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RECENT WORKS BY TEXAS WOMEN PHOTOGRAPHERS
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Discriminating Tastes: Re-examining the Quality Issue

This essay is in response to a symposium and exhibition, "Message Carriers" at Houston Center for Photography September 10-October 24, 1993 Organized by the Photographic Resource Center at Boston University.

Jo Oertel

In 1990, Howardena Pindell, an African American woman artist, published the first in a two-part series of articles in "The New Art Examiner" in which she accused the art world of racism. She cited first-hand accounts of racist treatment she and other artists of color had experienced at the hands of gallery owners, dealers, museum curators, critics and art historians. She further based her charge on statistics she had gathered for an earlier, larger research project on the subject. Her data clearly showed that artists of color are severely under-represented compared to their white colleagues. For Pindell, the appalling paucity of artists of color in the venues of the art world could only be attributed to racial discrimination.

Not surprisingly, Pindell's article provoked controversy. In this post-Civil Rights era of simultaneous high racial tension and sensitivity to "political correctness," her charge is serious and stinging—all the more so when directed at a sector of society that generally prides itself on its liberalism. But it was Pindell's suggestion that the art world involves the issue of quality as a veil to cover overt racism that perhaps irked most. Pindell wrote: "Double-speak" and "double-think" codes are used in the art world to imply the ability of one group of artists (people of European descent) to produce "quality" work, and the inability of another group of artists (people who are not of European descent) to produce "quality" work. The word "quality" is therefore used if it were synonymous with skin pigmentation and ancestry, but it is stated publicly as signifying an assumed and courageous color-blind standard."

Despite Pindell's valid artistic reputation, one can almost hear her opponents suggesting in retaliation that hers were the charges of an artist who refused to accept the possibility that maybe her art was not good enough to be exhibited; bitter, she played her only trump card and made the accusation of racism. It is a familiar counterpart, similar to the one with which feminism is frequently charged when they accuse the art world of sexist practices. I could not help but think of Pindell's article when the question of artistic quality was raised in the past few weeks. In the article "Message Carriers," the recent exhibition of photographic work by contemporary Native American artists held at the Houston Center for Photography Included in the show were Patricia Deadman, Zig Link, Carm Little Turtle, James Luna, Larry McNeil, Jolene Rickard, Hualietah J. Truchtel-Helie and Richard Ray White. The exhibition, which traveled to HCP from the Photographic Resource Center in Boston, was curated by Theresa Hadlan (also a Native American of Lapisa, Santo Domingo, and James Pueblo descent). The response was overwhelmingly positive. Some reviewers, however, suggested that the organizers had suspended their critical judgment in an effort to present a show that would conform to current standards of political correctness. Once again, we circle back to the ubiquitous issue of quality.

What is this notion of quality? On what do we base quality judgment? What are our criteria concerning "good" art? More importantly, where do these criteria come from? Who or what is determining—or has predetermined—them?

In an article entitled "Critical Reflections," Thomas McEvilley wrote that "the mainstream tradition in Western philosophy...has argued for universal and unchanging criteria of quality that are supposedly valid for all times and places." McEvilley continued, "There are differences in expression...but it is a shared idea that correct judgments are based on a correct perception of universals, and incorrect ones on a misconception of them. Absolute values, in this view, are inborn to all humans individually in all times and places...Some people can apprehend these inborn ideas clearly, and some, because of a variety of obscuring factors, cannot."

This belief in absolute quality and in the ability of some to discern it where others are unable has informed much art critical writing in the past century, if not longer. A substantial cornerstone of "cultural arbiters" continues to cling to these beliefs. In a recent documentary film about the feminist group, the Guerrilla Girls, one art consultant was asked how he identifies quality in art. "That is a mysterious process," he exclaimed. "I like describing how one falls in love." Apparently, quality inheres in the work of art, the ability to recognize it is a god-given gift, and the process by which one discerns it is inexplicable, intangible, but nonetheless real.

