and consistently more accessible to an inquisitive public. It is a place where the sphere of art patronage and collectorship can expand simply through awareness of the existence of the person and personality behind the work. It is a place that moves art acquisition out of the otherwise closed realm of activity usually reserved for those who denote what art is and what it is not.

Beyond the ethnic label that is generally affixed for public convenience, the work displayed at the Barnes-Blackman Galleries is best described as honest. Enthusiasm is the primary characteristic of the gallery: enthusiasm for the work that must be done and shown, enthusiasm for the artists who choose to share with the larger Houston community the products of search and self-discovery, enthusiasm for sharing a resource that sadly had gone untapped, unacknowledged, and ignored for too long. Welcome.

Michelle Barnes is the Director of the Barnes-Blackman Gallery, a downtown space which exhibits original work, primarily by Black artists. She also teaches art at The Kinkaid School, and is active in numerous civic and arts organizations.



Earlie Hudnall, My Sister, My Brother, 1984

Society for Photographic Education 25th National Conference

March 3-6, 1988
Hyatt Regency Hotel-Downtown
1200 Louisiana Street
Houston, TX 77002

The SPE National Conference will be held in conjunction with the Houston Foto Fest and the Association of International Photography Dealers Conference.

Keynote Speaker: John Szarkowski, Director of Photography at the Museum of Modern Art, New York. To be joined by **Nathan Lyons**, Director of the Visual Studies Workshop, **Aaron Siskind**, internationally acclaimed Photographer and Educator, and several other founders of SPE in a panel discussion on the history and development of the organization and the field of photography over the past 25 years.

Giselle Freund, well-known French photographer, social historian, and author of *Photography and Society*, will be the Society's Honored Educator and Honored Photographer.

Edward Said, Parr Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia University, will discuss *After the Last Sky: Palestinian Lives*, a photographic essay on the lives of the Palestinian people by Mr. Said and Jean Mohr, a Swiss photojournalist.

Yvonne Rainier, renowned filmmaker and educator, the Independent Study Program of the Whitney Museum, will present and discuss her film, *The Man Who Envied Women*.

Helen Hughes, an American photojournalist known for her work in the area of human rights in Chile, and **Chuck Kleinhans**, Professor of Radio, T.V. and Film at Northwestern University, and Co-editor of *Jump Cut*, will also speak.

Additional panels will address: Personal Expression in Contemporary Art-Making, Economic Survival, Women in Photography, History and Theory. (Programming subject to change without notice.)

Conference fees, until January 30, 1988: SPE members, \$65; non-members, \$85. After January 30, 1988: SPE members, \$75; non-members, \$95. Please send check to: SPE 25th National Conference Committee, P.O. Box BBB, Albuquerque, NM 87197. Phone 505-268-4073.

Guaranteed hotel reservations, until January 30, 1988: \$81.00 per night, double occupancy, Hyatt Regency Hotel-Downtown. Phone: 800-228-9000.

MESSAGES

Continued from p. 3

professionals (in the 28-54 age bracket): active, established, and respected in Houston's yuppie uppercrust. The myth of "The Other" is perpetuated outside anticipated, definable (and manageable) cultural/economic strata because it exists, as a model, beyond these strata as fact, opinion, rule, or at the very least, amusing. *Good-natured* disapproval is ineffectual disapproval, a response which aligns as concurrence. Having recently been instructed, during a dinner party, by a group of young (late 20s) professionals that vehement protest, no matter the issue, is "un-ladylike," I must conclude that nearly everyone has a blind spot, that shortsightedness and narrow-mindedness (the lesbian who, in the course of fairly banal conversation, uses the word "nigger"—which I repeat here, for example and effect, with feelings of conflict—without flinching, yet in the same contextual breath objects to the word "queer") are endemic to a culture which has so thoroughly internalized discrimination that most young people, when queried, no longer find it a relevant issue. Is a myth harmful? Are stereotypes detrimental to image and expectation? Is discrimination an inevitable by-product? Consider these questions the next time a "friend" or "acquaintance" or "colleague" tells a racist or sexist or homophobic joke anticipating a response he or she can count on, and the urge to laugh—or not—weighs heavy.

The past month has been spent monitoring the deconstruction of an old garage apartment behind my house. Does a practical model of or definition for the post-modernist totemic "deconstruction" (to single out one of many terms indispensable to the lingo) exist by way of example? Something one might apply outside criticism? Although my cohorts and I use this and other companion terms liberally, I subconsciously dread committing crimes of extra-contextual usage. Even more distressing is the realization that I might some day find evidence of having been syntactically influenced by the over-used, unspeakably dull inventory of post-modern buzz words, the use of which seems to insure two things: first, the writer will experience immediate and substantial reinforcement, and second, somewhere down the line, said writer will be vilified and ridiculed for using incomprehensible and nonsensical language.

In the summer of 1987, during an interview I conducted with Stan Grossfeld, an award-winning photojournalist with the *Boston Globe* (in *Sight Magazine*, Fall 1987), the issue of documenting the oppressed—the nature or name of the oppressor notwithstanding—arose in conjunction with the inability, whether through volition, regulation, or opportunity, of such a group to speak for itself. Inconclusive objectification or misrepresentation seem to be inherent risks in, say, photographing starving Ethiopians, although both intention and result are often positive. Our discussion was not the first to address this issue; hopefully, as conversations progress, sweeping and reductive distillations (along the lines of gender cause-and-effect, for starters) that short-circuit rational and creative thinking will yield to innovative solutions. Paul Hester and Robert Hobbs examine other aspects of oppression in book reviews within, as does Cynthia Freeland in her discussion of Lonny Shavelson's exhibit. This issue of *SPOT* looks at one's *speaking* of and about issues concerning "otherness" as much as its structure and content. Perhaps conceptualizing that which is agreed upon as socio-politically problematic thereby elevates it beyond workable parameters, accounting in part for the relentless and influential hold it maintains, or the rifts that seem at once simple-minded and irremediable.

