

HOUSTON CENTER FOR PHOTOGRAPHY • SPRING 1992 \$5



George Krause, John the Baptist, Spain, 1964

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SPRING 1992 VOLUME XI NUMBER 1

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SPOT

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The Houston Center for Photography celebrated its tenth anniversary last year, marking a decade of growth, change, and achievements. HCP members reflect on the organization's contributions to photography in Houston and look forward to the future. An update on HCP's many fellowship recipients is also provided, in addition to a timeline on the major photographic events in the city during the past ten years.

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EDITORS' NOTE

As we celebrate the Houston Center for Photography's tenth anniversary and reflect on its accomplishments, it is clear that HCP was not alone in its prosperity during the past decade. Houston was rich with photographic activity: the Museum of Fine Arts was developing a strong program with exhibitions and related activities; FotoFest grew from a dream to an international event; and the many galleries in the region were gaining widespread support from patrons and artists alike.

To meet the challenge of this receptive audience, HCP has sought to find its own niche by presenting a variety of exhibitions, lectures, workshops, catalogs, fellowships, and issues of the journal you hold in your hand. Planning this issue to celebrate the tenth anniversary of such a diverse organization was a formidable, yet stimulating, task. From a review of a book on nineteenth-century photography to a roundtable discussion on censorship in the arts today, a range of photohistory may be sampled. We address the topic of censorship in this issue because it is a concern that has affected our past and certainly will impact our future. Just as we were finishing this issue of SPOT, the National Council on the Arts struck another blow to freedom of expression and the peer panel process by overriding the Visual Artists Organization's panel recommendation to fund Franklin Furnace of New York and Highways of Santa Monica. The battle continues.

HCP forges ahead in its efforts to bring challenging work to you, and we've highlighted those efforts in a feature article on HCP's accomplishments over the years through the words of those involved. It is augmented by a timeline putting these events into the context of the photographic activities in Houston at the time. All told, an ample buffet from which to sample.

As part of the HCP celebration, we would like to salute and express our gratitude to the entire membership of the Houston Center for Photography, without whose continuing support this home for photo-lovers would cease to exist. We would like to also acknowledge our loyal advertisers and the Forums Program of the National Endowment for the Arts for their support of SPOT. Since its inception, HCP has been the product of collaborations of all types, and this issue of SPOT is no exception. From the cooperation of writers—local and national—to the exceptional efforts of staff and interns at HCP, this journal is the tangible result of their invaluable contributions.

Marlee Miller and Maggie Olvey

LETTERS

Dear Editor:

Thank you for the review of my exhibition at the center. I was greatly bemused by Mr. Dobay's lengthy critical speculation (SPOT, Fall 1991).

Frankly, I doubt that images offer an efficient path to greater spiritual understanding. Quite the contrary, it is our addiction to images, I would negate, in addition to the addiction to moral correctness so pervasive in our society. As William Burroughs has so aptly stated, "As soon as we say that something is true, real, then immediately things are not permitted." Who appointed whom the gate-keeper? It is by letting a "philistine . . . into the realm of mystery" that we are able to value a "realm of mystery."

What Mr. Dobay is seeking, I hope he finds, but it resides in himself not in my work or for that matter anyone else's.

Rick Hock Rochester, New York

Dear Editor:

I am writing to express my dismay at two overwhelmingly negative reviews in the Fall 1991 issue of SPOT.

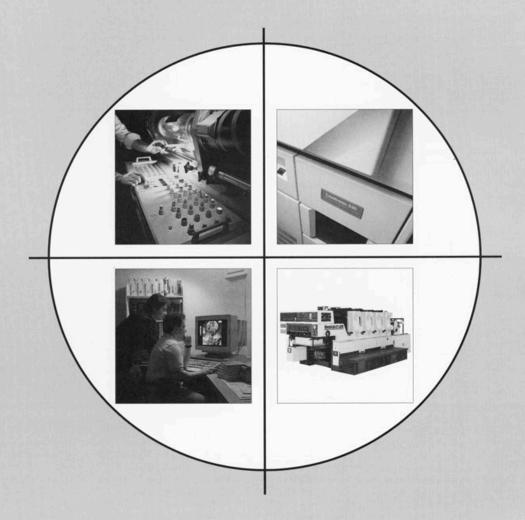
James Houlihan interprets Robert Wilson's exhibition at the Contemporary Arts Museum as a form of attachment to materialism, which implies a contradiction in the face of his attempted spiritualism. I find not only the entire interpretation, but many individual judgments, insupportable. For instance, I found the presence of Wilson's own cowboy boots in the show a statement about his roots and his feelings of closeness to his home state (Texas). But more important, by concentrating on a cynical view of the exhibition, Houlihan neglected to inform the public as to why Wilson is so important. As a theatrical producer and director he is famous all over the world for avant-garde productions that oddly resurrect theater practice from all periods back to the Greeks. This work alone would qualify him for more serious treatment. That the objects he designs for his productions and the drawings he prepares for the sets are objects of art in themselves is even more impressive. Certainly he is controversial; his rewriting of scripts, his gadgets, his combinations of theater and dance—this is a controversy that is enlivening theater, not injuring it. I think the paradox Wilson expresses is not one of contradiction or hypocrisy but the dilemma of contemporary life caught between material and spirit, loving each and longing always for the other.

The other article that dismayed me was "A World in Negative" by Diane Berna-Heath. It has always been my understanding that one must judge art in accordance with its intentions, not in accordance with our own preconceived notions. We must enter its world and follow the rules it creates. Never should we expect a work of art to do that which it does not attempt. Criticism is a tool to negotiate between the artist and the audience, instructing the audience how to make this entry. Bad work will fall by the wayside. I believe the Kuwaiti photographs realized their intentions.

The views I have expressed, particularly statements about the purpose of criticism and the nature of art, are subjective and cannot be taken as truths. But I firmly believe that a positive approach is more constructive than looking for what is wrong and focusing on it. After all, when we look for something, we usually find it.

Elizabeth McBride Houston, Texas

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Delving into HCP's Ten-Year History

Ellen Lang

Emerging from the Houston photographic community in October 1981, the Houston Center for Photography (HCP) has tried to be many things to many people. The sometimes turbulent, often triumphant, evolution of this visual artists organization reflects the dreams of the people behind it—artists, collectors, curators, patrons, and students. A grassroots phenomenon with institutional aspirations, HCP's auspicious birth, ambitious expansion, stubborn survival, and determined vitality is an American success story.

While a ten-year tenure for any medium-sized artists organization is awe inspiring and cause for celebration, its early history resembles a myth, complete with proud heroes and dark horses. Its founding members recount those first few years with pride and emotion. The story approximates a genealogy of the Houston photographic community.

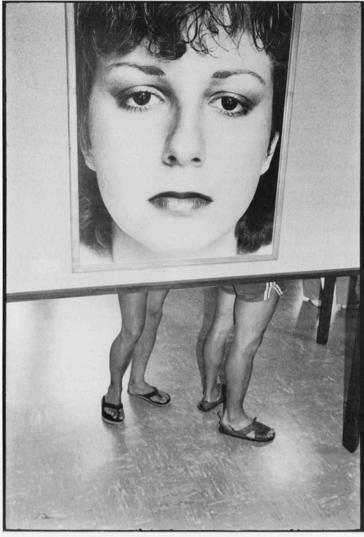
In the Beginning

Prior to 1975, photography had little permanent foothold or mainstream clout in Houston. The evolving popularity of photography in the city paralleled its development across the country. Some multimedia commercial galleries, such as Fredericka Hunter's Texas Gallery in 1970, included photography in their yearly programming. The Cronin Gallery, one of Houston's few exclusive photography showplaces, opened in 1975 and was followed soon by David Mancini's Photopia, filling in where Geoff Winningham's Latent Image Gallery had left off in the early '70s. Winningham's Rice Media Center program, established in 1969, was strong; the photography department at the University of Houston had begun with promise in 1975 under George Bunker; and the photography department at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (MFAH), was maturing under the nurturing hands of Anne W. Tucker. But, the diverse denizen of photographers, collectors, and "accomplished spectators"-Lynn Herbert, past HCP executive director, calls "the sophisticated seers"-wanted

As the curator of photography at MFAH, Tucker brought together those with a true love of photography. She sent out flyers inviting people to talk about the photographic community at Frederic and Betty Fleming's Paradise Bar and Grill, and the word spread. As thirty to forty people discussed their dreams, the idea of the Houston Center for Photography began to take shape. Although no permanent meeting or exhibition place existed, ideas and energy abounded. The organization was to move first to Sally Horrigan's house, then to Buddy Clemmons gallery/home, and on to Bering Memorial United Methodist Church before settling in 1983 into its current locale at the corner of Mulberry and West Alabama.

In addition to address changes, the director's torch passed from Lynn Herbert (then McLanahan) in 1983 to Lew Thomas in 1985. In 1987, April Rapier held it briefly before passing it on to Jean Caslin. As presidents of HCP's board of directors, Gay Block, Dave Crossley, Herman Detering, Paul Hester, Horrigan, Joan Morgenstern, Rapier, Amanda Whitaker, and Clint Willour have done their parts. While diversity has always been a defining characteristic of HCP, it has contributed to the center's strength and challenged its stability.

Much of that vision was realized in the first year. HCP became more than just a meeting place for members to exhibit and



HCP's first show: head by Dave Crossley, head and feet by Paul Hester. (This photo was first reproduced in the second issue of *Image* magazine.)

discuss their work. Volunteers produced workshops and lectures that offered technical and issue-oriented education. They organized exhibitions that explored the range of photography, and they put basic fundraising, programming, and organizational structures into place. In addition to a monthly newsletter, they launched *Image*, a critical photography journal, in

continues to characterize the organization today in spite of tremendous organizational changes—was apparent from the start.

Just "two months into it, a community was clear," asserts Crossley. "It offered opportunities for dialogue, the chance to see one another's work. It included professionals and amateurs who in the true sense of the word, were in it for the love of it. . . .



One of the first members' meetings. Photo by Debra Rueb.

1983. The magazine was renamed SPOT in 1984 because of a conflict with another magazine's name. Artist Ed Hill and Crossley, a commercial photographer, conceived the name, and Charles Schorre and Peter Boyle developed the original design.

The community spirit, which enabled so much work to be done so fast—and

There were no limitations."

HCP opened a gallery in the Bering Memorial Church in July 1982, just before its incorporation as a nonprofit artists organization. The organization successfully undertook a fundraising campaign with a \$180,000 goal over a three-year period. Muffy McLanahan, recognized recently by the Houston Post as one of ten Women of Distinction for her volunteer support of the Houston Grand Opera, chaired the drive beginning in 1983. When Crossley's wife, Jody Blazek (the CPA who secured the center's nonprofit status with the help of attorney David Portz), notified the members of a vacancy in some Menil properties in the museum district, the center moved to its present site. In maverick fashion, HCP installed a computer to streamline operations, making it one of the first alternative arts organizations to do so. With Crossley as president, the hiring of Herbert as the center's first director established a creative team at HCP. Prior to that time, according to a founding member, all center operations were conducted on "a strictly democratic basis," with everyone voting at monthly meetings.

The center came together quickly because of the grassroots support. Longtime member, Ginny Camfield, a photographer who sits on the current board, recalls that "the membership that came together for all activities was a real resource." For the first annual Members' Exhibition, the gallery space in the church needed painting. Debra Rueb, a founding member and photographer who works for a NASA contractor, faced a crumbling room that was to exhibit the center's first show in a matter of days. Typical of the determination at work, Camfield remembers Rueb saying, "Just paint the room white, it'll be fine." So the two women spent the weekend painting. Hester remembers that "human sweat" gave the organization momentum and resources that made up for limited funds. He recalls using rub-on lettering for exhibition titles: "What we didn't have, we would make."

In addition to materials, members made up organizational procedures as they went along, devoting imagination and seemingly endless energy to get the center off the ground. Crossley remarks on his tenure as the first president of HCP: "I was a blank palette. There were no rules. We went whole hog." It was a time of youth and ambition before family concerns and career goals demanded more attention. Doing everything included choosing exhibitions from the work of photographers both inside and outside the organization. The Houston-based membership was small in comparison to today's, enabling "house' votes to determine all programming. Members subsequently developed more systematic selection procedures, which have evolved to juried shows for members' exhibitions and to committee choices for regular programming.

Founding member Paul Hester speaks fondly of a 1982 exhibition, "Chillysmith Farm: Mark and Dan Jury," based on the book Gramps, which describes the last three years in the life of Frank Tugend, the artists' grandfather. Camfield remembers some unknown artists who brought their portfolios to the church one Thursday night and presented work with unexpected quality and insight. She recalls seeing some sensitive portraits of women and platinum prints of Connecticut factories that were 'unrivaled by what I see today" and earned exposure in the Members' Gallery. Muffy McLanahan remembers "In Space, A Photographic Journey," presented by HCP for NASA/Johnson Space Center in 1987 A fifteen-foot high photographic mural of the moon, John Glenn's special appearance, and an astronaut reunion appealed to many people. A \$30,000 publicity and fundraising bonanza, the exhibition exposed a broad range of people to photography and HCP, but it also brought the



Members of the Houston Center for Photography at the annual selection meeting for the Second Annual Members' Exhibition, 1983, by Paul Hester.

debate over HCP's artistic identity to a head, according to those involved. Should the center focus on art photography, reportage, or a diversity of views? Then Executive Director Lew Thomas, show curators Crossley and McLanahan, and the membership struck a compromise. They "HCP once tried to be all things to all people," he says. "Now it needs to be what no one else can be." His expansive vision parallels the center's artistic philosophy, which "fosters a wide diversity of work."

Individual voices reflect unique points of reference. To Crossley, it's about the

Anne W. Tucker makes her choice in the balloting for the First Annual Members' Exhibition.

presented the exhibition at the Transco

Among the distinguished members who showed their work at HCP's first exhibitions were George Krause, who recently completed preparations for a retrospective to be seen at MFAH this spring, and Gay Block, whose solo show at the Museum of Modern Art opened January 15. The work of other ex officio board members, such as Fred Baldwin, Suzanne Bloom, Peter Brown, Hill, Charles Schorre, Wendy Watriss, and Winningham, also inspire pride in the Houston photographic community.