Yet, others have pointed out the dubious basis upon which such a belief in the universality of quality rests. As McEvilley notes, "There is no evidence that would suggest that it is subjective and relative. First, there is the historical evidence: the simple fact that taste changes over time. Countless examples could be used to illustrate this: we're all familiar with them. Art fashions are as great by their own generation may seem mediocre to a later one, and vice versa. The very notion of what makes a work (myself included) are all implicated to one degree or another. Pronouncements from the cultural arbiters carry weight, especially today. Large sums of money change hands, careers are made or broken on the pronouncements of the "art experts." Through even the most guidelines choices we make when we curate or review exhibitions, published scholarly articles, or design academic courses, we implicitly help to determine which works will end up in the canon of Art (with a capital "A"), which works are good, mediocre, or just plain junk. Sorting through the vast array of cultural production, we determine what has quality or merit and what does not.

The authority of these gatekeepers of culture derives from education and training. They have learned the "history" of past art and know what to look for in present art. Pindell has written. "But what privileges have they enjoyed (or taken for granted) that enabled them the luxury of learning history, and whose history are they learning? Just what is the relationship between one's socio-economic background and one's conception of art? As McEvilley has mused, "It seems clear that we take as objective measures of value what we have been conditioned to take that way...One of the conditioning factors is the cultural tradition in which one lives. In the Western tradition in general, for example, any art that ties from the Corbusian line...looks recognizable as art and thus will correspond to some degree to our tradition of commodification."

Conversely, we should not expect art produces, "panoramic" in our definitions of art and in our evaluations of quality. Yet for even the most open-minded, certain parameters persist. For example, we may embrace the obligations postmodern theories of the arts (I refer to Roland Barthes' notion of the death of the author) at the most fundamental, unacknowledged level, our expectations still encompass the person of the artist, and his or her motivations in producing art...I was reminded of some of these unapologetic boundaries and merchant assumptions when, a few years ago, a friend suggested we browse a "gallery" that catered to tourist trade and was filled with mass-produced paintings. "What? That's not art," I exclaimed. "That's kitsch!" I may be liberal, but self-respecting art historian would set foot in such a den of crass commercialization, just as none will likely be found at the "starring artist" sales regularly promoted in tinsel television commercials.

We cultural arbiters have a vested interest in maintaining hierarchies. Do away with these dubious distinctions and the need for the art expert varies. Mary Edwards Walker, nineteenth-century physician, feminist and reformer, once said, "You [men] are not our protectors...if you were, who would be to protect us?" Shift the focus and Walker's pithy comment would apply to this context.

Like McEvilley, I am not advocating that we dispense with value judgments altogether; that need not be the ultimate goal. Whatever we find ourselves making evaluative judg
ments about art, or diminishing work with an invocation of "quality," we might instead simply proceed cautiously, with greater self-consciousness. We ought to take a moment to acknowledge our assumptions and our conditioning to ourselves and to our audience. We would be well-served, I think, to notice how our experiences—economic, ethnic, social, political—are framing our picture of a work of art.

Let me suggest how this process can work. Over the course of my study of the sometimes thorny issues involved around the multicultural debate in the arts, I have been troubled by the decision of some artists of color to be very protective of their art and extraordinarily selective about where and in what context their works are seen, reproduced, exhibited. The artists included in "Message Carriers" together with curator Theresa Huddleson expressed this sentiment in the July 14 symposium that took place at HCP on September 11, 1993. 14 This careful control would they argue, help prevent the work of artists of color from being misunderstood, misrepresented, and misjudged according to an inappropriate and ill-suited set of criteria. The position seemed problematic to me. I was disturbed by the implication that the art could not stand on its own. If it did not convey in message effectively without words, speech, synapses attached, without a carefully controlled environment, how would the art possibly stand the test of time? What was to keep it from being misunderstood, misrepresented, and misjudged later? I wondered, too, if these artists could really afford the luxury of being so selective about where and how their works were seen. Did they not desire visibility and recognition within the mainstream and if so, wasn't such protectiveness counterproductive? Finally, I was bothered by the implicit re-introduction of a hierarchical model, in which the artist's interpretation of her work is given greater significance than the viewer's.