April Rapier

SEKULA ON HUGUNIN

January 17, 1988

To the Editor:

No critic, historian or theorist can expect to control the uses to which his or her work is put by other writers. Indeed, one should perhaps feel complimented merely that other writers find one's work useful. In a recent article in *SPOT*, "Robert Heinecken's 'Neo-Physiognomy'" (Summer, 1987), James Hugunin was kind enough to acknowledge a debt to my essay "The Body and the Archive" (*October* 39, Winter, 1986). However, I don't share his sanguine estimation of Heinecken's work. While I would have preferred to have ignored Heinecken's dubious "experiments" with physiognomy, a contrary reading now seems necessary. The issue is not Heinecken's work as such, but rather the larger terms within which the politics of representation of the body are contested.

Some readers of *SPOT* may be unfamiliar with the context in which I proposed that the term "neophysiognomy" might be of value in explaining the "return of the body" in contemporary art. In "The Body and the Archive" I argue that two novel systems of description of the criminal body emerged in the 1880s, within the context of a generalized crisis of epistemological faith in optics. Both attempts were founded on the attempt to salvage the value of visual physiognomic evidenced through recourse to more abstract statistical methods. In effect, the contingency of optics was made to submit to the regularity of statistics. Both projects relied upon the central conceptual category of social statistics: the mathematical notion of the average man (*l'homme moyen*) proposed by the Belgian astronomer and statistician Adolphe Quetelet in the 1830s. The Paris police official Alphonse Bertillon invented the first modern system of criminal identification, first, by combining standardized front-and-profile photographic portraits with a numerical series of nine bodily measurements on a single *fiche*; and second, by organizing these cards in a massive filing system based on their relative positions within a statistical distribution. The English psychologist and founder of eugenics, Francis Galton, invented a method of composite portraiture ("pictorial statistics") in an attempt to produce actual photographic impressions of abstract, statistically defined biosocial types. He was especially concerned with the isolation of a distinctive "criminal type" engendered by heredity.

Bertillon's practical nominalism and Galton's theoretical essentialism constitute the two methodological poles of positivist attempts to define and regulate social deviance. Their notions of the proper relation between image and archive were diametrically opposed. Bertillon sought to unerringly and efficiently embed the image within the archive. Galton sought to embed the archive within a single generic image. Although their projects were specialized and idiosyncratic, they mapped out the general epistemological parameters for the bureaucratic handling of visual documents. Unfortunately, Bertillon and Galton are still with us. "Bertillon" survives in the operations of the national security state, in the condition of intensive and extensive surveillance that characterizes both everyday life and the geopolitical sphere. "Galton" lives in the renewed authority of biological determinism, founded in the increased hegemony of the political Right in the Western democracies. Galton's spirit also survives in the neo-eugenicist implications of some of the new biotechnologies.

The composite method

developed by Galton enjoyed an enormous popularity well into the second decade of this century. Subsequently, artists of a crypto-scientific bent have been drawn to composite portraiture, usually with only a limited awareness of the eugenicist origins of the technique. A provisional list would include Moholy-Nagy in the 1940s, and more recently William Wegman, Nancy Burson, and now Robert Heinecken.

Citing my brief negative assessment of the technocratic aspects of Burson's work, James Hugunin argues that Heinecken, in contrast to Burson, has produced "an *ironic* resurrection of biosocial typology." Building on the saving grace of irony, Hugunin's praise becomes increasingly effusive: Heinecken offers, paradoxically it seems to me, both "a deconstruction of our master narratives" and a "Lukacsian... thrust beneath the surface of mere appearance." In short, Heinecken is claimed as a comrade of a vague cultural leftism, a fellow swimmer in a reheated Jamesonian stew. I suspect that Heinecken might find these associations a bit bewildering, perhaps a bit amusing, and finally rather flattering.

For Hugunin, Heinecken has established a clear critical distance from the physiognomic legacy of Galton. But the prominent passage in Heinecken's text that performs this task for Hugunin is embarrassingly short on historical accuracy, even about the medium of photography, about which Heinecken should know something: "The art of physiognomy... emerges in England in the late 1880s along with phrenology, photography and other pseudo sciences." The exonerating and self-deprecating joke here lies in the labeling of photography. Heinecken is presumably also being flip about historical knowledge in general, as might well befit a parody of a scientific marketing research report. But the terms under which a particular science or discursive practice is regarded as legitimate or not are always historical. Phrenology was not considered a pseudoscience in the 1830s, for example. The informed reader can't help but suspect that although Heinecken knows that photography emerged well before the 1880s, he is quite uninformed about the history of biosocial thought. That is, Heinecken is deploying "smartness" to cover for intellectual laziness and ignorance. Heinecken is never in complete control of the always delicate devices of parody, and his "ironic" distance keeps collapsing into a rather naked and awkwardly worded wish-fulfillment fantasy.

What is the character of this fantasy? Hugunin arrives at his vision of a "leftist" Heinecken while ignoring the sexual and racial subtexts inscribed in the work. Heinecken's central literary conceit is that his autobiographical protagonist is a modest latter-day McLuhan, a couch-potato/media-analyst invited into the corporate boardroom. His mission is to rationalize the selection of a network anchorwoman, using superimpositions of male and female newscasters in search of a "subliminal" and "androgynous" ideal type. Accordingly, the male role of the news team is more or less fixed; it is the female role that needs filling. This is a pop version of an old symbolist fantasy: the male artist, through mechanical means, "gives birth" to an artificial woman. Heinecken's search takes on an overtly sexualized character, as if he were directing a pornographic film or managing a breeding laboratory: ratings "erect," newscasters "couple." Furthermore, race and gender characteristics are marked for Heinecken's researcher in ways that do not depart from stereotypes: "the jungle mil-

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ieu...adds a deliberate touch of dark maleness to the otherwise rather effeminate composite."