Photography Explored

Clint Willour, HCP board member and



HCP board retreat, 1984. Photo by Herman Detering.

curator of the Galveston Arts Center, explains that "in terms of its goals, the HCP is about, for, and by photographers and photography." He acknowledges the breadth of aesthetic values within the photographic community and the difficulty he faces when addressing divergent styles.

wonder of seeing in ways that the eye cannot: "Photography allows you to see things, to share experiences with other people. There is a bigger crowd interested in photography involved with life rather than art photography." To Brown, a photographer and teacher at Rice University, it's about exploration and introspection. Rapier, who handpaints photographic imagery and teaches and writes about photography and photographic history, focuses on the fine art and interdisciplinary aspect of photography. But, she laments, "I find most art empty, heartless, and pigheaded." Jean Caslin, current executive director of HCP, appreciates a broad range of work in keeping with her bi-coastal art history education. She speaks with equal excitement

about black-and-white documentary photographs and experimental slide installations.

installations.

This diversity
of photographic interests is reflected in the
center's membership
even now. Winningham
explains that despite differing tastes, a common
desire "to show work
and get to know photography" has characterized the HCP
membership.
Remarking on educational and local pro-

gramming, Tucker says, "The center has always had a broader view, but it exists to benefit its members." That's often done with portfolio reviews and members' exhibitions. Through its board and committee structure, she adds, it "gives people the chance to be involved in ways they cannot

at a museum." This means being involved in bringing shows to town that wouldn't otherwise be seen, she says. Hans Staartjes, chair of the Programming Committee, emphasizes the opportunities for active involvement at a visual artisits organization, including "the chance to develop, see work, meet interesting people, and further my career by seeing work that really means something."

Willour concedes the center's social role and practical role as well, noting that it has always been a vehicle for artists. Camfield recalls the electricity generated by HCP being one of the only places in town to show emerging photographers' work. Before FotoFest and photography's mainstream acceptance as a fine art, few photographers had the support, exposure, and identification that comes with being represented by a gallery. Willour explains that now "there are so many other opportunities in Houston that we didn't have before. Work can be seen at the MFAH, FotoFest, DiverseWorks, and the artists' regular galleries," he says. "Because HCP created other opportunities, its need to do that changed. It can grow to a point, then it outgrows itself, but it is fulfilled in other ways," referring to expanded programs, exhibitions, fellowships, and grants for artists. Inevitable tradeoffs are a factor of growth. For Muffy McLanahan, this includes the exchange of intimacy for influence. "There used to be arguments and hugs; now there are committee reports," she says. HCP strikes a delicate balance between being a membership organization for the Houston photographic community and a visual arts organization with national stature.

HCP: The Organization

With growth, the center has increasing opportunities and increasing demands common to an organization. As the center grows, fundraising consumes more time. Michael DeVoll, HCP administrative director, describes the center's double life: "Either you are busy doing what you do, or you are getting funding to do what you do." To help defray the costs of producing and showing new work, HCP often shares resources with St. Paul's Film in the Cities, Boston's Photographic Resource Center, San Francisco's CameraWork, and Portland's (Öregon) Blue Sky Gallery so that programming produced by one institution may travel to one or more of the others for viewing. This makes the work of lesser known or emerging photographers more visible and accessible. Through national distribution of SPOT, the center forges even more ties. Krause compares SPOT to Afterimage, VIEWS, and Photo Review. SPOT addresses "the social and cultural impact of photography in the world," according to Jeff DeBevec, chair of HCP's Publications Committee. He explained that its high-production value and insightful writing make SPOT a major source of pride for HCP, as well as one of its largest expenditures—supported by advertising and the National Endowment

for the Arts (NEA).

HCP also shares institutional concerns with other organizations across the country, such as long-range planning, fundraising, and other bureaucratic realities. Hester compares the financial environment of today's visual artists organizations with that of one ten years ago. "The big difference," he says, "is funding in all the arts. Things cost more to do and you have to have professional people to do it, but it becomes like a perpetual motion machine-spending money to make more." Then there is "the concern about offending those with money to spend;" it becomes, he says, an issue of survival. Muffy McLanahan explains that when money gets tight, "people hedge, since they don't want the discussion to get back to the donors. In hard times, people are quick to rally around, but they need to feel all is right with the world."

While the Cultural Arts Council of Houston and the Texas Commission on the Arts are sources of operating support, HCP has also received National

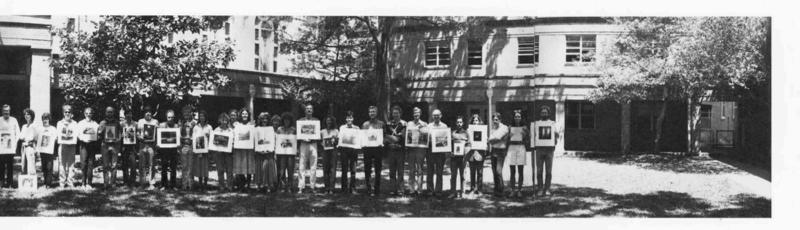


The HCP Members' Gallery at Bering Church.

Endowment for the Arts support. With this federal funding and national recognition, an artists organization changes in complex ways. Seeking acceptance into the Advancement Program of the NEA, HCP turned its attention to examining the organization's mission, standardizing operations, and doing long-range planning, in addition to maintaining regular programming. The staff and board produced a doc-

April Rapier and Dave Crossley at the opening of the "Coast-to-Coast" exhibition curated by Rapier.





ument that current HCP President Joan Morgenstern refers to as "the book that tells who we are, where we are, and where we're going." It outlines the roles of the staff and board and details a task/timeline for HCP's multi-year plan.

To be matched by grassroots funding

and Lesbian Couples" by Sage Sohier, "Convergence: Eight Photographers," and "The Scorched Earth: Oil Well Fires in Kuwait." These exhibits addressed homosexual, multicultural, and working-class issues and audiences.

Having found its niche, the center can



David Mancini holds a photograph to be sold at HCP's first auction as Clint Willour acts as auctioneer and Lynn McLanahan Herbert looks on.

over the next three years, the NEA Advancement Grant goes into effect this year. It directs funding to enhance public programs and will help increase staff with the addition of a development/marketing coordinator and a membership assistant/workshop coordinator. And, HCP will create a working capital reserve to facilitate cash management. It will no longer be necessary for a financial wizard to "save the day" or "perform his magic," as Crossley describes investor Mike McLanahan doing for the center during hard times. Acceptance into the NEA plan, according to DeBevec, suggests that "the NEA is saying, 'HCP is worth it,' and they will bank on us to succeed in the future."

HCP: The Community

As HCP implements its plan, it strengthens ties to the community. Rather than an emphasis on organization that separates HCP from the audience and members it serves, the Advancement Grant actually enhances and expands those ties. Through its refined mission and expanded goals, the center will spend the next three

years strengthening all public programs to showcase new national and international talent and trends. As HCP creates varied programs, including multicultural and experimental work, it will draw in new audiences. With artist support, such as grants and fellowships in addition to exhibition space, the center nurtures emerging artists and appreciation of photography from Poland to Pearland (Texas). Willour gives examples of the tremendous community response for shows such as "At Home With Themselves: Gay

interact with other institutions more effectively. To a certain extent, HCP, FotoFest, MFAH, CAM, DiverseWorks, and The Menil Collection have always competed, but they enhance each other through an educated, involved, and sophisticated audience. Tucker explains the interactive interests: "There is competition for the same limited funds. Sometimes we step on each other's toes in terms of programs and funding. Beyond that, we all wish each other well and do what we can to help each other."

This is particularly true in the case of FotoFest. Fred Baldwin and Petra Benteler initially conceived of the international event as a program to be put on by HCP. The idea grew into an independent organization, which departed from the scope and mission of the center. Taking place every two years, FotoFest—called the biggest photography event in the world—fosters cooperation among the city's museums, galleries, and institutions.

"Cross-institutional" is the word Peter Brown uses to describe Houston's photo-

Proud Recipients in '84: (I to r): Director Lynn Herbert, fellow Margaret Moore, President Gay Block, and fellows Debra Telatovich and Peter McClennan.



graphic community. Krause remembers that when Baldwin taught at the University of Houston, he would bring his students to HCP. Currently, Tucker is secretary for HCP in addition to her MFAH responsibilities. Krause sits on the FotoFest art board—as do several other HCP board members—between teaching photography classes and tending to his own work. Morgenstern, once a president of Photo Forum (MFAH's photography support group) now presides over HCP as board president.

The institutional overlap creates a rich cultural environment that defines the community and encourages its accomplishments. Although Winningham asserts that HCP has had a powerful influence on the photographic community in terms of its people, exhibitions, and seminars, he insists that the MFAH program changed the community. "It was Anne's influence," he says. "That's when it changed in the biggest way." Tucker disagrees, though not, she says, solely out of modesty. All the organizations "buttressed and drew

strength from one another," she says. Brown notes the role of the academic community, citing Glassell School of Art, the Art Institute, Rice Media Center, and the University of Houston.

The interaction of an arts organization with other institutions requires a constant strategic balance among funding, programming, constituency, and artist support networks. Thomas, now curator of the Contemporary Arts Center in New Orleans. recalls his challenging professional education as HCP's second executive director. He explains that, because his strength was a conceptual emphasis with little administrative background in grants and funding," his arrival in 1985 was "controversial." He admits that by pursuing his professional goal "to open up discussion, to exert a challenging influence, I alienated the

board at different times." But, people are quick to point out his contributions.

Krause remembers the spirit of change at the center and Thomas' personal vision when he says, "Lew Thomas was trying to say, "This is what modern photography is about." Thomas acknowledges, "Despite the differences, I was pleased to be invited" to the tenth anniversary party honoring past directors and presidents.

Focusing on the Future

HCP has evolved in its ten years through the determination and diverse dreams of the individuals who make up its community. Pursuing and implementing the NEA Advancement Grant helped to put the whole HCP house in order and define the delicate balance of membership, funding, fellowships, programming, and publications. With a three-year funding plan through 1995 that provides for continuity and overlap, HCP has focused its future.

The staff and board can now focus on HCP's mission, which met with unanimous approval in the winter of 1991. It states: The Houston Center for Photography strives to deepen the understanding and appreciation of the photographic arts. Through exhibitions, publications, and educational programming, the center supports emerging and mid-career artists and their audiences. It provides a forum for the exchange of ideas and promotes the study of photography, both as a medium of expression and as a tool of cultural investigation. HCP is a nonprofit organization serving as a resource to its members and the community with programs that have regional and national impact.



First HCP President Paul Hester critiques members' work at the gallery on West Alabama, HCP's current home.

As HCP enters its second decade in the black, Tucker says, "Its purpose and vitality is what will keep it going." HCP will continue to serve and reflect its members and the community as it fosters photography that, in Tucker's words, "becomes incorporated into the fabric of the city, crosses all strata and intersects various communities."

Ellen Lang is a MFA student in design at the University of Houston and a freelance writer.

Ten Years of Houston Photography

Our timeline highlights museum and gallery exhibitions, acquisitions, and other important contributions to the art of photography in Houston over the past ten years. This timeline mentions only those museums, galleries, and educational institutions that responded to our requests for information.

Founders organize Houston Center for Photography.

Texas Gallery exhibits "Cindy Sherman Color Photographs."

Texas Gallery exhibits "Three Texas Photographers: Nic Nicosia, Suzanne Paul, Casey Williams."

HCP moves to its first location at Bering Memorial United Methodist Church.

HCP incorporates as nonprofit, charter #61776; obtains tax-exempt status.

Museum of Fine Arts, Houston,
co-organizes "Paper and Light:
The Calotype in France and
Great Britain," with the Art
Institute of Chicago in cooperation with the University of Texas.

HCP holds first benefit auction.

MFAH receives "American Images,"

The American Telephone and

Telegraph Collection,

299 photographs.

MFAH purchases "László Moholy-Nagy,"
28 vintage and 16 modern prints
made from Moholy-Nagy's negatives and archival material
(completed in 1984).

MFAH purchases and is bequested the Edward Steichen Collection, 90 photographs (completed in 1990).

Robin Cronin closes her gallery three and a half years after the untimely death of her business partner and husband Tony Cronin.

Charles Gallagher, with a group of artists, opens DiverseWorks artspace to provide opportunities and support for artists through exhibitions, performances, and readings, grant programs, and commissions.

MFAH purchases and is given
"Contemporary Mexican
Photography," 223 photographs,
(completed in 1990).

Texas Gallery shows "Lee Friedlanders Photographs of

HCP publishes first issue of Image maga-

HCP moves to current West Alabama location, hires Lynn (McLanahan) Herbert as first executive director.

MFAH shows "Photographs and Portfolios by Paul Strand," co-organized with the Art Institute of Chicago.

HCP awards first fellowships.

Texas Gallery exhibits "William Wegman: Polaroids."



First exhibition at HCP's current location on West Alabama and Mulberry. Photo by Jim Caldwell and Paula Goldman.

The Menil Collection shows "Tibet: The Sacred Realm, Photographs 1880–1950," organized by the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the Asia Society, NYC.

Petra Benteler and Frederick Baldwin conceive the idea for Houston FOTOFEST. Modelled after the "Mois de la Photo" in Paris, the purpose of this biennial celebration is to promote photography and enhance the growing cultural reputation of Houston and Texas.

HCP Goldy mard retreat, writes

MFAH exhibits "Edward Steichen: The Condé Naste Years,"

DiverseWorks exhibits "Reserved for Export I: A Contemporary View of Mexican Photography," 70 black-and-white photographs by contemporary Mexican photogra phers.



The Black & White Ball. Photo by Jim Caldwell

HCP holds Black & White Ball benefit at Magnolia Ballroom.

MFAH appoints Anne W. Tucker as first Gus and Lyndall Wortham Curator of Photography.

HCP's Image magazine becomes SPOT.

Susan Morgan becomes a partner of Benteler Galleries, renamed Benteler-Morgan Galleries. Petra Benteler returns to West Germany to operate a private branch of the business. Dr. North frosty and Michelle yarges open the Community Artists Collective to exhibit and market the works of African-American artists.

"Raj Remembered: A Night in British India" is presented for the benefit of the Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston at Transco Gallery.

DiverseWorks shows "Sans Titre," contemporary French photographs and video.

HCP hires Lew Thomas as executive director and Chris Lunceford as administrative director.

HCP shows "Siliconstones: A Photographic Installation" (its first installation) by Carol Gerhardt and Mary Margaret Hansen.

MFAH shows "The Golden Age of British Photography, 1839–1900," organized by the Victoria & Albert Museum and the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

DiverseWorks shows "Playing It Again: Strategies of Appropriation."

The Transo Tower shows "Presence," exhibition of photographs from the book of the same name.

FotoFest features 64 exhibitions, J83 photographers, and 4,000 photographs.

HCP shows Bernard Faucon for FotoFest.

MFAH exhibits "Robert Frank: New York to Nova Scotia" (Target IV).

The Community Artists' Collective



Texas Gallery exhibits "Robert

Mapplethorpe: Platinum Prints."