Slowly, though, I realized that my concerns are saturated with Eurocentric, modernist expectations and assumptions—which may or may not overlap with those of the Native American artists included in "Message Carriers." I have been unthinkingly imposing my priorities for art and how art is valued on those where they may not persist. In positing why I place such importance on the autonomy of the art object, I have come to see that in a society which often views art as the self-contained, self-serving work of art is valued because of its long-term market salability. By extension, the modernist, universalist aesthetic that art should transcend its cultural and historical moment has also been shaped by these pervasive market forces. Recognizing where these priorities come from, I am better able to critique or relativize them. There really any reason why this definition of a work of art is better than one which conceives art wholly differently, as larger (and perhaps more abstract, less materially-based) than the object/artifact per se? A work which resonates with our grandparents' generation but that today seems "dead" cannot, by our current criteria, be a great work of art. The definitions which we take for granted seem simply arbitrary and altogether too rigid.

In fact, there is an analogous Native American belief (obviously generated from very different circumstances) that art can continue to communicate independently and beyond the life of its creator. Significantly, though, the panel discussion at HCP only marginally touched upon the photographs by the artists. Even in light of this it was right when she asserted that market forces—largely unquestioned but ever-present—are what drive our culture's desire for "codified and confirmed notions of quality and originality" in art critical discourse. 15 Indeed, they drive our very conception of art and how art should function.

Tinhinhjimnith in her black-and-white self-portraits, Creates A Native Artist. We are dealing with the problem of determining who is Indian and who is not. Does a tribal roll or Census number make one any more Indian than not having a number? How does one determine who is Indian—by blood quantum? Why is it even necessary to prove one's heritage?

The enactment of Public Law 101-664.

"The Indian Arts and Crafts Act of 1990," requiring native artists to prove their heritage, places the burden of proving "Indianness" on the Indian for the benefit of the outsider who wants to buy authentic Indian art. Why should the burden be placed on the artist and not on the consumer? If the potential buyer of Indian art is not knowledgeable, the problem is due to the outsider's own cast of mind which has failed to seek understanding and knowledge of what is or isn't Indian art.

Ed.: Are these realism at the root of the art of many modern American Indian artists?

Sánchez: This is often the case. For example, objectification and the embodiment of outside cultures are addressed in Zig Jackson's photographs, Indian Photographing Tourist Photographing Indians. Indians have long been treated as objects, and insensitive tourists often thrust their cameras at the "object" of their fancy, totally oblivious to the concept of invasion of one's space. Each photographer successively brings a message to the audience, both Indian and non-Indian; and the audience leaves the exhibit with a questioning mind if not for a better understanding of modern-day American Indian culture. If the observer truly wants understanding, he will seek answers to the questions embedded in the photographic art in "Message Carriers."
The Work of Women

ReFraming the Past: Recent Work from Texas Women Photographers. Curated by Jean Caclin, Executive Director. Houston Center for Photography for Women & Their Work Gallery, Austin, Texas, July 3-August 1, 1993. Galveston Art Center, March 3-April 24, 1994. Temple Art Center, June 1-July 1, 1994

Mary Visser

In "ReFraming the Past" nine women artists question the political, sociocultural and cultural context that has been given value by the status quo. Each image contributes to the whole concept of what it means to be a woman in a patriarchal culture. The exhibition presents women who work as artists in the photographic medium as individuals and as part of the concept of woman that is constantly being redefined and expanded. The work asks that the viewer reexamine their assumptions about the role of women in this society.

In selecting this body of work Caclin has presented two interconnecting issues. The first has to do with the expanding format of photography within the artworld and the other has to do with how these women approach issues of gender and race through the photographic medium. I found the artwork to be not just an exhibition of the individual works of Texas women photographers but a rediscovery of women as producers of culture and meaning. These artists deconstruct the roles women have had superimposed upon them by a patriarchal society. The violence that women have suffered, the stereotyping of roles, the very definition of what it means to be a woman has been examined and reexamined by these artists.