The overall effect of Heinecken's parody is to suggest that media conglomerates regard issues of race and gender equality with an enormous measure of cynicism. Heinecken's character embodies that cynicism. I would argue further that Heinecken himself agrees with his "fictional" self. His intellectual horizons are no broader than those attributed to this character, consisting of "middlebrow" *kulturkritik*, McLuhan and the derivative pop psychologists of "subliminal seduction." No wonder he needs Hugunin to up the intellectual stakes. Heinecken shares positions expressed in a number of films about television, from *Network* to *Broadcast News*. Like *Network* in particular, his work exhibits a horrified fascination with the apparition of a masculinized and thus aberrant professional woman. This fascination is consistent with his earlier work, which Hugunin concedes operated "to the dismay of feminists." The largest reproductions in Heinecken's current booklet are reserved for those composites that are, in his judgement, the most "grotesque," that is, the most "masculine." Thus, composites of Connie Chung and several male newscasters are described as follows: "Her classic Asian features seemed to dominate the men's and what was hoped would be exotic was grotesque instead." It is not surprising, given the currents of male desire, that Heinecken's "grotesques" are in fact composites in which the superimposition of a male face on a female face has effectively "aged" the appearance of the woman.

With this privileging of "grotesque" visual products, the internal logic of Heinecken's parody collapses, and his affinity with other quasi-surrealist *pompier*s like Joel-Peter Witkin emerges. The parody breaks down here because the role of Heinecken's fictional consultant is to generate a pleasant and reassuring androgyny. These "successful" composites are epitomized by a Michael Jacksonesque superimposition of Jane Pauley and Bryant Gumbel, described as an image of "racial bliss." Just as Heinecken's character stigmatizes and rejects the "masculine" and elderly-seeming woman, he also stigmatizes and rejects the "masculine" Black man, preferring the reassuring figure of the "feminized" Black male, the stereotype of the eunuch. As with Galton and the entire legacy of biosocial thought, Heinecken's fascination with the "pathological" is merely a necessary moment in the affirmation of normative constraints.

By mapping issues of affirmative action onto the vitiated role of the newscaster, Heinecken obscures the fact that, no matter how trivial the news, newsrooms and networks are nontrivial sites of political struggle. As bad as things are in the world of television, they could be worse. The demand that Blacks, Hispanics, Asians and women read the news may well be co-opted at various points by cynical managers, but the possibility remains that news from South Africa read by a Black person is forced into a different register of experience than it would be if the same text were read by a white. The same possibility would hold for a woman reading a story on litigation over the Dalkon Shield. Furthermore, the active presence of Blacks and women in the newsroom may well force a changing of the text.

By directing his "deconstructive" energies at the elephantine target of CBS, Heinecken displaces issues of race and gender that persistently surface much closer to home, that is, in the university and in the institutions of the art world. How

would the Connie Chung composite read for an Asian woman who has been refused admission to UCLA despite her high entrance examination scores, simply because administrators fear the emergence of an overly Asian student body? While I certainly don't blame Heinecken for policies pursued by the admissions officers of the institution at which he is tutored, I would urge him (and Hugunin) to ponder this question. But perhaps it is just as well that Heinecken aims at a target beyond his reach, since I suspect that his "guerrilla esthetics" (Hugunin) have more in common with the sympathies and concerns of the right than with those of the left.

Allan Sekula

Allan Sekula, photographer and critic, is the Program Director for Photography, California Institute of the Arts.

To the Editor:

I have just finished reading "Challenging Corporate Comfort," Paul Hester's non-review of *The Art of Commercial Photography*, in the Winter edition of the Houston Center for Photography's publication, *SPOT*. Despite the fact the "review" failed to mention anything specific about any specific photograph there were some points brought out that merit further attention.

One thing I found particularly annoying was the labelling of the show as an "exhibition of profit-motivated images." Are we supposed to believe that each and every ARTIST represented in the show has the same motivation? Sure, there are those that are motivated strictly by money but I'll bet there are a lot of other motivations involved. Motivation like not starving, or covering our children's asses with more designer jeans; but how about "I do it because I love to make pictures" motivation? Just because a photograph is labelled commercial and it was paid for does not mean that it is intrinsically inferior. The photographs in the exhibition were out of context, they were not as reproduced in brochures or magazines, they were shown as original photographic prints on a gallery wall [sic]. That context should have some bearing on the perception of the imagery. After all the exhibition was entitled the ART of commercial photography, that title alone should clue in the viewer that these were special photographs that went beyond original intent [sic]. Labelling all of the photographs "profit-motivated" is not only an inaccurate generalization but, [sic] yet another simplistic attempt to make a distinction between High Art (found on gallery walls) and Low Art (found in that magazine in your lap). This is an artificial distinction created by

curators and critics, not by image-motivated artists.