April Rapier moves from president to interim executive director of HCP.

Moody Gallery shows "Private Thoughts" by MANUAL (Ed Hill/Suzanne Bloom).

In cooperation with HCP, the East and
West Galleries of Transco
Tower show "In Space: A
Photographic Journey," the first
large-scale exhibition of photographs taken for the National
Aeronautics and Space
Administration.

The Menil Collection opens in a new building designed by noted architect Renzo Piano. The art, collected over the years by Dominique and Jean de Menil, features the works of Leger and Braque, Picasso, and Magritte, as well as important African and pre-Columbian work.

FotoFest includes 84 exhibidom in huseums, galleries, and corporate buildings around Houston.

DiverseWorks shows "Rudy Burckhardt: A Survey," photographs from 1937–1985

Lew Thomas curates "Not For The Living Room," exhibited at Diverse-Works, showing the work of Texas photographers.





MANUAL, Earth/Science, 1988 Ektacolor photo, 30" x 40".

The Moody Gallery exhibits MANUAL's "After Nature" and Ray K. Metzker's "Feste de Foglio."

Lawndale, in conjunction with FotoFest, exhibits "Texas: Exploring the Boundaries."

The Menil Collection exhibits Henri Cartier-Bresson and Walker Evans during FotoFest.

HCP shows "Beyond the Image" curated by Robert Blake from ICP.

Texas Gallery exhibits "Andy Warhol: Photographs."

HCP shows "The Other," curated by Cynthia Freeland.

HCP hires Jean Caslin as executive director.

Texas Gallery exhibits "Nic Nicosia: Real Pictures."

The Menil Collection exhibits "The Perpetual Motif: The Art of Man Ray."

Anchorage Foundation of Texas provides HCP with Macintosh computer; HCP initiates Artists Access Grants.

HCP begins programming of

DiverseWorks exhibits "Mothers of the Disappeared."



FotoFest 1990 at the George R. Brown Convention Center. © Houston Chronicle

HCP hires Michael DeVoll as administrative director.

MFAH shows "The Art of Photography: 1839–1989," co-organized with Royal Academy of Art and Australian National Gallery.

HCP shows "Beyond Permission," curated by Geoff Brune and R. Lynn Foster.

HCP coordinates "Windows on Houston," a pubic art project for the Municipal Arts Commission.

Benteler-Morgan Galleries exhibits
"Elliott Erwitt: Personal Exposures."

FotoFest features 28 exhibitions
shown in the George R. Brown
Convention Center and galleries
around Houston.

HCP hosts "3 x 5: Brown, Flynt, Joyce, Kirchman, MacNeil" photographic installations.

CAM presents "The International Pinhole Photography Exhibition."

HCP holds "Photo Fiesta" benefit at Magnolia Ballroom.

Nic Nicosia, Real Pictures #11, 1988





Man Ray's *Electricité*, 1931, The Menil Collection

HCP enters NEA Advancement Program.

Sewall Art Gallery at Rice University shows "Other Images: Other Reality—Mexican Photography Since 1930."

MFAH exhibits "Czech Modernism: 1900–45."

MFAH exhibits "Martin Luther King Jr., and the Civil Rights Movement."

West Gallery, Transco Tower, exhibits "The Pin Oak Horse Show," photographs by Geoff Winningham.

CAM exhibits MANUAL'S installation "Forest\Products."



Elliott Erwitt, California, 1955

HCP holds Birthday Blow-up Bash at the James Gallery celebrating the organization's tenth anniversary.

NEA awards HCP \$60,000 Advancement Grant.

MFAH exhibits "Paul Strand," organized by the National Gallery of Art.

MFAH receives "Allan Chasanoff Photographic Collection," 950 photographs.

CAM features Duane Michals as part of its lecture series, "Topics in Twentieth-Century Art."

CAM shows "Contemporary Latin American Photographers."

CAM shows an installation by Christian Boltanski: Shadows.



Sewall Art Gallery at Rice University shows "India Along the Ganges: Photographs by Raghubir Singh," curated by Milo C. Beach, director of the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution.

With funding from an NEA Special Exhibition Grant, HCP shows "Tseng Kwong Chi: The Expeditionary Works."

Timeline compiled by Tracey McEachern Moger

GEORGE KRAUSE

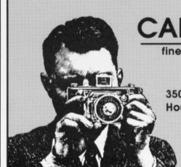
A Retrospective

Anne Tucker



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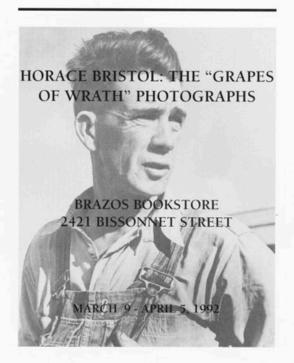
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HCP Fellowships: Turning Money into Art

Nels P. Highberg

The Houston Center for Photography began its annual Photography Fellowship Program in 1983. For the first two years, awards were given to help photographers complete an ongoing documentary project. In 1985, jurors—prominent members of Houston's photographic community—increased the scope of the program to award photographers involved in any photographic work in progress. A year after receiving the award, recipients exhibit their completed work at HCP. Since its inception, the program has given awards to twenty-six photographers.

After receiving the fellowship, many recipients continued their education earning advanced degrees in art. Margaret Moore (1984) earned an MFA from Arizona State University, and Dornith Doherty (1985) earned hers from the Yale University School of Art. Currently, Monica Chau (1989) studies for an MFA at the California Institute of the Arts, the same school where Paula Goldman (1985) earned her MFA. Carol Vuchetich (1987) graduated from the University of Houston with an MFA in photography, while Liz Ward (1988) earned an MFA in painting there. Also at UH, Roel Castillo (1986) earned a BFA in photography and is now enrolled in the MFA program, and David A. Portz (1986) earned an MA in English literature and creative writing. Elizabeth M. Grant (1987) is currently studying for a BFA at the College of Santa Fe.

Many fellowship recipients have used their photographic skills to teach. In the Houston area, Amy Blakemore (1989) teaches at the Glassell School of Art, while Vuchetich is a member of the adjunct faculty there. Bill Frazier (1986) is a member of the faculty at San Jacinto Junior College. Margo Reece (1990) teaches at the University of Houston. Outside of Texas, Goldman teaches at the University of California at Riverside, while Doherty teaches at the Herron School of Art at Indiana University—Purdue University at Indianapolis.

"I've always had an interest in doing installations, and the fellowship gave me the freedom and access to explore going beyond simple photos on a wall."

-Monica Chau, 1989

Other winners still follow careers involving photography. Sonia G. Yi (1990) is a staff photographer at the *Conroe Courier Gulf Coast*. Ben DeSoto (1989) continues to work at the *Houston Chronicle*, where he has won awards from the Houston Press Club and the Inter American Press Association. Paul Vincent Kuntz (1988) is a medical and public relations photographer for Texas Children's Hospital and St. Luke's Episcopal Hospital.

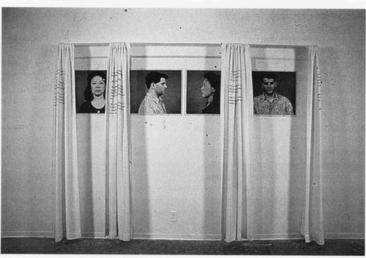
Other fellows continue to expand their careers. Stephen Peterson (1985) is the director of financial aid at Texas A&M University at Galveston. Portz practices law with the firm of Ryan & Sudan in Houston. Scottie Stapleton (1990) attends law school in Houston, and Jill Goodman

"When a professional photographic organization gave me the fellowship, I felt very encouraged to continue working. It was the thing that helped most."

—Carol Vuchetich



Paula Goldman, from the "Laughing" series, 1991



Monica Chau and Daniel Mirer, installation photo of Lofan/Shikseh, 1991 (original in color)

Carol Vuchetich, from the "Invisible People" series, 1991



(1987) attends law school in Chicago.
R. Lynn Foster (1989) owns his own company where he is a broker selling used industrial equipment. Now living in Victoria, Texas, Frank Isaac (1986) is the director of education at the ABC Merit Shop Training Program, a nonprofit educational trust that provides training for the petrochemical industry. Most of these former fellows still practice photography and exhibit their work.

After receiving an HCP Fellowship, many recipients continued winning awards, such as Frazier and Ward who have won Mid-America Arts Alliance / National Endowment for the Arts Photography Fellowship Awards.

"I'm still plugging away at the fickle world of art photography. . . . I used my fellowship money to buy a set of Dynalights, and I still use them constantly."

-Paula Goldman, 1985

Some former fellows have begun completely new series of work. Goldman's "Laughing" series began with her interest in how emotional states are represented in our culture. Chau's installation Lofan/Shikseh is a collaboration with Daniel Mirer that chronicles their parents' mutual disapproval of their relationship. In her "Invisible People" series, Vuchetich photographs those who are aging and are sometimes forgotten.

HCP created the fellowship program to help photographers find much needed funds to complete their work. Isaac said: "The HCP Fellowship was very important to me; I was very fortunate to be a recipient. It came at a critical time." Pending funding, the program will continue, and more photographers will be able to complete projects they believe in.

HCP Fellows

1983 Naomi Bullock Martin Harris Pamela Morris 1984 Peter McClennan Margaret Moore Debra Telatovich 1985 Dornith Doherty Paula Goldman Stephen Peterson 1986 Roel Castillo Bill Frazier Frank Isaac David A.Portz

1987 Elizabeth M. Grant Jill Goodman Carol Vuchetich 1988

R. Lynn Foster Paul Vincent Kuntz Liz Ward 1989

Amy Blakemore Monica Chau Ben DeSoto Elbert D. Howze 1990

Margo Reece Scottie Stapleton Sonia G. Yi

Nels P. Highberg studies literature and creative writing at the University of Houston and works at HCP as the curatorial assistant.



he Houston Art Dealers Association welcomes you to FotoFest '92 and invites one and all to visit our galleries. Many of our 20 members are hosting photographic exhibitions.

he Houston Art Dealers Association is a non-profit membership organization founded in 1977 for the purpose of promoting the visual arts in Houston. It is often through the art dealer's efforts and exhibitions that artists are first brought to the attention of the public, collectors and museums. Responsible fine art dealers build public confidence, encourage strong, continuing support for the arts and enrich the community at large.

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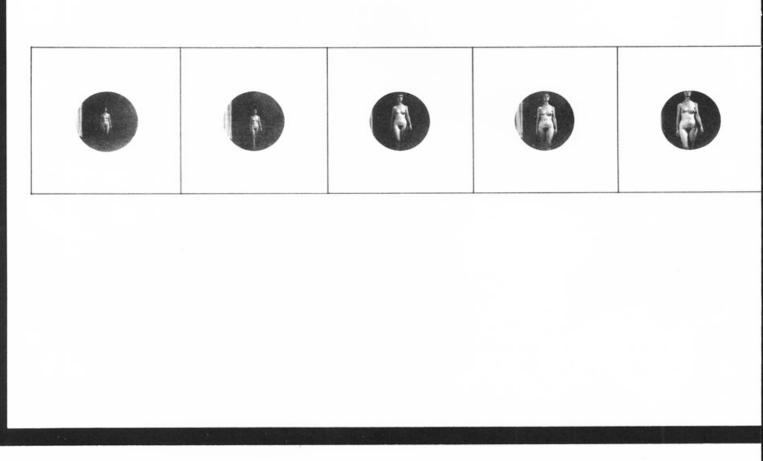
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The Perspectives of Censorship: A Discussion

What follows is the edited transcript of a roundtable discussion among Anne W. Tucker, the Gus and Lyndall Wortham Curator of Photography at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; David L. Jacobs, chair of the Art Department at the University of Houston; and William Camfield, professor of art and art history at Rice University.

These local experts addressed the issue of censorship in the arts as stimulated by a lecture given at the University of Houston this past December by Dennis Barrie, director of the Contemporary Arts Center in Cincinnati. Barrie and the center were charged with misdemeanor counts of "pandering obscenity and displaying minors in nudity-oriented material" when the center exhibited "Robert Mapplethorpe: The Perfect Moment." Barrie and the center were found not guilty.

ANNE W. TUCKER: Dennis Barrie gave the history of the Contemporary Arts Center taking the exhibition, of finding out about the cancellation at The Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., then going back to his board and that board reaffirming the exhibition, not once, but twice. As he was telling that story, I almost had the sense of a Greek play, in the sense that I felt he was caught in an irreversible fate. I had to remind myself that it wasn't fate, that Dennis chose the confrontation on the

basis of principle. But, when he was telling it, he was telling it as though it was a cup he would have been pleased to have had pass from his lips. Not because he had made the commitment to take the show, I didn't feel, but because he felt honor bound, quite literally honor bound.

There were a wide range of decisions he could have made. He could have chosen to edit the show. Contractually it was in the contract that he couldn't. Knowing the district attorney and everyone in Cincinnati, Barrie, his board, and staff thought they had done all their groundwork; they thought they had the mayor and the newspapers and the city councilmen understanding what they were doing and why. But, then this manufactured groundswell from the fundamentalists' letter-writing campaign switched people who had previously said they wouldn't prosecute the center. So, at each step of the way, he tried to walk as close to the line as he could and do it right. And, you know, it was just forced upon him.

David Jacobs: I question the idea of a wholly manufactured groundswell. The Reverend Wildmon [from American Family Federation] is touching sensitive nerves that are out there in the populace and manipulating them towards some very unbeautiful ends. He is a powerful and, in

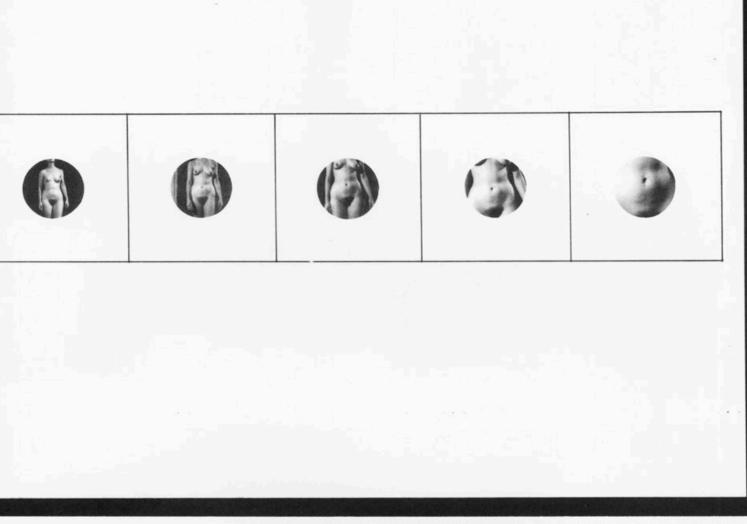
my mind, dangerous force. But, it is not just a matter of a set-up. We should never underestimate the depth of puritanical strains within our society. The conservatism in Cincinnati—where I was born and raised—is pronounced in a lot of ways, but no more so than in many other parts of the country.