Barbara DeGenève, a feminist photographer working to change oppressive representations of women and minorities in society, has written, "Photographic images carry ideological messages which cumulatively shape the culture's ideas, values, and attitudes. They are the bearers of cultural mythologies. If we see enough pictures of a certain type (women being brutalized by men, minorities as ghetto residents) we can conclude that such imagery is valuable to the culture. Especially, if certain aspects of society are not represented, it is most likely due to the fact that no important Susan S. Grant, Faith, 1985, original in color

K. Johnson Bowles, Past Catholic Reclik #2: The Suffocating of M.M., 1992, mixed media photo sculpture

Gisela Pullick and Deborah Chery, both feminist art historians, make the following point about how women have been positioned in fine art, "Representing creativity as masculine and circulating women as the beautiful image for the desiring male gaze. High Culture systematically denies knowledge of women as producers of culture and meaning." Contemporary photography has become increasingly important as an avenue of artistic expression. Modernism once demanded that a work of art stand on its own "without relying on subject matter." This tenet looked to form, rather than subject, as the important element.

This modernist theme moved photography into a place of acceptance within the fine art world. Important examples of this work are seen in Edward Weston's finely-crafted nudes and formalistic images of vegetables such as the Pepper series.

This approach to image making can be found in the work of Amy Blakemore who works in the straight style which is the basis for the modernist theme, but who places the content of the subject over a formal approach to structure. Blakemore uses the technique of isolating the subject from its environment by using extreme contrasts in tone development. This separation of the subject from its surroundings gives the subject visual priority. Her use of the inexpensive Diana camera allows the details and tonality of the image to be defined by the qualities inherent in the plastic lens.

Many modernist photographers used the technique of compressing tonalities to heighten the viewer's attention to the formal qualities of their images such as shape and form. But Blakemore uses it to focus the viewer's perception on the content to be found within the subjects. She understands that when capturing the image one must allow the subject to be in control of his or her own presence. The photographer observes and then selects the moment when the subject reveals that presence.

In the work Girl in Hodges, a young girl looks back over her shoulder as she runs into a rectangular opening between two large box hedges. You receive an impression of both delight and danger from this slightly blurred view of the moment, Blakemore's photograph is a portrait of the subject's interaction with the environment and with the viewer's memory. It is up to the viewer to complete the content of the moment by bringing his or her own experience to the image. Blakemore visually isolates the subject to create an intimacy between the viewer and subject. The image is blurred and detail is obscured with purpose. The viewer must depend upon a sense of knowledge of the subject based upon interaction rather than observation.

In Sower and Brother, Blakemore uses Diane Arbus's confrontation mode of image making. However, there is a subtle but important difference when Blakemore uses this mode. In this work the subjects confront the viewer not the photographer. In Arbus's work one is always aware that the subject is being photographed. The photographer's presence creates a voyeuristic feeling in the images, and the viewer is made to feel an intruder. In Blakemore's image there is no such feeling of intrusion. You feel that sister and brother are responding directly to your gaze. The choice of vantage point is important to Blakemore. Vantage point allows the artist to declare a personal way of seeing which prevails even in the most complicated field of view. In Three Grils Blakemore uses the camera low, placing the young girl central to the visual data surrounding her relaxed, but commanding presence. Blakemore's compositions may be formalistic, but her intent is to deliver the content with impact and enough ambiguity to force an interaction based upon the viewer's experiences. As a straight photographer she has been true to the formalistic structure of defining an image, but as a postmodernist she has given content priority. We are more aware of the subject of the moment and what we bring to the image than of the formal structure of these images.

Walker Evans stated that "We sense nothing in isolation, that we sense this for what it is only by reference to another thing." K. Johnson Bowles with her post-Catholic relics of mixed media assemblages, calls into question the tenets of a patriarchal culture that imposes upon its female members a role in the content of the moment by bringing his or her own experience to the image. Blakemore visually isolates the subject to create an intimacy between the viewer and subject. The image is blurred and detail is obscured with purpose. The viewer must depend upon a sense of knowledge of the subject based upon interaction rather than observation.

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that denies the reality of women’s lives. In her work, Patsy Conklin Miller #2, we are faced with a pair of red stools held as an icon for the suffering women who undergo to be accepted within this society’s definition of female. The nails leave no question that the wearing of these shoes is torture. Bowles examines the absurdity of this construct by making a relic out of this well known symbol of femininity. Its importance is acknowledged by the fact that women continue to submit to small and large forms of body pain to be attractive. Bowles uses her Catholic heritage to deconstruct issues of sexuality and identity. Within the context of a relic she gives these issues an importance and value not yet accepted within society. She deals with issues of self esteem based upon a stereotype of beauty that is unreal while focusing on issues of guilt and original sin that have been laid at the feet of

women for centuries. If the patriarchal culture demands an artificial face and behavior that is so important that women are judged and valued by how well they adhere to the ideal, then that ideal should be held sacred she argues, but we are made acutely aware of the absurdity of these values when the relics of such policies on view.