Another concept that was mentioned was the notion of "corporate comfort." As stated in the article, corporate comfort refers to: "...what is permissible: avoid controversy, don't offend anyone, keep it easy, non-taxing, non-challenging, non-threatening." Commercial photographers do create images under strict rules of corporate comfort. The most successful of those photographers can meet that [sic] criteria and go beyond it to produce something meaningful without the copy and advertising context. However it is corporate comfort that seems to dilute and stagnate some talent right here in Houston. Don't forget that there's a lot of risky advertising coming out of other markets. The corporate comfort level here in Houston is excessively conservative. Trends do not start in Houston. We all know the rules of corporate comfort and we play by them, [sic] I also hope that we try to make some of those rules ourselves, to stretch the limits of acceptability. It's our game too! But, what is even more distressing is that those very rules of corporate comfort affect even the most idealistic of fine-art photographer [sic]. I hear a faint cry for "oppositional work" at the end of Mr. Hester's article, but just try to find some of that non-profit-motivated oppositional work in a gallery here in Houston. You can't find it in commercial galleries because corporate comfort has eliminated all but the most decorative work from those spaces. Why? Because corporate collectors don't buy risky imagery for their office walls, and the corporate collector is the target audience of the commercial galleries in this city. That leaves one to search the alternative spaces for oppositional work, and what do we find? Usually art-school level ideas of socio-

political themes which will be rendered meaningless with the next Presidential administration. Add to that low technical quality that seems to accompany a lot of "art" photos and you get pictures that are useless as decoration or even as backdrops for products. Even the HCP with all its [sic] influence and resources does not show particularly risky work. Just have a look at the Joel Meyerowitz show, there's no risk involved there, it's safe-city [sic]. There is not a thing offensive or "oppositional" about it, just pure decor with name recognition. The prints are in color and even couch-size, so why not leave it to a safe and comfortably corporate commercial gallery and show something oppositional? Does the HCP fear to offend? Or has corporate comfort diluted our aesthetics to the point that most of us actually believe that this is cutting-edge stuff?

It seems distressing that when good photographs emerge from the safety of the corporate grayness they get criticized for being "profit-motivated." Intent does not determine quality. If you don't get paid for that last brochure you shot does it mean your pictures are better?

Not Comfortable
Dale O'Dell
1988

[Editor's note: Mr. O'Dell's letter was first published in the American Society of Magazine Photographers' February Newsletter.]



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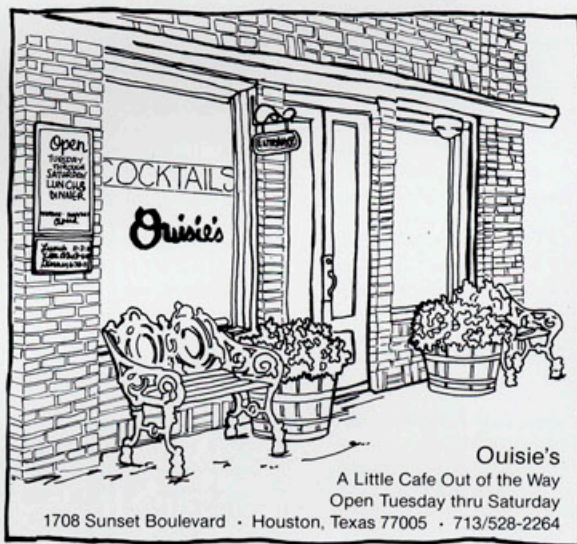
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CALENDAR

EXHIBITIONS

MARCH

Allen Center February 26-March 25, "Image and Emphasis," Austrian contemporary photography. 7am-7pm, Monday-Friday; 9am-1pm Saturday. 1200 Smith, 651-1515.

Allied Bank Plaza February 26-March 25, Italian photographer Mario Giacomelli. 7am-7pm, Monday-Friday; 7am-1pm, Saturday. 1000 Louisiana, 651-1515.

American General February 26-March 25, "Portraits and Dreams: Photographs by Children of the Americas." 8am-6pm, Monday-Friday. 2929 Allen Parkway, 831-2500.

Archway Gallery March 4-26, "Same Street-Three Views," Bruce Gilden, Lou Lanzano and Patrick Pagnano. 10am-5:30pm, Monday-Saturday. 2600 Montrose, 522-2409.

Art Institute of Houston February 22-March 26, Stroboscopic photographer Harold "Doc" Edgerton. 8am-9pm, Monday-Friday; 10am-2pm, Saturday. 3600 Yoakum, 523-2546.

Art League March 3-April 2, "Salon de Refuses," statewide annual juried show. 10am-5:30pm, Tuesday-Friday; 12 noon-4pm, Saturday. 1953 Montrose, 523-9530.

Barnes-Blackman Gallery February 26-March 27, "Five Contemporary Black Houston Photographers," works by Louise Martin, Geary Broadnax, Earlie Hudnall, Jeffery St. Mary, and Raymond Grosrand. 2pm-8pm, Sunday-Wednesday; 2pm-10pm, Thursday-Saturday. 3535 Main, 520-0059.

Benteler-Morgan Gallery February 26-April 29, Belgian photographer Herbert Grooteclaes. 10am-5pm, Monday-Friday; 10am-1pm, Saturday. 4200 Montrose, 522-8228.

Black Heritage Gallery March 4-25, "Places and Faces," by Houston photographer Morris Richardson. 10am-6pm, Monday-Saturday. 5408 Almeda, 529-7900.

Blaffer Gallery, University of Houston March 7-April 3, "Roots and Turns," a retrospective of 20th century Dutch photography; Jerome Leibling. 10am-5pm, Tuesday-Friday; 1pm-5pm, Saturday and Sunday. 114 Fine Arts Bldg. 749-1320.

Brent Gallery February 25-March 26, "Feet First," Argentine photographer Maria Inez Rogue. 11am-5:30pm, Tuesday-Saturday. 908 Wood, 236-1830.

Butera's on Alabama February 1-April 1, "Sandra Joseph: Bottom Line," 7am-10pm, Monday-Friday; 8am-10pm, Saturday and Sunday. 2946 S. Shepherd, 528-1500.

Butera's on Montrose February 1-April 1, "Phyllis Hand: Mardi Gras Retrospective." 7am-10pm, Monday-Friday; 8am-10pm, Saturday and Sunday. 4621 Montrose, 520-8426.