AT: One of the things that I really enjoyed was hearing Dennis talk about the aftermath of the trial. He talked about the jurors that came to see the art museum and the jurors who had not been allowed to see other art in the exhibition except the seven pieces that were on trial. He talked about what that did to pique their curiosity and pique their curiosity about the center. When I was in Cincinnati, during the trial, I didn't meet a single person—whether it was a cab driver or a bookstore operator or a waitress in the hotel-who wanted the trial to be taking place. Many of them didn't approve of the photographs, but all of them resented deeply being told that they couldn't see the photographs. And I think that was another thing Dennis realized, that they were playing on it in the trial.

William Camfield: And I think that's maybe one of the lessons from this. To me, one of the impressive things about it is that, in effect, freedom of expression was under attack partly on the pretext of pro-

tecting people from pornography. And it seemed to me that the jury, working under the most adverse circumstances, said: "No thanks, we'll take care of ourselves. We don't need big brother to tell us what we can see or not see. We'll take care of it ourselves." I think that's a major lesson that came out of that, and I glory in it because they had such a stacked deck to work with given what the judge permitted them to see and not to see.

AT: Dennis not only had The Corcoran's example, but he also had Jock Reynolds' example. Jock immediately picked up the show when The Corcoran canceled it and presented it at the Washington Project for the Arts. The crowds showed up in great mass, and public support swelled for the WPA. You know, the show closed at the WPA without any legal confrontations or any congressional confrontations. So, I have heard people criticize Dennis, saying, Well he should have known this indictment was coming," I don't agree with that. I think that given the fact that the show, after Washington, had traveled to Berkeley and other museums and nothing had happened at those institutions, I don't think that he could have known. I think he anticipated; he made perfectly clear that they knew that was a possibility, but that they were doing everything they possibly



Sol LeWitt's Schematic Drawing for Muybridge II, 1964. Collection of the artist; photo courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

could to avoid a trial—a loser-winner situation with the city government.

WC: What impressed me particularly was just his recognition of what he had to do. I think beyond that, what really came through to me in the lecture was the support he got from all sorts of people to stick to that decision, to that point. It became clear to me how much difficulty and risk was pressed on the trustees, the staff, probably family and friends. He could have had dozens of people, friends and important people around him, who were at risk over this confrontation. They could have decided to put pressure on him, or, even if they decided not to, he could see their business going down the drain or see a marriage on the rocks or friendships splitting-so many temptations to back off that point.

AT: There was a board member who resigned from his bank rather than bow to the bank's wishes.

WC: I was very impressed that the trustees and the staff—and who knows what kind of people—stood with him on that.

DJ: I think it did create an extraordinary sense of community in the city, but he also said that the other two major museums in Cincinnati were not as supportive as they might have been—that is, the Taft Museum and the Cincinnati Art Museum.

AT: They did not take a public position in support.

DJ: Right. Directors from museums around the world and throughout the U.S. were very forthcoming with support. The community that rallied around him in some ways would be those people who he probably would have least have expected, whereas the people who would be his natural allies held back meaningful support.

WC: That's a fascinating point. Roto-Rooter was rooting for him, but not necessarily the cultural institution down the block.

AT: Well, he did say that they had to drop out of the citywide arts funding organization or it would have cost their colleagues—other arts organizations—too much money, and in fact, donations to the Contemporary Arts Center are still down in Cincinnati. It has not recovered to a funding level that they had before the trial. So, there has been long-term inhibiting factors.

WC: Did the center pay off its legal debts?

AT: Yes, it has. Dennis has been lecturing to pay off his legal debts with his lecture fees. That's been part of it, so as of this year, he said he can get off the road and return to being just a museum director.

WC: I'm sure he'll be grateful for that, but in the meantime, I'm glad that the others—the rest of us—can profit by his wandering.

AT: How did you profit from hearing him?

WC: It's made me think a lot more about issues of freedom of expression; the responsibilities of museums; the risk of museums, trustees, people, neighbors, other art institutions or educational institutions; how easy it is to say, "Well, it's their battle," particularly if you're not in fine arts, but you're ballet or you're symphony. You'll ay, "Well, that's not our block; it's somebody elses." But it's not true. We're in that together, and I appreciated Barrie's styleartful speaker, low key, thoughtful, humorous, not someone who comes across as bearing a cross or angry or out in left field. He's someone, I think, who could really communicate with all kinds of people and really sensitize us towards issues of freedom of expression and concomitant responsibilities of all kinds. I hope that he talks to thousands and thousands of people.

The issue of censorship has become a feature of all my classes now. And in every class I teach I get into issues of freedom of expression and censorship, patronage and power. Not that I hadn't done that before, but I do it in a different way. I turn it over

to students. I divide them; I split the class. I say: "You're on this side of the issue, you're on that side of the issue. Here's some research material to get you started, and you take it further. Next week, or whenever we're getting back together, let's go to it." It has been amazing to me. It is really unpredictable. It's just as controversial and unpredictable as issues of homosexuality or abortion or something of that sort, where more established liberal/conservative lines get mixed up. And it's impor-

DJ: I would say one thing in a slightly critical vein about the lecture, and that is that I don't think Barrie framed the brouhaha over the show as much as he might have in terms of a homophobic response. He touched upon the homosexual elements in the work, certainly, particularly in the X Portfolio, but I think that whole other context could have been strengthened. Other speakers might have talked about the same series of events with much stronger accent marks in that direction.

AT: I think it was partially because those were never explicitly expressed in the trial. There were two images that they were prosecuting for child pornography and five for pornography. All of those were images that were either sado-masochistic or images

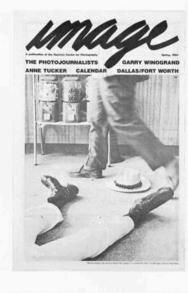
Continued on page 18





























































Covers from the Past

As HCP has evolved, so has its magazine. The Houston Center for Photography launched *Image* magazine in 1983 to provide its members with a critical photography journal. The magazine was renamed in 1984 at the urging of the attorney for the International Museum of Photography at the George Eastman House because it had a magazine with the same name. Nearly a decade later, HCP continues to bring its members provocative features, reviews, and commentary on the world of photography.

Copy photographs by Dave Crossley



Dennis Barrie, director of the Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati, with Robert Mapplethorpe's Lucy Ferry

Perspectives of Censorship

Continued from page 15.
of sex and violence, which, granted, were homosexual, but I didn't—at least in the time I was sitting there—ever hear the word homosexual.

DJ: This got triggered by something that somebody said to me after the lecture. Barrie talked about some of the X Portfolio X work as being "tough" and "difficult," but some people in the gay community might find the work not frightening or difficult to look at but beautiful. They would see the work as aesthetically significant. I'm not really criticizing the lecture on this ground, except to point out that a gay perspective on Mapplethorpe opens up other perspectives.

AT: Right. Both the X Portfolio and the Sol LeWitt piece, which caused the controversy at the Museum of the American Art this summer, were exhibited in Houston, Texas, at the Texas Gallery at different times in the late '70s and early '80s. So, you don't know when the ax is falling. I would also say that Houston is a very conservative city, and yet there was not a peep. There was certainly talk. I mean, I remember vividly when the X Portfolio was exhibited because I found it shocking then. I found it shocking again when I saw it, but I think you are right that for people whom sado-masochism is not exotic, those pictures have different meaning than for those

of us for whom that is an alien experience. But that is part of art.

DJ: Oh, absolutely. That's what makes it interesting.

Something that Dennis touched upon in his lecture as well is the kind of conservatism that is bred by the events in Cincinnati and at The Corcoran, and at events going back well into the early '80s, like the suspension of the NEA critics' grants. People throughout the art world are more cautious and more gun-shy at this point. Part of this is a function of increased private and corporate sponsorship for exhibitions. Major corporations that have their banners flamboyantly displaced at the steps of the Met and other places are interested in putting their money behind relatively safe art. Rembrandt portraits aren't going to get anybody too upset, whereas Mapplethorpe, whose work is a lot safer than a lot of other photographer's, will. The aftermath of the Cincinnati trial is a general conservatism with a lot of artists and curators looking over their shoulders. That's certainly happening with smaller arts organizations as well. They're going after NEA money, and they're concerned about all of the moves that have been put on NEA again since the early '80s.

So, I think that's a very troublesome after-effect of all of this. On some levels there was a victory won in Cincinnati, but on other levels the problem is still very much with us. I'm not sure that anybody

appeal. They knew they would win on appeal. But the reason they felt it was so important to win on the local level was first of all for the support of the center and the city, but also so that local sheriffs, in the midst of an election campaign, would not think that this was an easy ticket to come out looking tough. And in fact, this sheriff had to answer to people for the enormous waste of public funds, which turned out to matter to the people more—especially since he didn't even get

won out in that trial. I

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to jail, and the arts cen-

ter is still there, and

Mapplethorpe's pho-

living with the conse-

AT: One of the things

that Dennis and they

believed all along was

that they would win;

they would lose on the

local level, but win on

quences.

tographs have survived

it; but I think we're still

brought bad publicity to Cincinnati, cost a great deal of money, and accomplished nothing. I think that there was a very important victory in terms of what didn't happen because they won. DJ: I think that's a very

a conviction-that it

good point.

AT: Because of what
Jesse Helms did in starting this whole fight on
Mapplethorpe and

because they are in need of election issues, other local communities might very well have

seen this as proof that the arts were a weak constituency. They might have seen that the arts didn't have a strong enough constituency to stand up, that they were not as strong constituents as the fundamentalists, and that it was something a politician could take on. Winning the trial, I think, really helped. It didn't evaporate it, but it did slow down; it did take some steam out.

DJ: What kind of effect did it have, though, on curatorial decisions? And the decisions of museum directors and NEA panels in terms of work that is controversial?

WC: It surely made them more sensitive and probably a little more conservative.

DJ: How does that play out in the next ten or fifteen years? Part of that, I guess, is again the fact that art is a part of a society, and we are in a relatively conservative swing cycle at this point. It does go in cycles.

AT: That comes at the same time as an economic recession in which the arts are ready; the arts are in the position of last hire/first fire. When people are cutting their budgets, they'll cut arts before they cut education, before they cut health, before they cut other charitable causes. And so, decisions are made in that context as well. It's not only because it's a politically conservative time, but because we are in an economic downturn.

WC: There's a practical solution, Anne, in terms of the problems faced by a museum or curator. I saw Mapplethorpe's show in Paris, which did not have the X Portfolio, but had some other "difficult or relatively more difficult images." They handled it there by simply having it in a separate room off the main room, with an alert or warning posted on the wall, tastefully. It couldn't be missed, unless you were half blind, that the material inside could be offensive or disturbing to some people. It struck me that this was a very practical solution. The exhibition still flowed pretty smoothly in terms of the way it was installed and everything. You have a little notice there, and it didn't seem to deflect many people.

AT: One of the problems of being a curator is that you simply can't anticipate rich art. Art that is really compelling provokes a wide range of emotional responses, and if it's really good art, we can't anticipate what it will stir in people. So, the pictures that we think might be problematic will be passed by, and the pictures that we hadn't even anticipated as being offensive, or even ones that we may have regarded as extremely beautiful, will be disturbing to someone. This is another reason you have to be careful about censorship: because you are censoring. The director of the Museum of American Art found that Sol LeWitt piece offensive, which just astounded me because it was just a naked woman walking straight back toward a camera. But I don't doubt that she genuinely found it offensive. Where I disagree with her is that she limited the work of art to that meaning. She took it out based on: "I read it this way; therefore, it is about that." And that's where real censorship and damage to art is done.

WC: And it's the simplest trap of all to fall into when you privilege your own perspective, less than consciously as often as not. I think that it's especially important for people in positions of some relative power—and certainly curators, critics, professors, etc.—to always be second-guessing that reflex of self-assured judgments and maybe that's a legacy that's positive that comes out of this. Maybe looking over the shoulder is looking inward as well.

AT: Although I didn't get to testify, what I had been brought to Cincinnati to talk about was the fact that a curator hangs two works of art next to each other for a reason. Since then I have been talking to more and more people and have been absolutely stupefied by the vast percentage of the public who come to a museum with no idea that, by comparing two works of art hung next to each other, they can learn something about both of them. The simple act of comparison is a teaching tool, which we have always taken for granted. Every curator consciously hangs any work; every piece in an exhibition is hung exactly where it is for a reason. We have not done our job to let the public know that they can self-educate themselves by looking at the order of the pictures.

WC: Anne, that doesn't surprise me. I think the vast majority of people coming into a museum or an exhibition or a gallery never think, particularly, that there's any reason why this is where it is and that's next to it, other than perhaps from a purely mechanical or practical issue. I think it's probably extremely widespread. You just need a nail and a hook, and you put it up.

DJ: On a subliminal level I think they're probably having responses to this sequence. All curatorial decisions have their effect, but the audience may not realize the rhetoric involved in some of the presentation of the work.

AT: All right, is there anything else that

either of you want to say about Dennis or the lessons to be learned from his experience?

DJ: There's something that I'd like to touch on briefly-too briefly, I'm afraid. I think artists and arts professionals have to make a better case for themselves. There are a lot of misconceptions out there about what art-making is. As a result of the Mapplethorpe flap, in some ways the arts community has closed ranks, which may be a natural reaction psychologically, and perhaps is a good thing strategically. But I don't think we ought to fool ourselves with our own rhetoric, especially when our

rhetoric suggests a privileged position for the artist in relation to society. Arts people need to think seriously about themselves as imagemakers within a social context and take some responsibility for the images they generate. I guess I would make that especially emphatic with photography, with its causal link to something that's out there in the world—the photograph's very special, if problematical, representational status.

AT: I came away from the trial feeling that it was the art world that had failed in terms of our making art, that our arrogance had in some ways brought us to this trial. It's

our arrogance to think, "You understand this or you don't, you get it about art or you don't." And, "We don't need to reach out to people, we don't need to make them feel at home in our institutions." I felt, in part, that the attitude of thinking people should be able to walk into a museum and have all the tools they need—when in fact all of us have years and years and years of training—was part of it.

Bill, did you have anything more that you wanted to add?