Cara Catherine DeBak takes on issues of violence against women as a personal event and a general issue. In unaited (Dadys) completed in 1993, the image is composed of parallel images. On the left is a sepia-toned photo of a family some couched on the right with a photographed image of a young woman’s face expressing pain, anger, and anguish. The family scene appears calm except for the underlying tone of danger or threat. The threat appears to come from the father figure which has been replaced with a white silhouette.

Two small girls are standing in the background and the empty silhouette of the father holds something in his hand in a stabbing gesture. The little girl’s expressions appear strange and tense rather than comfortable in the presence of this ominous figure. The accompanying photocopied image on the right shows a young woman’s face twisting across the page with intense contortions of pain. The same coupling of painful individual memory versus the innocuous calm of a snapshot image appears in the photograph titled unaited (Miss). In this image the face of a toddler girl has been cut out leaving a black gaping hole. The accompanying image is a photocopystory of a young woman with her hands tugging at her hair and her mouth contorted in a silent scream. The contrast between the two images conveys the reality of the snapshot memory. DeBak forces the viewer to reconstruct the lives of these little girls that is far different from what the snapshot conveys.

Like Blackmore, Robin Dunn Germany asks the viewer to complete the story from his or her own personal experiences and memories. The image, The Story of the Earth is Long is a mixed-media collage based upon images of individuals known or unknown to the artist. In the center is a photo booth strip shot showing a woman of the 1940s in four different poses. This strip is surrounded by images of planes dropping bombs and other war time imagery. Germany’s photo collage tells of a war time Madonna waiting for her man. In the mixed media work titled Sacred View, Germany has placed an image of a young girl on the lid of a hanging box surrounded by stereotypes of women and their body parts. When the lid is opened a dissected view of the internal reproductive organs along with a side view of the public region is juxtaposed with a glamour photo of a woman’s profile. What roars the viewer mute of this collaboration of images? Germany states

in the catalog that in making these stories she expresses her “own concern about her identity as an artist: a person with one set of futures who ended up in another.” The influences of place and culture on personal identity is the subject of Kathy Lovas’ work. Past and present are brought together by perceptions and associations with images of people that in rolling these stories she expresses her “own concern about her identity as an artist: a person with one set of futures who ended up in another.” The influences of place and culture on personal identity is the subject of Kathy Lovas’ work. Past and present are brought together by perceptions and associations with images of people that...
MONTAGE: The Ghost in the Machine

Among the glitch-free exhibits was Rath’s piece Challenge. It was a sight and sound installation comprised of an ever-changing row of large red LED numbers and letters, seven television monitors representing the seven heavens, and a cage of hovering ping-pong balls. Footage included J.R.K.'s famous speech about the space program, the landing on the moon, and of course the news commentary during the Challenger explosion. The cold technology of the installation itself lent irony to our faith in “fail-proof” systems. Tagging the Other; an angry piece by Pipot, was mainly comprised of four video screens with continuous and confrontational footage of identification photos. Although it was obviously a comment on racism, it was also about surveillance and loss of human dignity. Less subject to equipment failure, the more traditionally digitized manipulated fine art pieces hanging on the walls included thought-ful and quite well known pieces by Michael Brooksky, Esther Parada and Manuel Without a doubt, the main attraction at Montage was virtual reality. The technology expo at the Riverside Convention Center hod as its central attraction the present manifestation of the Latzer dream. I was as curious as anyone to try out these famous virtual reality helmets. Needless to say, I was not the only one with this brilliant idea. When I arrived, business executives were twirling around gynoecopic cages wearing squared wireless helmets it was a very odd sight. A monitor showed what they were seeing: a wowing, pose- lated, serpentum tunnel with dolphins darting in and out of the screens. Perhaps an ideal slot machine for a bored child at a local supermarket.