Caroline Lee Gallery March 5-30, "Explicit Image II: Past and Present Erotic Photography." 10am-5pm, Tuesday-Saturday. 2637 Colquitt, 527-0772.

Chevron February 26-March 25, "Windows," curated by Jean-Claude Lamagny of the Paris Bibliotheque Nationale. 8am-6pm, Monday-Friday; 8am-noon, Saturday. 1301 McKinney, 754-9185.

Children's Museum March 7-11, "Portraits and Dreams: Photographs by the Children of the Americas." In conjunction with the American General exhibition. Tuesday-Thursday and Sunday, 1pm-5pm; 10am-5pm Saturday. 3201 Allen Parkway, 522-4430.

Citicorp February 26-March 25, "Young European Photographers." 7am-7pm, Monday-Friday; 7am-1pm, Saturday. 1200 Smith, 621-9500.

College of Architecture, University of Houston March 3-26, "Swedish Exhibition," contemporary Swedish documentary photography. 9am-5pm, Monday-Friday. 4800 Calhoun, 749-1187.

College of the Mainland March 3-March 25, "Dances: Public and Private," photographs by Jim Caldwell. 12:30pm-4:30pm, Monday-Friday. 8001 Palmer Highway, 280-3991.

Contemporary Arts Museum February 26-March 25, "Sally Gall: Tropical Landscapes," and "Bill Viola: Survey of a Decade." 10am-5pm, Tuesday-Saturday; noon-6pm, Sunday. 5216 Montrose, 526-3129.

Crocker Gallery, University of St. Thomas February 26-March 25, "Tales of the Heart," photographs by April Rapier. 7am-10pm, Monday-Friday; 10am-5pm, Saturday; 10am-4pm, Sunday. 3900 Mt. Vernon, 522-7911.

Davis-McClain Gallery March 5-April 2, "Gary Brotmeyer: Recent Works." 10am-5:30pm, Monday-Friday; 11am-5pm, Saturday. 2627 Colquitt, 520-9200.

Detering Book Gallery February 26-March 25, "Michael Someroff: Photographers Unknown." 10am-6pm, Monday-Saturday; 10am-5pm, Sunday. 2311 Bissonnet, 520-5288.

DiverseWorks February 27-March 31, "Rudy Burkhardt: A Survey," and Texas photographers, "Not for the Living Room." 10am-5pm Tuesday-Friday; noon-4pm, Saturday. 214 Travis, 223-8346.

Farrish Gallery, Rice University February 4-March 6, "Views From Italy," portraits of buildings by Danny Samuels. Noon-5pm, Monday-Sunday. 6100 S. Main, 527-8101.

Firehouse Gallery March 4-25, "Herstory: Black Women Photographers." 1pm-5pm, Tuesday-Saturday. 1413 Westheimer, 520-7840.

First City Bancorporation February 26-March 25, Polish photographers Edward Hartwig and Jan Jas. 8am-6pm, Monday-Friday. 1001 Main, 658-6109.

Goethe Institute March 1-31, "Images for Everybody," early photography in Bremen. 9am-5pm, Monday; 9am-7pm, Tuesday-Thursday; 9am-3:30pm, Friday; 9am-1pm, Saturday. 3120 Southwest Freeway, Suite 100, 528-2787.

Graham Gallery February 28-March 26, "Photography and the Creative Portrait." 10am-5:30pm, Tuesday-Saturday. 1431 W. Alabama, 528-2787.

Harris Gallery February 27-March 15, Peter Brown, George Krause, and Geoff Winningham. 10am-6pm, Tuesday-Friday; 11am-5pm, Saturday. 1100 Bissonnet, 522-9116.

Heritage Plaza February 26-March 25, photographs by Berenice Abbott. 7am-6pm, Monday-Friday; 8am-noon, Saturday. 430 Lamar, 651-7884.

Hooks-Epstein Gallery February 26-March 25, "E.F.Kitchen: The Flower Series." L.A. Portrait Series; "Cay Lang: The Flower Series." 10am-5:30pm, Tuesday-Saturday. 3210 Eastside, 522-0718.

Houston Center for Photography March 4-April 3, "Au Dela de L'Image: Beyond the Image," new French photojournalism. 11am-5pm, Wednesday-Friday; noon-5pm, Saturday and Sunday. 1441 W. Alabama, 529-4755.

Houston Post March 2-25, "Best of News Photography." 8:30am-5:30pm, Monday-Friday. 4747 Southwest Freeway, 840-5600.

Innova February 26-March 25, "A Day in the Life of the Soviet Union," and "Visions: Five Monographs." 8:30am-5pm, Monday-Friday. 20 Greenway Plaza, 963-9955.

Interfirst Bank February 26-March 25, "Brazilian Photography in the 19th Century." 8:30am-6pm, Monday-Friday; 8am-noon, Saturday. 1100 Louisiana, 759-9923.

Jack Meier Gallery February 27-March 19, Beatrice Helg. Swiss photography. 10am-5:30pm, Monday-Friday; 10am-6pm, Saturday. 2310 Bissonnet, 526-2983.

James Schubert Gallery March 3-April 2, "Rick Dingus: Movements of the Snake." 9am-6pm Monday-Friday; 11am-3pm Saturday. 5616 Royalton, 661-8003.

Jewish Community Center March 12-April 12, "18th Annual Juried Photography Exhibit." 9am-10pm, Sunday-Thursday; 9am-5pm Friday; 1pm-5pm Saturday. 5601 S. Braeswood, 729-3200.

Judy Youens Gallery February 20-March 31, "Jerry Uelsmann: Multiple Prints." 10am-5:30pm, Tuesday-Friday; 11am-5pm, Saturday. 2631 Colquitt, 527-0303.