WC: Certainly the whole thing has raised difficult issues about freedom versus



Photo by John Stamstead courtesy of the Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati, 1991.

responsibilities, and I don't know if there is any sort of resolution of that. I suspect that as long as the society wishes to think of itself, and try to act even halfway, democratically, then it's going to stay with us. I

think we are still hurting in the arts community from it; I think it's done damage. The arrogance comes both ways. I certainly agree, it was in our diverse professions. We're guilty of it, but it's a disease hardly

QUALITY

500 N. SHEPHERD 880-2505 limited to us and arrogance is out there in the public.

DJ: We don't have the market cornered.

WC: We do not.



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Christian Boltanski's Les Ombres (Shadows), 1984

Balancing Shadow and Substance

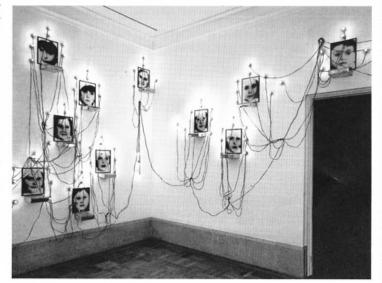
Christian Boltanski's Shadows was an exhibition at the Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, October 24, 1991– January 5, 1992.

Anne W. Tucker

Christian Boltanski derives from traditional theater many of his installations' key elements. Just as you await a curtain rising before a play begins, if there is more than one other person ahead of you to view Boltanski's Shadows, your expectations are held in suspension until those ahead move aside. Your only access is a window that barely accommodates two adults. Over their shoulders shadows dance on dimly lit walls, but until you can lean on the window ledge, you must deal with anticipation and impatience. Although favorably disposed toward Boltanski's work, I don't like waiting. "This is manipulative. Why make the window so small?" I thought. Most spectators lingered at the window, but when finally finished, they moved away from the window smiling. Boltanski understands that the piece's success requires an intimate, singular encounter.

Beyond the window, allusions to the theater continue. This is also the stuff of campfires in dark woods and Grimm's fairy tales. We behold an ancient dance of the spirits with the magician's hand fully revealed. Skulls and wart-nosed profiles challenge spindly bodies armed with the spears and whips. These ancient armies bob and overlap. See children, there is nothing to fear. Those tin and paper

figures hanging from wires in the center of the room are blown by a whirling fan and magnified into ghostly giants by five lamps. The lights are bright; the shadows are crisp. And if you are patient, an avenging angel emerges on the right, crosses the ceiling, and disappears into the left horiSeeing the mechanics keeps the piece from being seamless, slick, and hokey. It reminds us there is an artist at play. This has been created for our enchantment. Like a child watching the mobile over a crib, we can become momentarily lost in a slowly shifting pantomime. Boltanski isn't



Christian Boltanski's Monuments (La Fete du Pourim), 1989, is part of the permanent collection at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

zon. "There he comes," exclaimed a man to his wife, calling her back when she'd turned away before the angel appeared. Making you wait again, the angel reappears on the right pitching across these mischievous goblins. trying to trick us. It's an invitation to release our imaginations and to let "the individual work . . . trigger . . . associations that exist already in the viewer's mind," says Boltanski in the gallery notes.

At CAM on October 23, Boltanski

spoke of the audience's role in completing a piece with their stimulated memories. While insisting that an artist speaks only about his own village, he also said autobiography speaks not about the writer, but about us. He is relying on the basic truths that obsess him to engage the viewers as well. He also emphasized his willingness to let the piece mean whatever the viewer perceives that it connotes: "If someone says to me, your art is so happy, I say you are right. If they say your art is so sad, I say you are right. I was in Japan, and they said you are so Japanese."

Boltanski's shadow pieces are unique in his work because they do not employ found objects or photographs, but are entirely constructed from his imagination, or rather from our collective imaginations. Other installations employ photographs, clothing, and other personal artifacts that evoke the presence of a previous owner. Boltanski's context for the object may be fictional, but he relies on the object's capacity to be mnemonic of another human. More than for their aesthetic properties, he chooses objects, especially photographs, because they are relics of reality. On the one hand he is an ethnographer of experiences through collected objects; on the other, he conjures more primal manifestations of emotion. Each of his disparate installations shares this sense of drama and unabashed appeal to viewers' collective memories, experiences, and imaginations. His gift is to balance shadow and substance.

Anne Wilkes Tucker is the Gus and Lyndall Wortham Curator of Photography at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

Belonging to the South

William Christenberry's Southern Views was an exhibit at the Galveston Arts Center in Galveston, Texas, October 19 – November 24, 1991.

Patricia Carter

In a 1988 appearance at Galveston's Grand Opera House, dramatist and screenwriter Horton Foote spoke of how an artist finds his own voice: "An artist needs to know what has been done before his time; he needs to belong to a place." In November 1991, again at the historic Grand Opera House, an audience was introduced to William Christenberry, who seems the very embodiment of that dictum. A few blocks away, the Galveston Arts Center displayed the works—drawings, photographs, and sculptures—of this unique Southern artist.

The place that William Christenberry belongs to is Hale County, Alabama. It is his by birth, blood, and experience, and he seems to have possessed from earliest childhood that most lasting of birthrights: a feeling of connection to the land.

In 1958, Christenberry began making photographs in Hale County, using a little Brownie camera that he had been given for Christmas. He still maintains, as he told his Galveston audience, that those first photographs were made simply as references for his paintings, but it seems clear that something deeper was at work even then. He admits that he felt a need to come to grips with the landscape around him. "Photographs seemed the most straightforward response to what I saw," he said.

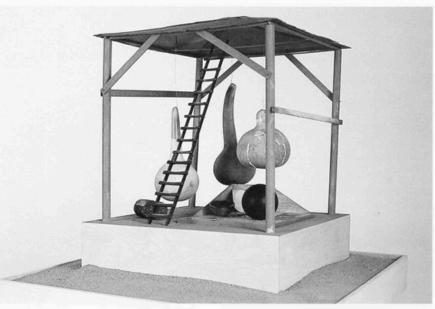
Christenberry spoke of his family, all devout Christians, and its division on the question of baptism between "dunkers" and "sprinklers." He did not speak of his own baptism, but it seems certain that his confirmation, at least as an artist, occurred at the moment in 1960 when he held in his hands a second edition of *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, the classic documentary on Hale County sharecroppers, with photographs by Walker Evans and text by James Agee.

Surprisingly, in the beginning it was not Evans' photographs but Agee's words that struck Christenberry with full force. Gradually, however, he found in Evans' work a permanent gift from which he could draw strength and inspiration. He began to trace the two men's footsteps, often photographing in the places that Evans and Agee had been, but moving increasingly beyond their work to find ways to relate his own experiences.

Christenberry now lives in Washington, D.C., and teaches at The Corcoran School of Art. But, he returns year after vear to Alabama and Hale County, and in so doing has built a body of work that gives us much more than a glimpse at a vanishing rural South. James Agee, striving to convey the essence of his experience in Hale County in 1936, used every means at his disposal: poetry, stream of consciousness, lists,

prayer, rhetoric. Christenberry, too, uses all means-paintings, drawings, photographs, and sculptures-but it is the photographs that bind the work together. For after all, Hale County is not a land of the artist's imagination. It is a real place. Rain falls; kudzu grows, thrives, dies back, and returns. Photo-graphs deal with those realities of place better than any other medium, especially Christenberry's photographs. They are as lucid and as plain, as straightforward, and as heart-breakingly simple as it is possible to be. Moreover, he never puts himself between us and what he is trying to show us. But what is it that he wants us to see? What is it that we can recognize and call our own?

Of the twenty-two photographs displayed at the Galveston Arts Center, most are of structures and small buildings that Christenberry has photographed again and again through the years—as the paint peels, as signs are replaced by graffiti, as the structures sag and begin their slow descent back to the soil. These photographs are not populated with the citizens of Hale County, but somehow the buildings and landscapes do not seem bereft of people. A human presence is perhaps most strongly felt in a small 3x5-inch image taken in 1971 and titled *Door Of*



William Christenberry's Southern Monument VI, 1980-91

House At Christmas, Greensboro, Alabama. The soft, color-saturated blue of the impoverished door seems the very color of longing, and we understand how much depends on four tiny Christmas lights shining in the December dark.

There is something about these rural buildings that is beautiful. The simplicity of form and lack of pretense is appealing. But more than that, Christenberry's perspective often gives us a real sense of the way these structures occupy their space. They seem to hold their place in the landscape with an integrity, a way of belonging, that speaks to the viewer. In one image, the small building seems as native to the Alabama earth and sky as the big chinaberry tree growing alongside. His sculptures, two of which were seen in Galveston, have a similar kind of presence.

In 1977, Christenberry began working with an 8x10 Deardorff camera. His beautifully luminous 20x24 prints show how surely he has made the large format serve his vision. It is no small trick that these photographs have the same poetic quality as the images made with the little Brownie Holiday and Hawkeye cameras.

Christenberry is fascinated by the passage of time, and a large part of his intent

Address_

in returning time after time to the same subject is to show us that process. Yet, somehow, I would not think to describe these buildings as "aging." Surely it is only the photographer (and the viewer) who is growing older, for these structures seem only to pass without grudging from one state of grace to the next.

The careers and works of most artists can be traced in linear fashion.

Christenberry's seem circular and satisfyingly whole, even as they continue to evolve and expand. His mother was a quiltmaker, and perhaps the quilt is a better analogy. Each square is a cosmos; the whole is a sovereign nation.

Christenberry continues to work with sureness of purpose. He wants, he says, to "possess" that place. But he wants also, as Agee wanted, to give it to us if we can take it. As he spreads his work before us, piece by piece and year by year, we may see a country we can all claim. It is the Land of Belonging.

Patricia Carter is a writer living in

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Simply Rauschenberg

Robert Rauschenberg: The Early 1950s was an exhibit shown at The Menil Collection in Houston, Texas, September 27, 1991–January 5, 1992.

Ed Osowski

In 1952, the first two works by Robert Rauschenberg to enter a public collection were acquired by The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Surprisingly, the works were not paintings, collages, sculptures, or assemblages—the works one identifies with the breakthroughs of Rauschenberg's career. Rather, they were two photographs, dated 1949 and 1951, purchased by Edward Steichen for The Museum of Modern Art's Photography Department.

These two photographs are among nineteen included in the exhibition "Robert Rauschenberg: The Early 1950s," which was organized by The Menil Collection. Also included were four monoprints on exposed blueprint paper. (The catalog of the exhibition includes these twenty-three works and several others not displayed.)

The two photographs Steichen bought are simple. What they possess is a spontaneity, an almost snapshot-like quickness yet an absolute certainty of purpose as well. Interior of an Old Carriage, the earlier work, depicts a horse-drawn carriage. The other, Cy on Bench, is a meditative and moody portrait of Rauschenberg's friend and fellow artist, Cy Twombly. These two works develop ideas in what might, in short, be called the modernist struggle to define the place of image and abstraction in art-as Walter Hopps writes in the catalog-which is at the very center of Rauschenberg's achievement. They are also about new ways of seeing that underscore the antihierarchical qualities of Rauschenberg's art.

Interior of an Old Carriage is neither nostalgic nor descriptive. Fifteen years earlier a photographer like Walker Evans might have found the same object an appropriate vehicle to convey some sense of the loss or passage of simpler and purer times. No such symbolic weight attaches itself to Rauschenberg's photograph. Two

wheels, a cushioned seat and backrest, a canopy, the rear window, a small white circle floating in the center of blackness: this is the photograph. What it demonstrates is Rauschenberg's effort to strip the object, not to some essential "thingness" but from its normal context, and to affix, in a sense, no meaning at all to what is there. The viewer stares into the carriage's beautiful and dark interior space and is stopped short by the globe-like circle of white that appears ready to float off the print. This is clearly not a photograph offered up as description. Carriage Interior tells us nothing about how this object functions; there is nothing useful about this photograph of what once was a most utilitarian object. To use different words, there is no narrative content to the photograph; there is no story, no plot, nothing about it to refer us to anything beyond itself, just the inky purity of its rich blacks.

Like Carriage Interior, the portrait of Twombly avoids description. More correctly, one might call it an anti-portrait. Nothing about the male figure allows one to identify the sitter as Twombly, he carries no brushes, paints, paper. His face, free of details, is a solid, blank globe. If this is a portrait of an artist, then it requires us to consider the very nature of artistic expression. Is it in the idea or the execution of the idea that art comes to exist?

Twombly's portrait was made during one of Rauschenberg's stays at the experimental school Black Mountain College, outside Asheville, North Carolina. There, Rauschenberg worked with John Cage, Merce Cunningham, Franz Kline, and others. A photograph by Rauschenberg of Cage, made at Black Mountain in 1952, avoids the clichés of portraiture. Cage sits at the wheel of his Model-A Ford, his face in profile, framed by an open window. Beyond him, through other windows, one sees trees and bushes. Central to the image is not Cage but an inverted "T," formed by the door frame, and two door handles that serve as dramatic arabesques in the bottom third of the photograph. Cage looks ahead at something the viewer cannot see. For the viewer, however, options seem endless. There are five windows, each affording a different view. In Rauschenberg's scheme, each window-and the view it possessesis of equal importance.

It would be an overstatement to talk about Cage's influence on Rauschenberg.

More correct would be to describe a general approach to making art that Cage, Twombly, Cunningham, Rauschenberg, and others shared. This approach found value in spontaneity, freedom, and discovery, based on what Cage has called remaining "curious and attentive to what I happen to encounter." (A photograph of Rauschenberg's studio on Fulton Street in New York, c. 1953, documents a framed Cage score among other art works in his possession.) It would not be incorrect to call this approach "democratic" because of the presumption that the appropriate subjects for art had not been canonized. At its very core there is little that is elitist about this art.

Rauschenberg seems indifferent to the categories of doing and documenting. Nothing could be more quotidian than the subject of the 1950 photograph Ceiling and Light Bulb. Yet, there are questions it raises: Is this a photograph? Is it a photograph of a work of art? Is it a photograph of an idea for a work of art? Or, is it proof that the world contains, if one looks with the proper vision, the subject of one's art? Most likely the photograph partakes of all. Ceiling and Light Bulb challenges the very notion of what is an appropriate subject for art. What could be more banal—a blank, black ceiling, a light bulb, and its pullstring descending from it? It is a photograph of what was there, in a certain place, at a definite time. But it also shares something with a sculpture by Rauschenberg, The Man with Two Souls. Both works seem concerned with finding objects, things about which one ordinarily feels nothing, and then, as Cage would have it, becoming "attentive" to them. One thinks of Ceiling and Light Bulb, then, as a wonderful accident, an example of Rauschenberg's finding in his private space an "accident" that resembled closely the sculptures he would

In Hopps' installation at The Menil Collection, photographs, paintings, and other works communicated in a silent dialogue: one work reinforcing, redefining, or clarifying an idea seen in another work. A good example is *Charleston Window*, a 1952 photograph set against two large, black, untitled canvases. In the photograph, a torn window shade is photographed from low and outside. It is framed by worn wood and seen through a screen. Shapes—a hint of window panes, a





ledge—are almost abstract. The paper shutter is torn and creased. In the companion canvases, paint interacts with paper—rippling, curling, creasing, and twisting from the effect of the paint. The black paint is the very essence of blackness.