The scientific uses of this technology are extensive. One of Latzer’s first contacts was with NASA, which uses virtual reality in various simulation situations. The possibilities are limited only by the sophistication of the data, and by making the sensory input seem as real as possible. Latzer foresees unprecedented future refinements that could offer a more seamless sensation; a design tied more directly into the human nervous system with that “flood the sense organs.”

Thanksfully, Montage was not all technology, and primitive communication still existed. One of my most memorable experiences was listening to Joann French (professor and feminist art critic at the University of Nebraska) at the State University of New York at Brockport. Her stirring speech (which included some beautifully cappella singing) entitled Love and Prophecy examined our relationship with the technological world. The biblical prophecy of doom and a “shuddering and unproductive future” in our culture, is a main fad for technology, “Technology,” explained French, “is the system by which society provides its media with practical things that they need and desire. . . Love and prophecy are knowledge applied to human beings ways of doing things. . . Most people don’t think of love and prophecy as practical, but love, or lack of it, orders intimate and political relationships among people.” French added, the love of “practical things” today has brought about the triumph of technology and an inevitable effect on social and cultural relationships. Today “technophilia has trumpeted over art.” The light of technology, the computer, has been “fetishized.” Now “computer students get cromed with the machine and forget about art. Information which includes images,” she warned, “is simply hidden ideology.” The counter force, according to French, is “love.” “Love is the heart of the seemingly disembodied body of reality... where human flesh is indiscernible: joining people in sex, romance and familial, national, and global ties.” Love “rotates the earth on its axis.”

There was little of the love French spoke about in Dawn Dedes’ Urban Warrior, but it was one of the most moving and jarring things at Montage, and an admirable revelation of the courage of this white female artist. It was a complex multi-media installation benefiting from a run down warehouse locale (the Hallstein’s Chevrolet warehouse). The autobiographical confessions of African American, New Orleans criminals and killers were bland out through loud speakers onto videotape side streets. Inside the warehouse was a corrugated metal structure with a series of wrought iron doorways that led you into

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Hans Staartjes, Virtual Reality Helmet

Editor’s Note: Montage ‘93—the “International Festival of the Image”—was held for the first time in Rochester, NY, in July, 1993. Organizers described its aim as revealing “the fusion of art and technology.” The festival, dedicated to the latest advances in digital imaging, included sixteen shows incorporating photography, film, two-dimensional and three-dimensional electronic imagery, as well as interactive media installations. Scheduled events included performing arts, trade shows, exhibits, educational events, and also featured virtual reality. President of Montage ‘93 was Naasak Lyons, director of the Visual Studies Workshop in Rochester. Sponsors of the proposed triennial event included the City of Rochester, N.Y., Eastman Kodak Company, Xerox Corporation, Bausch and Lomb, Chase Manhattan Bank, A.C. Cirkhans, Greater Rochester Cabbalah, Moho, Polaroid Corporations and Rochester Telephone Corporation.

Hans Staartjes

Struggling with the question of reality, Descartes concluded he could only be sure of the existence of his mind—"I think therefore I am." The mental and the material worlds were totally separate for Descartes, and the difficulty of explaining the connection between mind and body became known as the "ghost in the machine" dilemma. A reality tinkerer such as virtual reality inventor Jason Lanier (one of the major personalities at Montage ‘93), might have solved Descartes’ problem by placing a virtual reality helmet over the philosopher’s head and turning the ghost into a machine or the machine into a ghost. At any rate, during his lecture at the Eastman Theatre, Lanier proposed making reality an academic question, or at least blurring the lines of what we consider "real" by introducing a new artificial and computerized "reality" in a body suit, with simultaneous sensations of sight, sound, and touch.

Lanier’s talk concluded in the strong feeling of revelation and excitement I had arriving in Rochester. I was excited about seeing the new possibilities of expression and attending conferences dealing with the uses and effects of this new technology on art and artists. In the back of my mind, however, I felt hesitation; computer imaging, 3-D pics, holograms and virtual reality often do little except dazzle and impress. In terms of exhibitions, a clear propensity towards the former could be found in the shown at Eastern House (”The New Image, organized by Citrine Major and Hevel Fischer) and at the Strong Museum (”Perspectives, Precisities, Perspectives: Expressions in Three Dimensional Graphic and Electronic Media, organized by Lance Spitzer).
Drawn to the Light: Montage 1993

Charles Wiese

Montage '93 was a promising and seductive glow on the horizon. I work with digital media to produce my own artwork, and so, my expectations for the Montage festival were understandably high—at last, a city filled with digital art! Little did I suspect what awaited me.