Kahn Gallery February 26-March 25, "Bill Aron: From the Corners of the Earth." 10am-5pm, Monday-Friday. 1500 Sunset, 774-2123.

Kauffman Galleries March 4-April 9, "Eliot Porter, Oluf Nielson, Michael Johnson." 10am-6pm, Tuesday-Saturday. 2707 W. Alabama, 528-4229.

Lawndale February 27-April 2, "Texas: Exploring the Boundaries." 11am-5pm, Tuesday-Saturday. 5600 Hillman, 921-4155.

Leslie Muth Gallery February 27-March 17, "Kenny Rogers Captures the Essence of America." 10:30am-5:30pm, Tuesday-Saturday. 1114 Barkdull, 521-2639.

Marathon Oil February 26-March 25, "Finnish Photography of the 20th Century," and "Ten Norwegian Photographers." 8am-6pm, Monday-Friday; 9am-1pm, Saturday. 5555 San Felipe, 629-6600, X3303.

McMurtrey Gallery February 20-March 19, "Geoff Brune, Keith Carter, Patsy Cravens, Carol Cohen Burton, Skeet McCauley, Barbara Riley." 10am-5:30pm, Tuesday-Saturday; noon-4pm, Sunday. 3508 Lake, 523-8238.

Menil Collection February 26-March 19, "Henri Cartier-Bresson," and "Walker Evans." 11am-7pm, Wednesday-Sunday. 1515 Sul Ross, 525-9400.

Meredith Long Gallery February 23-March 11, "Charles Schorre: Pages from Books Unpublished." 10am-6pm, Tuesday-Saturday. 2323 San Felipe, 523-6671.

Millioud Gallery February 27-March 26, "Valentin Gertsman: Image et Imagination." 10:30am-4pm, Monday-Saturday. 4041 Richmond, 621-3330.

Moody Gallery February 20-March 19, "Manuel: Installation," and "Ray Metzker: Feste di Foglie." 10am-5:30pm, Tuesday-Saturday. 2815 Colquitt, 526-9911.

Munchies Cafe March 2-31, Debra Rueb: Tammy Photographs. 4pm-2am, Monday-Sunday. 2349 Bissonnet, 528-3545.

Museum of Art of the Americas West February 8-March 25, "Wanda Hammerbeck: Natural Site Photographs," and "A.J. Russell: Westward to Promontory." 10am-5pm, Monday-Friday. 1221 McKinney, 650-3233.

Museum of Fine Arts, Houston February 26-May 1, "Evocative Presence: 20th Century Photography in the Permanent Collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston." 10am-5pm, Tuesday-Saturday; 1pm-6pm, Sunday. 1001 Bissonnet, 526-1361.

New Gallery March 5-26, "Walter Chappell: Collected Light." 10:30am-5pm, Tuesday-Friday; 11am-5pm, Saturday. 2639 Colquitt, 520-7053.

O'Kane Gallery, University of Houston, Downtown February 22-March 11, "Allan Ludwig and Gwen Akin." 8am-5pm, Monday-Friday. 1 Main Street, 221-0842.

One Shell Plaza March 1-12, "Bob Busking Photographs." 7am-6pm, Monday-Friday. 910 Louisiana, 759-3528.

Parkerson Gallery March 5-31, "Josef Breitenbach." 10am-5pm, Tuesday-Friday; 11am-4pm, Saturday. 2620 Westheimer, 524-4945.

RepublicBank February 26-March 25, "Bernard-Pierre Wolf: Birth of a Myth." 7am-6pm, Monday-Friday. 700 Louisiana, 247-6441.

Rice Media Center March 2-30, "Nan Goldin: The Ballad of Sexual Dependency." 9am-5pm, Tuesday-Saturday; noon-6pm, Sunday. 2030 University, Entrance 7, 527-4894.

Sewall Gallery, Rice University March 4-April 6, "Portrayals," contemporary portraits. 9am-5pm, Tuesday-Saturday; noon-6pm, Sunday. 2030 University, 527-8101.

Susanna Sheffield Gallery March 4-26, "Fred Baldwin/Wendy Watriss: Black Cowboys." 1pm-6pm, Wednesday-Saturday. 512 Sul Ross, 526-2431.

Texas Commerce Tower February 29-March 23, "Andre Gelpke: Heim-Weh," West German photography. 8am-5pm, Monday-Friday. 601 Travis, 236-5638.

Toni Jones Gallery February 27-March 23, "David Strick: Our Hollywood." 9am-5:30pm, Monday-Saturday. 1720 Bissonnet, 528-7998.

Transco Gallery March 3-April 2, "Art Networks: 1950-1970," Harry Callahan, Van Deren Coke, Henry Holmes Smith, Aaron Siskind, Minor White, and their students. 8am-6pm, Monday-Friday; 9am-1pm, Saturday. 2800 Post Oak Blvd, 439-4400.

Two Houston Center February 26-March 25, "The Art of Modern Japanese Photography," "Sadayoshi Shiotani," and "Shoji Ueda." 8am-6pm, Monday-Friday. 1221 McKinney, 759-3528.

University of Texas Medical School February 25-March 25, "Photography and Psychiatry in the 19th Century." 7am-6pm, Monday-Friday. 6411 Fannin, 797-1777.

University State Bank February 26-March 25, "America's Uncommon Places: The Blessings of Liberty." 9am-4pm, Monday-Friday; 9am-noon, Saturday. 5615 Kirby, 526-1211.

Walzel Jewelers March 3-31, "Mary Margret Hansen, Barbara Riley, and Patsy Cravens." 10am-5pm, Monday-Friday. 1800 Post Oak Blvd, 627-7495.

Watercolor Society of Houston February 28-March 26, "Reclaiming Paradise: American Women Photograph the Land." 10am-3pm, Monday-Saturday. 3209 Montrose, 524-6736.