In the fall of 1952, Rauschenberg

sailed to Europe with Cy Twombly. He traveled through Spain, Greece, and Morocco, and settled in Rome where he stayed until April 1953. In a group of photographs taken in 1952 at a flea market in Rome, Rauschenberg found "art" everywhere. These are street photographs-photographs that record art that exists on the streets before one's eyes-ironically, not the grand monuments one associates with Rome's classical heritage. In several photographs, fabric-canvas in one, brocade in another-is twisted and folded, both concealing and revealing the objects behind. The treatments call to mind the way the window shade is creased and torn in the photograph Charleston Window, 1952, and the use of fabric, painted and layered, in the monumental black "untitled" canvases.

As a group, the Rome flea market images seem concerned with covering and revealing, masking and uncovering, losing and finding. In Rome Wall a poster announcing "Stalin E' Morto" has been torn from a wall. The wall itself is a texture of stains and random hatchings. Several letters, MA, El, O, and a fragment of a phrase, "... ovimento," emerge gradually from the wall's surface. These syllables have no meaning; they do not add up in any traditional sense to a sentence that one can read and understand. Their context has been removed by the overlays of other posters that once covered and concealed them. But like the wordless sounds John Cage employs in a number of his compositions, these random letters create a new meaning of design and shape.

Rauschenberg completes his photographic explorations with a series of five photographs, *Cy and Roman Steps*, 1952. The operative word in the title is the small conjunction *and* for these are not images of Twombly but are images in which the steps and Twombly are equal participants. What the five closely resemble are snapshots a tourist would reject: in each image the photographer has moved closer to his subjects until Twombly's torso, from chest to knees, fills the print. Never do we see Twombly's face. Never do we see anything



Robert Rauschenberg's Cy and Roman Steps

that concretely places these steps in Rome. Like the earlier Cy on the Bench, nothing except for the artist's words, tells us that this is Twombly. These are images of five specific moments, five movements through space and time, five ways of defining and imaging Twombly's position on the steps and his relation to the steps, and five ways of recording Rauschenberg's movements toward Twombly. The five photographsthe body gradually becoming more central in each work-coax and tease the viewer to apply some narrative framework to them. But what actually is occurring here? Twombly himself isn't moving toward the viewer, although he shifts his position slightly. If anything, the group of five resembles the movement of sound, of words without meaning. Trying to find "meaning" in them leads only to frustra-

More accurate, then, would be to call the five images an anti-series. Nothing actually becomes clearer in them. If anything, they are photographs of a nonWestern way of perceiving reality. They are photographs that find and lose perspective, that lead one to expect a grand revelation in the final frame, but conclude, instead, almost arbitrarily.

What the photographs in "Robert Rauschenberg: The Early 1950s" make clear is that for Rauschenberg, art emerges from the encounter between the imagination and the object. These are photographs that reject the hierarchical and traditional values of space, time, content, and narrative for a freer and looser approach to meaning. In them one finds a purity of trust in the power of the object itself to hold our attention.

Ed Osowski is a member of the National Book Critics Circle and his reviews appear regularly in the *Houston Post*.

The Dallas Six

The Dallas Six was shown in Gallery X at the Houston Center for Photography, in Houston, Texas, November 9–December 29, 1991.

Cara De Busk

"The Dallas Six" exhibition was part of a unique exchange organized by the directors of the Houston Center for Photography (HCP) and Allen Street Gallery in Dallas. Its goal was to acquaint Houston audiences to the work of Dallas artists and Dallas audiences to Houston artists.

Six Dallas artists were chosen from slide submissions by nearly thirty photographers for exhibition at HCP by Executive Director Jean Caslin, Administrative Director Michael DeVoll, and Hans Staartjes, a Houston photographer and HCP programming chair. These artists were selected to represent current trends in photography-based art coming out of the Dallas area. Their work emphasized handmanipulated photography that, according to DeVoll, is characteristic of the strongest work Dallas artists have to offer. The artists were Robin Dru Germany, Mark Luttrell, Kenda North, Glenys Quick, John Neal Phillips, and Rose Marcus Tobey.

Robin Dru Germany is a familiar artist to HCP members and visitors. Germany has participated in several HCP exhibitions and is a regular contributor to the annual HCP Members' Exhibition. Her work consists of dark, quiet images of aged, low-tech machinery into which other images-often human body parts-are subtly collaged. Germany is exploring a popular issue: the relationship of humans to machines. Through the discreet quality of her craft, she generates an alternative to the usual approach to this issue. Due to a cultural prejudice that encourages polarized thinking, many North Americans (artists or not) approach "technology" as the "other," as an uncontrollable force outside themselves. By being outside and other, technology is bad to them. Philosophies that describe machines as "dehumanizing" and use the word "mechanized" as a negative description of human behavior, demonstrate the psychological distance many Americans draw between themselves and these tools they describe as "technology."

Germany explores the truly interdependent relationship between man and technology by depicting an intimacy between the human parts and the machine parts in her images. By anthropomorphosizing the machines at the same time as mechanizing machines, Germany challenges notions that describe technology as outside us. We are technology and technology is us; therefore, we are responsible for what technology does. Germany's unique experience of working with printing presses has created a relationship of mutual respect and connection with the machines, and that refreshing insight is revealed in her work.

Mark Luttrell has expressed a strong interest in technology and how humans relate to and use the tools they develop. Yet, his interest is much less evident in his work, which consists of small, finely made platinum prints of still lifes containing fruit, flowers, and dead animals. Luttrell's images, given such loaded titles as Persistent Stereotype, carry many elements that are used by this culture to characterize the notion of the "feminine:" lushness, decay, food, delicacy, emotion, intuition, quietness, passivity, and death. Like Germany, Luttrell rewards the viewer who takes the time to look closely at these small, textural images; however, the very subtle political conflicts, which Luttrell almost hides within the images, are unclear. The sense that these images are attempting to be critical is there, but Luttrell is very averse to letting

the viewer know exactly what his position is regarding gender issues or the "decadence" of North American societies that he has said are his interest and symbolized by the objects he chooses to photograph.

Kendra North takes a much more straight, relatively unmanipulated approach to her work. Presented in pairs consisting of one black-andwhite and one color print, North's images are a clever exploration of the acts of looking and being looked at, which she has titled A Sport of Spectators. Surprisingly powerful in their simplicity, these pairs of images depict young men and young women engaged in the highly genderstereotyped activities of the California beaches: girl watching, bikini contests, muscle competitions, watching and being watched. By pairing similar color images with blackand-white images in a skewed mirroring, North allows the viewer room for distance and a critical eye when engaging these "documents." The slickness of the prints and of her presentation reiterate this quality and focus on appearance that seem to be the major focus of energy for North's subjects.

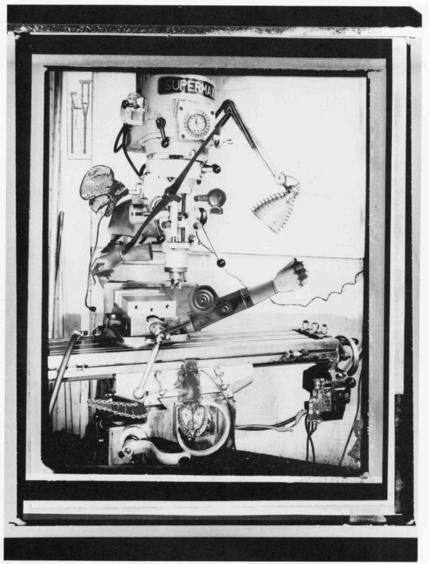
The beautifully rough and soft hand-colored montages by Glenys Quick are probably the most intriguing images in the exhibition. The juxtaposition of softly colored, degenerated images of trees, sky, and small appropriated photos, which appear to be old family snapshots of women, create a map to the concerns of this artist: finding an alternative to the popular representations of women and of "nature," and intertwining personal history with the 'great" issues of art-love, truth, beauty, the nature of

The unofficial exhibit theme of hand manipulation continues with the marked portraits by John Neal Phillips. Using scratches on his negatives and marks on his prints, he demonstrates another popular approach to manipulated photography, yet the evidence of the artist's hand in this case seems to be motivated purely by anger and disrespect for his subject. Phillips shoots (or as he phrases it, "sticking cameras in people's faces") grainy, contrasty portraits that are creepy, urban, and supposedly on-the-street, then scratches and marks out the faces of his models. What Phillips fails to communicate is why he needs to perform this rageful act on

his images.

The obscuring of faces and identity can be a powerful effect. Artists have explored issues of gender, class, race, and representation in general by using variations on the obliteration of identity. Phillips' work lacks the intellectual direction found in work such as that of John Baldessari. (In particular, Baldessari's use of solid, colored circles to obscure parts of his images, usually these circles are used to

delete the individual features of the subject's face or head; therefore, transforming



Robin Dru Germany's De-Invinkorador, 1991

Glenys Quick's Flight (original in color)



the persons represented into symbols.) By keeping the emotional qualities evident in this work and expanding on the dry intellectualism of artists such as Baldessari, Phillips could have made a strong contribution to the exploration of identity. But, he has chosen not to commit himself in this way, and the result is that he appears to be no more than a basic misanthrope with a camera and darkroom.

The final artist that comprises "The Dallas Six" is Rose Marcus Tobey. Her mixed media box is very far from the quality of the other work. A hodge-podge of slick, color magazine images combined

with toy soldiers and other objects inserted into a small diorama of Parisian party-life, this piece is an interesting effort, but seems lacking of real direction or meaning.

The most unfortunate quality of "The Dallas Six" exhibition is the inclusion of work that is not up to HCP's standards of quality in craft and meaning. Gallery X is intended to be a space for work that takes risks, either aesthetic or philosophical, yet some of the work chosen for the exhibition in this show lacks the strength, rebelliousness, and emotion usually found here.

Cara De Busk is a photo-artist working in

Working-Class Waplington

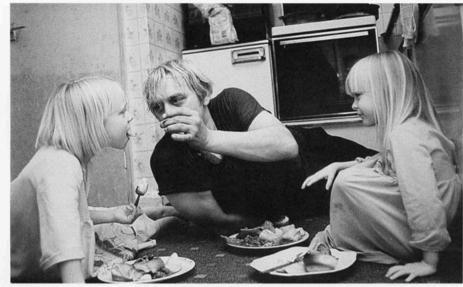
Living Room, photographs by Nick Waplington with essays by John Berger and Richard Avedon. New York: Aperture Foundation, Inc., 1991. \$35. 74 pages.

Elizabeth Claud

In his first book, Nick Waplington portrays the daily lives of two working-class families from Nottingham, England, in a manner that is at once chaotic, perplexing, and above all intimate. Perhaps due to the four-year duration of the project, the family members seem oblivious to the photographer's presence and neither hide from nor pose for the camera. The overall effect that Waplington achieves could be described as "fly on the wall" objectivity: the photographer happens to be there at the most bizarre and telling moments of daily life, the moments that are generally hidden from strangers.

"The photographer's triumph is to bring order out of chaos, without betraying the chaos," states Richard Avedon in his essay on the book. "Waplington presents the violence in affection, the sexuality in innocence, a chill at the electric hearth, all in a new vocabulary, without romance, all in the same room at the same time."

Most of the images are interior scenes, full of curious and spontaneous action. In the kitchens, two young girls feed their father, an infant plays in a pile of paper and laundry, a woman gestures at a man with a blunt knife, and a screaming young girl holds one eye as she wanders toward the photographer. In the living rooms, a girl stares at her reflection in a hand mirror, adults tickle their children or hold them aloft by their ankles, a man gooses his wife, and a mother makes her child's hair stand on end with a vacuum cleaner.



Nick Waplington, from Living Room, 1991 (original in color)

Waplington's style successfully unifies disparate events, reinforcing the instability and humor of the subject matter. Horizon lines are skewed, and the perspective shifts from floor to ceiling level. Many of the figures are drastically cropped at the periphery or are blurred beyond recognition. The details that are inherent in the documentation of the individuals and their homes add to the impact of the images. The houses have not been cleaned for the photographer's visit, and the detritus of daily life gives the viewer more information. One notices baby bottles, candy wrappers, overflowing ashtrays, figurines, cups, T-shirt insignias, empty bags and bottles, patterned carpets and sofas, tattoos, and bunny slippers.

In a sense, Waplington photographs the interactions of family members with the sensibility of an anthropologist, but he allows the viewer to interpret the results of his labor. We try to analyze the situations leading to the final comical, yet disturbing, images and are compelled to leaf through the book over and over again. We want to know who these people are in relation to each other, though the images are not captioned or discussed in those terms. We note the changes in the people and their homes over the years and try to order the images chronologically. However, the individual images have a resonance that transcends any desire for additional infor-

Of the image on the cover of Living

Room, Richard Avedon wrote: "His [Waplington's] pictures have the precision of good writing-what more perfect opening sentence for a short story could there be than 'Three little girls in gingham dresses were Hoovering the lawn'?" Indeed, the images can stand alone, though the work as a whole presented in Living Room adds to the mystery.

Waplington is sensitive to the families and conveys his long-term fondness for them without evoking pity. As John Berger states:

"What is remarkable about Nick Waplington's photographs is the special way in which they make the intimate something public, something that we, who do not know personally the two families photographed, can look at without any sense (or thrill) of intrusion."

One of the most compelling aspects of Living Room is that Waplington has stepped outside of the tendency toward objectification of the working class.

Instead, he has achieved a rapport with his subjects that brings his images to a higher level.

Elizabeth Claud is working toward a master's degree in art history at the University of New Mexico.

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QUI RIPOSA: Baby Face, California, 1988

THE STREET: Elephant Girl, Philadelphia, 1965



A Feast for the Soul

George Krause, by Anne W. Tucker. Houston: Rice University Press, 1991. \$39.95. 152 pages.

Lynn M. Herbert

This book was published on the occasion of an upcoming retrospective of George Krause's photographic work, "George Krause: Universal Issues," which will be at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, March 8–May 17. The book is a handsome tribute to this artist's bountiful body of work.

The first four pages set the stage: four photographs, one from each of Krause's ongoing series, "The Street," "Saints and Martyrs," "I Nudi," and "Qui Riposa." These four photographs are mysterious, powerful, and compelling. They demand our involvement in an inviting way. It is clear right off the bat that we're not deal-

ing with a lightweight here.