The "iterations" show at the Memorial Gallery was by far the strongest of the curated shows. The range of artworks exhibited spanned from Jim Campbell's haunting interactive videos which evoke issues of memory, history, and self-awareness to Montage's ongoing photograph/video installation dealing with culture, technology, and deconstruction. Keith Piper's installation of digital video was a breathtaking barrage of montaged voice, text, video, and graphics spread across four synchronized monitors. Embedded in this artwork are expressed concerns of the role technology can play in the determination and structure of personal identity. Here technology was focused to accomplish the goals of the artist rather than producing the often held displays of technological excess seen elsewhere. The show effectively pointed out a number of meaningful directions that the artist may choose from when working with digital media. Each of the artists presented a new paradigm for judging the quality of artistic expression. It would seem a convenient way to argue a lack of sophistication that may be found in a body of work—so resort to claims for a new aesthetic—and one that seems to distance the particular medium mandates a new basis for judging the quality of artistic expression. It would seem a convenient way to argue a lack of sophistication that may be found in a body of work—so resort to claims for a new aesthetic—and one that seems to distance the

Keith Piper, Tapping the Other (Detail), 1992

digital media. Significantly, each of the artworks on display stand as strong examples of the potential of such tools or offer.

The Eastman House and Strong Museum both chose to showcase the various expressions possible using digital media. The diversity of technologies used within these exhibitions created some serious problems. One unfortunate consequence was to create the effect of a trade show exhibiting new technologies for advertising displays, rather than an art exhibition. The hodgepodge of works could only be categorized under the general thematic of the technological tools used to produce them. I did not sense an incisive exploration of a new digital aesthetic, or of subjects that may draw strength from their chosen methods of production. The artworks seemed to be more about the medium and not enough about what could be expressed with it.

Claims are made for the advent of a new set of aesthetics. That somehow, the use of a particular medium mandates a new basis for judging the quality of artistic expression. It would seem a convenient way to argue a lack of sophistication that may be found in a body of work—so resort to claims for a new aesthetic—and one that seems to distance the

Charles Wiese is a Houston artist.
PEA PODS AND PEARS

The Allan Chasanoff Photographic Collection: Tradition and the Unpredictable, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, January 16–March 27, 1994

Maggie Oivny

We all collect images. Passionately or aversively, obsessively or casually, mentally or physically, we accumulate and become possessors of pictures. Collecting begins early. The boy of a few decades ago amassed baseball cards and proudly exhibited his knowledge of the trivia imprinted on the back; today’s youngest pupil for all the available video games for their computer/game machine in order to conquer the next electronic challenge. Collecting extends throughout our lifetimes. Grandmothers collect family pictures while travelers regale us with their scrapbooks and slides or videos. We recall images in dreams, flashbacks, and memories. When it comes to pictures, we all resemble pack rats.

However, the image collector under discussion here is a different breed. His appetite for pictures is more specific and its focus less plebeian. According to a Wall Street Journal article, dealers say that generally photography collections are centered on five categories: themes (e.g. pea pods and pears), styles and periods (Post-modernism, techniques: platinum, maker prints, photo perforation), and individual photographers (Paul Strand or Joel Peter Witkin).

Corollary to these five categories, a range of individual approaches to collecting the medium may come into play. The intuitional pursuit of "I like what I like," or interesting presentations of, say, the hand, or photographs taken in Mumbai, is not unlike that of the artsy, intellectual effort. Assembling historical or biographical collections entails some library research and less of reading and looking. And fine print collecting seemingly requires a lifetime of experience. This is not to suggest, though, that these approaches are so strictly delimited as they seem here. In fact, collecting images that speak to you, that evoke an intuitive or emotional response, no matter their historical or aesthetic worth, is a universally recommended path to take.