Watson Gallery February 26-March 19, "Margaret Bourke-White, Andre Kertesz, and L'Udo Stacho." 10am-5:30pm, Tuesday-Saturday. 3510 Lake, 526-9883.

APRIL

Art League March 3-April 2, "Salon de Refuses," statewide annual juried show. 10am-5:30pm, Tuesday-Friday; noon-4pm, Saturday. 1953 Montrose, 523-9530.

Benteler-Morgan Gallery February 26-April 29, Belgian photographer Herbert Grooteclaes. 10am-5pm, Monday-Friday; 10am-1pm, Saturday. 4200 Montrose, 522-8228.

Blaffer Gallery, University of Houston March 7-April 3, "Roots and Turns," a retrospective of 20th century Dutch photography; Jerome Leibling. 10am-5pm, Tuesday-Friday; 1pm-5pm, Saturday and Sunday. 114 Fine Arts Bldg, 749-1320.

Butera's on Alabama April 4-June 3, Carol Gerhardt Photographs. 7am-10pm, Monday-Friday; 8am-10pm, Saturday and Sunday. 2946 S. Shepherd, 528-1500.

Butera's on Montrose April 4-June 3, Sandra Joseph Works. 7am-10pm, Monday-Friday; 8am-10pm, Saturday and Sunday. 4621 Montrose, 520-8426.

Davis-McClain Gallery March 5-April 2, "Gary Brotmeyer: Recent Works," 10am-5:30pm, Monday-Friday; 11am-5pm, Saturday. 2627 Colquitt, 520-9200.

Houston Center for Photography March 4-April 3, "Au Dela de L'Image: Beyond the Image," new French photojournalism.

Houston Center for Photography April 8-May 15, "Seventh Annual Members' Exhibition." 11am-5pm, Wednesday-Friday; noon-5pm, Saturday and Sunday. 1441 W. Alabama, 529-4755.

James Schubert Gallery March 3-April 2, "Rick Dingus: Movements of the Snake." 9am-6pm Monday-Friday; 11am-3pm Saturday. 5616 Royalton, 661-8003.

Jewish Community Center March 12-April 12, "18th Annual Juried Photography Exhibit." 9am-10pm, Sunday-Thursdays; 9am-5pm Friday; 1pm-5pm Saturday. 5601 S. Braeswood, 729-3200.

Kauffman Galleries March 4-April 9, "Eliot Porter, Oluf Nielson, Michael Johnson." 10am-6pm, Tuesday-Saturday. 2707 W. Alabama, 528-4229.

Lawndale February 27-April 2, "Texas: Exploring the Boundaries." 11am-5pm, Tuesday-Saturday. 5600 Hillman, 921-4155.

Museum of Fine Arts, Houston February 26-May 1, "Evocative Presence: 20th Century Photography in the Permanent Collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston." 10am-5pm, Tuesday-Saturday; 1pm-6pm, Sunday. 1001 Bissonnet, 526-1361.

Sewell Gallery, Rice University March 4-April 6, "Portrayals," contemporary portraits. 9am-5pm, Tuesday-Saturday; noon-6pm, Sunday. 2030 University, 527-8101.

Transco Gallery March 3-April 2, "Art Networks: 1950-1970," Harry Callahan, Van Deren Coke, Henry Holmes Smith, Aaron Siskind, Minor White, and their students. 8am-6pm, Monday-Friday; 9am-1pm, Saturday. 2800 Post Oak Blvd. 439-4400.

MAY

Butera's on Alabama April 4-June 3, Carol Gerhardt Photographs. 7am-10pm, Monday-Friday; 8am-10pm, Saturday and Sunday. 2946 S. Shepherd, 528-1500.

Butera's on Montrose April 4-June 3, Sandra Joseph Works. 7am-10pm, Monday-Friday; 8am-10pm, Saturday and Sunday. 4621 Montrose, 520-8426.

Houston Center for Photography May 20-June 26, "Japanese Women Photographers From the '50s to the '80s." 11am-5pm, Wednesday-Friday; noon-5pm, Saturday and Sunday. 1441 W. Alabama, 529-4755.

Museum of Fine Arts, Houston May 15-July 10, "Photographers and Authors: A Collection of Portraits of Twentieth Century Writers. 10am-5pm, Tuesday-Saturday; 1pm-6pm, Sunday. 1001 Bissonnet, 526-1361.

EXHIBITIONS

ELSEWHERE

IN TEXAS

MARCH

Dallas/Ft. Worth
AfterImage March 12-April 30, Photographs by Michael A. Smith. 10am-5:30pm, Monday-Saturday. 2800 Routh, Suite 250, (214)871-9140.

Amon Carter Museum March 5-April 24, "Supreme Instants: Photographs by Edward Weston."

Amon Carter Museum March 11-May 16, "Western City Views: Prints and Photographs." 10am-5pm, Tuesday-Saturday; 1pm-5:30pm. 3501 Camp Bowie Drive, (817)738-1933.

APRIL

Dallas/Ft. Worth
AfterImage March 12-April 30, Photographs by Michael A. Smith. 10am-5:30pm, Monday-Saturday. 2800 Routh, Suite 250, (214)871-9140.

Amon Carter Museum March 5-April 24, "Supreme Instants: Photographs by Edward Weston."

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MAY

Dallas/Ft. Worth
AfterImage May 3-June 24, Photographs by Neil Folberg. 10am-5:30pm, Monday-Saturday. 2800 Routh, Suite 250, (214)871-9140.

Amon Carter Museum March 5-April 24, "Supreme Instants: Photographs by Edward Weston."

Amon Carter Museum March 11-May 16, "Western City Views: Prints and Photographs." 10am-5pm, Tuesday-Saturday; 1pm-5:30pm. 3501 Camp Bowie Drive, (817)738-1933.