As a veteran Krause follower, I was intrigued by these first four images. Seeing them together made me realize for the first time just how incredible it is that Krause has worked on four different series for so many years. Also, it was exciting to see them juxtaposed. A dialogue emerged among them that I had never experienced. Up until now, I had, for the most part, seen his series presented separately. Eager for more, I skipped the essay that followed and went right into the photographs, which are presented by series.

The works are presented one to a page, with few exceptions, without captions. As such, they are allowed to become food for the soul. Krause's unique vision allows the viewer easy access into his photographs. And once inside, there are so many areas of your own mind to explore. Krause's work makes us think about big

questions, such as our relationship to spirituality, to our own bodies, to our mortality. Looking at his photographs will be a different experience for each one of us, but ultimately, it is very self-revealing and rewarding. I found myself turning the pages very slowly. After going through the photographs once, I recommend going through them again with one finger on page 141, the page that lists the titles. Each work has a title, the city or country in which it was photographed, and a date. Going over the photographs again with Krause's titles in mind, opened new doors for my interpretations of each work.

The photographs date back to 1958, and I found old friends as well as many new ones. Interestingly, I discovered that some of the old friends had become, for me, timeless, universal, and permanently engraved in my visual memory through the years. It was jarring to see them in a book



I NUDI: Black Veil, Rome, 1979

SAINTS AND MARTYERS: Waxwork, Mexico, 1986



about a specific artist. For me they had entered a kind of universal domain.

Who but a reviewer ever has time to actually read the essay, right? Take the time with this book. Krause's body of work covers a lot of territory, some of it spicy, but Anne Tucker's essay is more than up to the challenge; it is a good read. It tells us about Krause, his background, how he got involved in photographs, who his early mentors were, and about his unusual printing technique and how it has evolved. Appropriately, Tucker's range is a catholic as Krause's. She draws from sources as varied as Mother Goose, the Bible, and Joseph Campbell to bring Krause's work, his involvement with it, and our own understanding of it home to the reader. The text pages also include small reproductions of curious and problematic works by Krause. Commentaries on individual works are often poetic and always provide

interesting insights, which broaden our appreciation of both Krause as an artist in today's world and his work.

This book has whet my appetite for the Krause exhibition, and I look forward to seeing it. This book and the energy that went into it are invaluable to someone with work as multilayered as Krause's. As Tucker aptly points out in her essay: "Most of Krause's images are too evocative to accept on liberal terms alone. . . . He delights in layers of interpretation and even conflicting readings." She also points out that "the basic themes—sensuality, spirituality, mortality, and mystery—are not exclusive to any one series."

In a museum exhibition, our legs can only hold out for so long. Yes, there we will have the opportunity to enjoy the force of Krause's powerful prints, but in a comfortable chair with this book, one can perhaps delve deeper, thumbing back and forth between prints, comparing or simply dwelling on an individual work longer. Nothing is as powerful as the print itself, and one will have to see the exhibition for that reward, but for a leisurely soul-enriching experience, this book affords a rare opportunity.

Krause's work is not about trends or about statements, it is about "universal issues" as Tucker's essay and exhibition title suggests. It is about the big questions that haunt us. They haunt us because it is not always comfortable to confront them. With this body of work, Krause bravely bares his enormous soul. As he has already gone out on the proverbial limb, it is easier for us to follow. Thanks are due to Tucker for bringing Krause out of his "elective obscurity." His largess of soul and his ability to give it a voice on photographic paper are special gifts.

Lynn M. Herbert is associate curator at the Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston.

Britain's Bigger Picture

British Photography: Toward a Bigger Picture, edited by Charles Hagen and Nan Richardson. New York: Aperture Foundation, Inc., 1991. \$29.95. 72 pages.

Linda Benedict-Jones

British Photography: Toward a Bigger Picture is not a coffee-table book. While it includes many high quality reproductions of photographs, it also includes seven essays. And while the essays are not long, neither are they shallow. With much grist for the mill, it is a welcome addition to the current world of photography books.

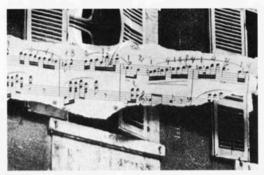
For Anglophiles, this book creates a yearning to have seen the Victoria & Albert Museum exhibition, "British Photography: Into the 1990s," which it was produced to accompany. This is certainly the case for me. It has been a decade since I visited Great Britain, after living and teaching photography there for several years at the end of the seventies. My last photographic involvement—in 1981—was researching material for both my master's thesis and an exhibition, "Ten Contemporary British Photographers," first shown at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. With that as my reference point, I came to the present book with much curiosity and was encouraged by the vitality of the work revealed between its

The volume opens with "Where We've Come From: Aspects of Postwar British Photography" by Mark Haworth-Booth, curator of photographs at the Victoria & Albert Museum and a prolific author. Early in the essay, Haworth-Booth lauds the contributions of England's own Bill Brandt-"Is there a British photographer who has not learned from him?" and other postwar photographers such as John Deakin, Nigel Henderson, and Roger Mayne. He also talks about photographers Tony Ray-Jones, Raymond Moore, and the celebrated war photographer Don McCullin, all of whom are quite familiar to a photo-educated American audience.

Haworth-Booth notes that in 1983, McCullin was barred by the Ministry of Defence from photographing the Falkland War, which Britain waged in the South Atlantic after Argentina invaded the tiny islands. "I still work for the Sunday Times, but they don't use me," McCullin said in a 1984 interview. "I stand around in the offices and don't know why I'm there. The paper has completely changed. It's not a newspaper, it's a consumer magazine, really no different from a mail-order catalog." In these comments. Americans hear echoes of the treatment accorded to journalists six years later when a half-million U.S. troops headed off to the Persian Gulf. Haworth-Booth also cites the works of Hannah Collins, who, like McCullin, tackled the Falkland Islands conflict but from a distance, using local materials and the cyanotype process.

This opening essay is an engaging piece of writing, although it included a few too many names, which occasionally interfered with the flow of thought. In some respects, this is an inevitable problem. Wishing no doubt to make his essay an exhaustive survey, Haworth-Booth acknowledges that for him, it is incomplete. He concludes with the hope that it will serve as a fruitful source of ideas and imagery for the new work of the 1990swork that will both draw on and challenge the traditions that have preceded it."

In "Landscape and the Fall," Chris Titterington, assistant curator of photographs at the Victoria & Albert Museum, sketches out an historical survey of landscape photography, claiming that until Americans added formalism as an element in the 1950s, it was basically a pic-



Mari Mahr, from "A Few Days in Geneva," 1985

turesque genre. This is an important and well-written essay that suffers for one unfortunate reason: after making compelling points about many new people, Titterington leaves us with only a brief glimpse, or no glimpse at all, of their visual work. He cannot be blamed for this, of course. It sums up, however, one of the main frustrations of this book: there simply are not enough photographs. The other problem, which is not evident until one begins to read the book, is that many of the photographs are in the wrong places.

For years I have lamented the lack of attention those on this side of the Atlantic have paid to British photographers. I have applauded all attempts to correct this imbalance, and this book is no exception. It amounts to no more than an hors d'oeuvre, though; somehow the chef snuck out before the entrée was served. The book whets our appetite with a sumptuous list of

photographers' names in each of the essays, but leaves us feeling hungry for the menu items that never reach our plate.

Thankfully, in the purely photographic essay "Thatcher's Britain," editors Charles Hagen and Nan Richardson do afford us one parade of images from a familiar cast of the 1980s: Paul Trevor, Brian Griffin, Victor Burgin, Paul Graham,

Martin Parr, and Chris Steele-Perkins, plus a few others. Together they offer us visual information to help establish a context for the theme of the book. The content of the photographs is far from reassuring, but in the company of such hearty essays, it is a necessary treat for the right side of the

Susan Butler, former editor of Creative Camera, contributes a compelling essay titled "Between Frames," in which she explores connections between individual photographic works and entire continents of thought. First she clearly describes, then analyzes a photographer's work. Her treatment of Yve Lomax's Divergent Series, for example, is succinct, clear, and illuminating. Lomax, it seems, uses montage techniques to toy with narrative expectations in ways not unlike what Jean-Luc Godard did cinematically. The viewer's participation in interpreting the piece is vital, though different viewers, of course, will have different interpretations. I was game to try and then was disappointed to find but two examples of the work many pages later in the book. Ironically, Butler's essay concludes with a mere four sentences on the photographers who have the most visual presence in the ten-page piece—Helen Chadwick, Verdi Yahooda, Mari Mahr, and Karen Knorran unfortunate apportionment in that their work deserves more commentary and theirs is the work we have been experiencing visually while ingesting the thought-provoking text.

The flaws in the book layout reached their zenith for me in Butler's piece. I

found it aggravating that there were no page references to the work about which I was reading. Keith Arnatt's work is a good example: I note that the front page of the book indicates that his work is included; I'm reading along, immersed in two compelling paragraphs about him, but can't find his most recent work. In perusing the book, yet again, in

search of the photograph in question, my train of thought is disturbed, and in the final analysis, I am disturbed. Did the editors think this would be regarded as a coffee-table book to be looked at and not read? I wish they would have known that some people would actually want to fully digest the product they were making. As a reader of the words, the pictures, and the relationship between them, I consider these book-layout aggravations to be significant. At first glance the book appears well synchronized, a healthy blend of image and text. Scratch the surface (i.e., read the essays) and the choreography falls apart.

Despite this frustration over layout, the quality of the writing and the information the book contained kept me going. Gilane Tawadros, education officer at the Photographer's Gallery in London, opens her essay, "Other Britains, Other Britons,"



Ingrid Pollard, from "Pastorale Interlude," 1987 (original is hand-painted)

with a quotation about the unique perspective black people have on society given that they are made to feel like outsiders: "The black man or woman who is born here and grows up here has something special to contribute to Western civilization. He or she will participate in it, see it from birth, but will never be quite completely in it." (C.L.R. James, Ten.8, 1984.) In what was perhaps the most cogent essay of the book, Tawadros introduces us to photographers whose images (at last!) are conveniently reproduced with the text that accompanies them. A number of the photographers she cites belong to a group called D-Max, the technical term that refers to the maximum density of which a given photographic emulsion is capable. For the group of black photographers in Britain, it "alludes to the photographers' awareness of the aesthetic and political plurality of blackness in British society," writes Tawadros.

One photographer to exhibit with D-Max, Ingrid Pollard, created a series called Pastoral Interludes, set in the celebrated Lake District, an area that more or less epitomizes the "authentic" British countryside of eighteenth-century landscape as depicted in both paintings and poems. This romantic region continues to be a metaphor of individual freedom for the British middle classes. I need only close my eyes and I can imagine it easily on posters, postcards, and, yes, tea and biscuit tins throughout Britain. Pollard uses this interpretation to explore issues of alienation when she presents a picture of a black woman against this idyllic, lush green

background. The effect is startling because it is so unfamiliar. She maximizes the effect with the addition of a few words: ". as if the black experience is only lived within an urban environment. I thought I liked the LAKE DISTRICT, where I wandered lonely as a BLACK face in a sea of white. A visit to the countryside is always accompanied by a feeling of unease, dread. . .

In "Through the Looking Glass Darkly," Rosetta Brooks, editor of ZG magazine, gives another perspective of Britain with her fascinating treatise on the era of mass consumerism after World War II and the twists and turns of this phenomenon to the present day. She comments on the decades as they rolled by after the war, providing an analysis of various forms of popular culture, from film to fashion. When Brooks addresses the 1980s, she provides a glimpse, reinforced frequently in contemporary British cinema, of a significantly splintered society. She believes that this societal breakup may provoke many British photographers, such as John Hilliard and Susan Trangmar, among others, to deal with issues of identity and community in their work.

The final essays in the book by David Mellor and Michael O'Pray offer yet other perspectives on the rich field of image makers in Britain today. O'Pray, film and video critic for Art Monthly, focuses his attention specifically on the moving image and provides us with a veritable laundry list of films to rent on the weekend or to watch for at the local art cinema. His essay does not shy away from an occasional discussion of money, since producing film, as is news to no one, is an expensive undertaking.

The strength of the British tradition was always the documentary approach. In the early 1980s, I forecasted that this tradition would be self-sustaining. While I think this can still be argued, it is equally important to now recognize that photographers in Great Britain have an enormously large repertoire of styles and approaches to their credit. New voices have emerged; prior forms of expression have been challenged. The "Bigger Picture" of this book's title is not just about the growing numbers of photographers in Great Britain today. though that is not insignificant. It is more about the conceptual expansion of expression as it is now informed more than ever by critical theory, politics, fashion, cinema, popular culture, and even technical innovation in the medium. Documentary alone is clearly no longer a sufficient definition.

In his opening essay, Haworth-Booth states that in the recent past British photographers have adopted a large part of the American tradition as their own. American photographers should not be content to accept this as a one-way street. They, in turn, can profit from lessons learned from abroad. This book is a good step in that

Linda Benedict-Jones is curator of the Polaroid Collection in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Peter Cattrell's Fenced in Gully,



The Social Fabric of America

Photography in Nineteenth-Century America, edited by Martha A. Sandweiss, with essays by Alan Trachtenberg, Barbara McCandless, Martha A. Sandweiss, Keith F. Davis, Peter Bacon Hales, Sarah Greenough. Amon Carter Museum of Western Art, Forth Worth, and Harry N. Abrams, Inc., New York, 1991. \$49.50. 336 pages.

Joanne Lukitsh

In the "introduction," Martha A. Sandweiss situates Photography in Nineteenth-Century America within a field of study developed in the late 1930s with the publication of Beaumont Newhall's Photography, 1839-1937 and Robert Taft's Photography and the American Scene: A Social History, 1839-1889. Unlike Newhall's transposition of an art historical narrative of master practitioners and internal stylistic development to photographic activities, Sandweiss explains, Taft's intention was to trace "the effect of photography upon the social fabric of America, and in turn, the effect of social life upon the progress of photography." Sandweiss acknowledges the importance of Newhall's work, but credits Taft's suggestion that "an intriguing field for further study would be how photographs were created, used, and perceived by their original audiences" as the inspiration for Photography in Nineteenth-Century America and the exhibition it accompanies.

The terms of Sandweiss' contrast between Newhall and Taft would seem to place the book and exhibition within the context of well over a decade's criticism of the aesthetic autonomy of the photographic image, but, as I will discuss, this is not entirely the case. A more troubling consequence of Sandweiss' contrast between art history and American social history is that "America" is left as the unexamined term. How does Taft's interest in the study of how photographs were used by their original audiences speak to contemporary ideas about the "social fabric of America?"

Photography in Nineteenth-Century America features six essays, interspersed by a color plate and portfolio sections that reproduce images from a number of American museums, libraries, and historical collections, and an appendix consisting of an exhibition checklist and biographies. This format is similar to recent national surveys of nineteenth-century photography, such as The Golden Age of British Photography, but the lengthy essays (with extensive references to primary sources) in Photography in Nineteenth-Century America seem to address a more serious audience. The six essays are arranged in approximate chronological order and their subjects generally coincide with Taft's (and with Newhall's, for that matter) discussion of the period: the early reception of photography in the United States, portraiture, the Civil War, photography produced during different periods of westward expansion, and late century amateur pictorial photography.

The theoretical approaches of the essays differ from those of Taft and from each other. In the essay "Photography: The Emergence of a Keyword," Alan Trachtenberg analyzes the different meanings generated by and attached to the word "photography" during the era of the daguerreotype, when "the image and the idea of a photographic medium took shape in America." Barbara McCandless' "The Portrait Studio and the Celebrity: Promoting the Art" discusses how the production and display of photographs of celebrities was as significant to the careers of portrait photographers as the more widely recognized production of portraits of family and friends, and develops this



Mathew Brady's James Brooks (Editor of New York Express), c. 1858

idea in an extended account of the careers of Mathew Brady and Napoleon Sarony. Sandweiss' "Undecisive Moments: The Narrative Tradition in Western Photography," recounts how photographers working in the West from the pre-Civil War period through the end of the century used different means—from the exhibition of hundreds of daguerreotypes in formats derived from panorama paintings to descriptive captions on photographic mounts—to place individual images within a narrative text that would meet the expectations of contemporary audiences.

In "A Terrible Distinctness: Photography of the Civil War Era," Keith Davis examines the cultural context of Civil War photography through an analysis of the production, dissemination, and appreciation of the imagery in relation to the interests of what Davis identifies as its four primary audiences: the civilian public, individual soldiers, the illustrated press, and the official military hierarchy. Peter Bacon Hales' "American Views and the Romance of Modernization" describes the course of what he describes as an "American photographic view tradition," which represented the urban and Western spaces under development in the post-Civil War period in a form consistent with dominant American values. In "Of Charming Glens, Graceful Glades, and Browning Cliffs: The Economic Incentives, Social Inducements, and Aesthetic Issues of American Pictorial Photography,



Timothy H. O'Sullivan's Field Where General Reynolds Fell, Gettysburg, 1863

1880–1902," Sarah Greenough provides a lengthy discussion of pictorial photographic activities among amateur photographers in the 1890s, after professional photographers had relinquished "the new aesthetic of pictorial photography" as a potential—but unsuccessful—means of adding status to a profession threatened in the 1880s by the growing amateur market.

While the essays all approach their subjects differently, to a large degree they share the concept that photography is a "medium," a concept that suffices as the reason why none of the essayists explains her or his premise for distinguishing nineteenth-century photography from contemporary visual and literary representations as

a subject of study. As used here, the concept of nineteenth-century photography as a medium is uneasily transported from Greenberg's late modernist formalism: there is a photographic medium—encompassing daguerreotypes and gelatin silver prints—and it follows a purposeful course through the nineteenth-century. It is a predictable "Newhall" approach to the history of photography; Sandweiss is not being disingenuous in claiming Taft as precedent; she and the essayists are at pains to resist "aestheticizing" photographs, but they have fewer qualms about aestheticizing nineteenth-century American history.

While Sandweiss' "Undecisive Moments" challenges what she describes as a photographic art market's preoccupation with the "aesthetic qualities of the individual print," her challenge proceeds on that market's terms and she does not evaluate the historical significance of these different photographic narratives, save to indicate their affinity with "themes made familiar in contemporary literary tests: the taming of the wilderness, the subjugation of the native peoples, and the westward expansion of American culture." Sandweiss provides some valuable information about the reception of this imagery, but her discussion of this material-particularly her ambition to reconstruct "the original narrative context" of the photographers or to their public audiences—is surprisingly indifferent to the stakes involved in the conflicting contemporary historical interpretations of the westward expansion of American culture. Additionally, her belief in the availability of the original context of viewing exists, at the expense of, among other factors, a productive investigation of the historical significance of differences in viewing. In contrast, Davis' "A Terrible Distinctness" is less concerned with photography as a medium, than with the complex of uses photographic representations played in the Civil War, "the first 'modern' conflict to combine mass armies, industrial technology, factory production, engineering skills, and mechanical invention. Davis' thorough account of the production and reception of Civil War photographs in relation to their four primary audiences is also proposed as an "attempt to suggest some of the original meanings and func-

tions" of this imagery, but he also describes the difficulty of that attempt; more importantly, his concluding remarks locate his own essay among the inventions and interpretations of Civil War imagery written since the war's historical conclusion.

Trachtenberg's essay on the emergence of photography as a "keyword" from the 1840s through the 1860s—a "keyword linked to modernity itself" essay consists of nuanced, excellent readings of the different meanings of "pho-

tography" in a number of elite and popular sources. The meanings under discussion encompass issues of erotic anxiety to expectations of civic order, and the essays include an important discussion of Oliver Wendell Holmes' three Atlantic Monthly essays on photography. Trachtenberg's essay would seem to be least attached to the concept of nineteenth-century photog raphy as medium, and on one level this is the case: the specific material properties of the daguerreotype, the stereograph, and paper prints inform his study. Yet, however complex the concept, photography follows its appropriate course: the essay concludes with a summary notice of Alfred Stieglitz campaign for photography as an art and

the modern movement in photography, which "would restore the critical edge in the keyword, making it seem once again a word worth fighting for." The connection between Holmes and Stieglitz is a tenuous one, serving more to bring a provocative analysis to a familiar point of closure.

McCandless' and Hales' essays are concerned with the photographic medium as manifested in the production of, respectively, portraits and landscape subjects, over extended periods of time. McCandless' discussion of the importance of the studio-produced celebrity portrait for the development of a popular market for photographic portraits, culminating in "truly democratic portrait," produced by the Kodak hand camera, provides much useful information, but is discouragingly vague on what constitutes a popular market and its changing expectations of portrait representations. Hales' examination of the American view tradition as one that "integrated the rhetoric of expansionism, the economics of laissez-faire capitalism and the visual conventions of landscape



Alfred Stieglitz's Weary, 1890

discourse to represent a new culture coming gloriously into being within a special landscape of virtue and hope," rather romanticizes this tradition and its practitioners, though Hales' readings of view imagery and the images produced in the wake of the disintegration of this "tradition" are interesting in their discussion of viewing practices and the representation of space.

The affiliation *Photography in Nineteenth-Century America* claims with Taft would seem to promise a social history of nineteenth-century photography: for most of these essays, research in the subjects consistent with modernist histories of photography constituted the effective extent of their thinking about social history. At a time when controversy over whose stories of American history will be taught in schools and exhibited in museums, the book is oddly detached: while it doesn't advance different voices, neither does the medium of photography authoritatively maintain traditional values.

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Unknown Photographer, California Forty-Niner, c.1850



We've Seen It Before

The Power of Photography, by Vicki Goldberg. New York: Abbeville Press. 1991. \$39.95. 280 pages.

David L. Jacobs

In *The Power of Photography*, Vicki Goldberg has written a comprehensive and readable book on photographs that have changed our views of ourselves and the world. Goldberg discusses the impact of photography after its appearance in 1839 in such diverse work as photographs from the Civil War, early scientific photography, police and surveillance photography, Western landscapes, and the time-efficiency studies of workers by Frederick Winslow Taylor and Frank B. Gilbreth.

The emphasis of the book, predictably, is on documentary and photojournalism. There is a powerful section on Emmett Till, a black adolescent from Chicago who was beaten to death on a visit to Mississippi. Jet magazine published a photograph of his battered face in 1955, but it took more than 30 years for the white press to publish it, and then only as a part of the first episode of the TV documentary Eyes on the Prize (1988). Iconic images such as Lange's Migrant Mother, Rothstein's cow skulls, the explosion of the Hindenburg, Bourke-White's photograph of prisoners at Buchenwald, and the Marines raising the flag at Iwo Jima, are reproduced and discussed at length.

Special attention is given to the 1960s and early 1970s when several images achieved iconic status through documenting the violence and turmoil of the period. There are ample discussions of Che Guevara's death photograph (1967), Ron Haeberle's photography of the My Lai massacre (1970), Eddie Adams'photograph of an assassination in the streets of Saigon (1968), the Kennedy and Oswald assassinations (1963), the Birmingham race riot (1964), the Buddhist monk immolating himself (1963), the screaming girl at Kent State (1970), and Nick Ut's photography of children fleeing napalm (1972). Goldberg discusses some of the sociopolitical contexts of the events depicted in these photographs as well as their subsequent publication in newspapers or magazines.

This is well-ploughed territory, and even though Goldberg doesn't turn up much new sod, her discussion is certainly well-researched. Her writing, although too breezily casual at times, is clear and wellpaced. She has a good ear for anecdotes. Goldberg reminds us, for example, that in Woody Allen's Stardust Memories a huge blow-up of Eddie Adams' General Loan Executing a Vietcong Suspect serves as a "backdrop for dialogue about human suffering and the complaint that 'everything's over so quickly, and you don't have any idea was it worth it or not." And kitschy references like the following on Joe Rosenthal's Iwo Jima picture, enliven the book: "This may be the most widely reproduced and re-created photograph in history: 3,500,000 posters of the image were printed for the Seventh War Loan drive, 15,000 outdoor panels and 175,000 car cards were published, and the photograph was reproduced on an issue of three-cent stamps. In 1955 the photographer said: 'It has been done in oils, water colors, pastels, chalk and match sticks. A float based on it won a prize in a Rose Bowl parade, and the flag-raising has been re-enacted by children, by gymnasts. . . . It has been sculptured in ice and in hamburger." Someone somewhere must have entombed it on black velvet as well.

Goldberg characteristically develops her themes by discussing early examples and then jumping to subsequent examples culled from more recent times. In her chapter "The Unimpeachable Witness,"



Jack Beers' Jack Ruby Shoots Lee Harvey Oswald, 1963

for example, she discusses our assumptions about photographic truth through photographs of Civil War atrocities, Muybridge's galloping horses, and German concentration camps. In another chapter, "Fame and Celebrity," she touches on the rage for cartes-de-visite, Brady's Gallery of Illustrious Americans, and John Mayall's photographs of Queen Victoria, before providing a more extensive discussion of Sojourner Truth, the famous emancipated slave who supported herself in large part by selling her photographic por-

trait. (Her motto: "I'll sell the Shadow to support the Substance.")

There are several pages on the risqué photographs of actress Adah Isaacs Menken and her lover, novelist Alexandre Dumas, which were all the rage in mid-nineteenth-century Paris. Goldberg then turns to a 1902 law suit concerning a photograph of Abigail Roberson that was used to advertise Franklin Mills flour without Roberson's permission-an interesting early example of how the courts regard questions of photographic infringement and personal rights. After discussing the famous

and the sexy—Clark Gable's bared chest in It Happened One Night, Betty Grable's legs, Marilyn Monroe's swirling dress—



Joe Rosenthal's Iwo Jima—Old Glory goes up on Mt. Suribachi, 1945

Goldberg shifts to how Jackson Pollock's career was advanced by Arnold Newman's photographs in *Life* magazine (1949) and Hans Namuth's images a few years later.

This far-ranging chapter concludes on the following note: "Photographs sign cruel pacts with youth and beauty and publicity. Lainie Kazan, the singer and actress, told a television interviewer in 1986 that she did not go out of the house for seven years because she could not live up to her airbrushed and retouched portraits. 'I went to bed in 1969 and didn't get up until 1976 I would not come out until I

looked like my photograph.""

The Power of Photography brings together photographs that have unquestionably changed our ways of seeing and knowing. The book has the considerable virtue of being accessible to a broad audience. However, this is not a book that poses new questions about the medium or its impact upon society. Despite her ambitious scope and solid research, in the end Goldberg doesn't shed much light on the inner workings of photographic rhetoric. She gives short shrift to ways in which these images were used toward persuasive ends. How, for example, editors decide which pictures should and shouldn't be published, and in some cases endlessly republished until they achieve near mythic status. We don't learn much about the deeper structures that created the depicted events in the first place . . . or how the photographer decided what and how to see and know them . . . or how the editor/publisher/curator determined what and how to present them . . . or the incalculable ways that viewers (and, by extension, societies) process and assimilate photographic information. Snapshots are ignored, despite their pervasive, if elusive, effects on our self-definitions. And scant attention is paid to ways that photography has represented and reinforced our notions of gender,



Death of Che Guevara, 1967

whether through fashion advertisements or pornography.

While Goldberg touches on some of these issues, it's usually in a glancing rather than developed way. She is a short-winded writer, which has its benefits when writing columns for photo magazines or reviews in the New York Times (or book reviews in SPOT). But a book with the subtitle "How Photography Has Changed Our Lives" demands a more rigorously theorized perspective than what we get in these artfully assembled short essays. And too, Goldberg's reflexes are still grounded in the rah-rah-photography mode, which may prevent her from diving headlong into some of the thornier political and philosophical questions that photography pre-

To understand why photographs have exerted such power and influence, we finally must grapple with why people, past and present, need to invest authority into repre sentations of experience. In any rhetorical relationship there is the persuader and the persuaded, and Goldberg, like many photographic commentators, in large measure sidesteps the psychological and sociological dynamics of the latter. Since 1839 we have used these wondrous banal, eloquent mute paradoxical images to pursue, in John Dewey's phrase, our "quest for certainty." In order to understand photographic rhetoric we must eventually confront our ancient ongoing rambling trembling quest for fixed knowledge of our fleeting times

David L. Jacobs is chair of the University of Houston Art Department and co-curator of "Ralph Eugene Meatyard: An American Visionary" organized by the Akron Art Museum.

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The Houston Center for Photography periodically receives review copies of books from publishers around the country. They are available to visitors for perusal during HCP's regular gallery hours.

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The light through the doorway pressed gently on her face, showing me her world, her house, her bed, her eyes. She looked into my eyes through the camera, as if she knew she would be looking at the world, and without fear. She always cried when I showed her a picture of herself. Eloina told me later her mother was unhappy with how she looked, old and wrinkled. "Julie's camera never lies," Eloina said. I never thought of her as old and wrinkled. I saw a woman, a friend. And she always asked me to take another picture.

-Julie Newton

Julie Newton is a photographer in Austin, Texas, and a faculty member at the University of Texas at Austin.

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