FOTOFEST LECTURES

Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Brown Auditorium

Tuesday, March 1, 6pm Debrah Willis: Contemporary Black Women Photographers
Wednesday, March 2, 6pm William Messer: Yugoslavian Photography
Thursday, March 3, 7pm Frank Gohlke: His Work
Friday, March 4, 5:30pm Symposium: Themes and Directions for Museum and Corporate Collections

Sunday, March 6, 1pm Symposium: Art Networks
Monday, March 7, 6pm Arthur Tress: His Work
Wednesday, March 9, 6pm Christina Rodero: Spanish Photography
Thursday, March 10, 7pm Mary Ellen Mark: Her Work
Friday, March 11, 6pm Margarita Tipitsyn: Contemporary Russian Photography
Sunday, March 14, 1pm Megan Jenkinson: New Zealand Photography

Sunday, March 14, 2pm
Rodolpho del Percio: Argentina Documentary Photography
Sunday, March 14, 3pm Rune Hassner: Swedish Photography

Brown Bag Lectures at the Rice Media Center
Tuesday, March 1, noon Carl Aigner: Australian Photography
Wednesday, March 2, noon Herman Hoeneveld: Dutch Photography
Thursday, March 3, noon to be announced

Friday, March 4, noon Ray Demoulin: Eastman Kodak
Monday, March 7, noon Robert Blake: New Fench Photojournalism
Tuesday, March 8, noon Phillippe Salaun
Wednesday, March 9, noon to be announced
Thursday, March 10, noon to be announced
Friday, March 11, noon to be announced

APRIL

Houston Center for Photography **Thursday, April 14, 7:30pm**, Keith Smith will discuss hand-made books and book-as-object. 1441 W. Alabama, 529-4755. \$2 HCP members; \$3 non-members.

MAY

Houston Center for Photography **Wednesday, May 14, 7:30pm**, "Fotofest PostMortem," Joanne Lukitsh discusses the impact of FotoFest upon the Houston photographic community. **Houston Center for Photography** **Monday, May 23, 7:30pm**, "Blind Snake Blues," Jim Pomeroy has created a three dimensional dissolving slide show and talk centered around his work as a photographer and performing artist. 1441 W. Alabama, 529-4755. \$2 for HCP members; \$3 non-members.

WORKSHOPS

FOTOFEST

March 4, 5 and 6
Marie Cosindas: Environmental Portraiture and Still Life
Jerome Liebling: The Making of Documentary Photography
Duane Michals: Reality in Photography
Robert Sisson: The Macro World of Nature

March 11, 12 and 13
Larry Fink: Discovering the Intuitive
Mary Ellen Mark: Documentary Photography
Neal Slavin: Environmental Portraiture
George Tice: Making the Fine Photographic Print

APRIL

Houston Center for Photography
Fridays, April 15, 22, 29, and May 13, Carey Sutlive: Portrait Lighting II
Saturday and Sunday, April 16 and 17, Keith Smith: Artist Book Workshop
Saturdays, April 23, 30, and May 7, Bill Frazier: Beginning Photography. 1441 W. Alabama, 529-4755.

MAY

Houston Center for Photography
Wednesdays, May 11, 18 and 25, Bill Frazier: Photographic Composition
Saturday, May 14, Barbara Riley: The Painted Photograph. 1441 W. Alabama, 529-4755

CLUBS

ASMP (American Society of Magazine Photographers) meets second Monday of every month at the Graphic Arts Conference Center, 1324 Clay. Social Hour starts at 6:30pm, meeting starts at 7:30pm. 771-2220.

Association for Multimage, meets third Thursday every month. Contact Steve Sandifer, 667-9417.

Baytown Camera Club, meets at 7pm, first and third Monday of each month at the Baytown Community Center. 2407 Market. Contact Vernon Hagen, 424-5684.

Brazoria County Camera Club, meets 7:30pm, second Tuesday of every month at Continental Savings and Loan in Lake Jackson. Contact Don Benton, (409)265-4569.

The Houston Camera Club, meets 7:30pm, second and third Tuesday of each month at Baylor College of Medicine, DeBakey Bldg, Room M-112. Contact Glenn Stevens, 520-5013.

The Houston Photochrome Club, meets 7:30, second and fourth Tuesdays of each month at St. Michael's Church, 1801 Sage. Contact John Patton, 453-4167.

The Houston Photographic Club, meets 7:30pm, second and fourth Tuesdays of each month at Bering Church, Mulberry at Harold. Contact John Moyer, 933-4492.

Photographic Collectors of Houston, meets 7pm, fourth Wednesday of each month upstairs at The Camera Doctor, 3211 Edloe. Contact Curtis Riddick, 656-4077.

FM 1960

Photographic Society, meets 7:30pm, first and third Tuesday of each month at Doss Park, 2500 Frick Rd. Contact Royse Shaddix Jr, 237-3787.

Margaret Bourke-White
Vintage Photographs

André Kertész
Vintage Photographs

L'Ubo Stacho
Recent Photographs

In cooperation with the
Jane Corkin Gallery, Toronto

February 26 - March 19, 1988

Opening reception
Saturday, March 5, 6-8 pm

The Watson Gallery

3510 Lake
Houston, Texas 77098
713/526-9885
Gallery Hours: 10-5:30
Tuesday thru Saturday

America's Uncommon Places: The Blessings of Liberty



Thomas Neff. East flank and old kitchen, Longwood Plantation, Natchez, Mississippi. 1987

FOTOFEST '88 Exhibition
March, 1988 at University State Bank, 5615 Kirby Drive



University State Bank

5615 Kirby Drive
(713) 526-1211

5151 San Felipe

8203 S. Kirkwood

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