Recently, Susan Sonntag published The Volcano Lover, from which several passages are quoted in this essay. Begging the reader’s pardon for this digression, I suppose that I should not be overly surprised that the author of On Photography, a spiritual examination of the medium, should turn her attention to a novelized critique of collecting. Both activities are acquisitive, motivated by the desire to possess either materially or by proxy. Her incisive commentary, while describing a single collector, presents a number of different facets that motivate acquisitiveness. Each aspect could well describe an approach invariable to various types of photography collector: the investor, the exhibitionist, the do-gooder, and the tastemaker.

THE INVESTOR

A gratifying promissory, that collecting most things requires money but that the things collected themselves turn into more money. Though money may be the fleeting, disposable, temporary by-product of his passion, collecting was still a viable occupation; not merely recognizing but becoming valued on things, by including them in one’s collection.

Corporate collections often are based on this premise. The pictures themselves may or may not have an emotional appeal to their owner, except insofar as they represent profit as viable commodities. These collections are rarely accessible to the public. If they become so valuable as to constitute an important, major collection, their owners may collaborate with an art museum to provide a forum to exhibit the photographs. A recent example is the Gilman Paper Company Collection shown at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

Another aspect to collecting in general is provenance—where an individual image came from and who owned the picture prior to its acquisition. As Sonntag suggests, certain owners, by virtue of the quality of their other holdings, bestow a value and/or prestige on a new acquisition that it might not otherwise have held. Thus both the photograph and the owner achieve higher regard. The investor capitalizes on this duality: he himself attains a degree of personal prestige and power (as an exhibitionist, see following category), and his investment—originally a pragmatic, fiduciary commodity—becomes an object endowed with an aura of worth beyond its insurance value.

THE EXHIBITIONIST

Conversely, a valuable object confers value on its owner. A collector is happy to be known, mainly known, as the proprietor of what—through so much effort—has been collected. (138)

Referring once again to recent Metropolitan traveling exhibitions, John C. Waldolf’s once private collection, acquired by the Met partially through purchase and partially by donation, provided the glee for "The New Vision" exhibition, seen in Houston during the summer of 1991. An example of an historically-oriented type of collection, as revealed by the smaller-sized exhibition, it also offered an incisive view of the collector himself: cool, intellectual, and thoughtful.

Waldolf's savvy and dedicated collector was well known to the small circle of collectors and curators of the medium, but not at all to the public at large. The donation certainly conferred a degree of fame and name recognition he did not previously enjoy.

THE DO-GOODER

To collect is to reuse things, edible things, from refuse, from refuse disposal, or simply from the equitable desire of having to someone else's collection rather than one's own. (25)

Ostensibly, as put forth in the owner’s statement to the Met’s "The Making Dream" catalogue, Howard Gilman felt some of these conservationist stirrings. To save photographs from obsolescence and destruction is certainly a laudable motivation, provided that the "owner" knows how to supply the proper environment for their longevity. Good collectors consult with professionals to ensure the well-being of their holdings. Negligent owners sometimes prove to be more dangerous than the arctic tundra when it comes to safeguarding their cache. As to having to possess an image so

THE TASTERMAKER

The sweet scent of the collection (or tastemaker . . . best tastemakers are actually collectors); to be in a source area, as others catch up, to be priced out of the competition for what they have perceived. (71)

This moniker most frequently applies to the curatorial enterprise, whether performed in the service of a private collector or for a museum or gallery. Often an exhibition presenting work therefore unknown to the collecting public, engenders a flurry of purchases, raising the prices and diluting the market. A good example is the exhibition, "Czech Modernism," presented by the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston in 1989. What once was a moderately priced 1920s composition by any one of a number of successful Czech photographers, now has a value far exceeding the means of most collectors. This once obscure style/technique in photographic history now has cachet.

In light of these various categories and motivations, The Allan Chasanoff Photographic Collection, recently acquired by the MFAH, fails to identify itself as belonging to any one of them. A self-motivated entrepreneur, Chasanoff himself defies classification. Twisted, never inactive, and always on the forefront of innovation, this collector acquires photographers to inspire his own work. It matters not whether the print is pristine, made by a known or unfamiliar photographer, or even whether the image is the "best" that may be had for the price. What is important to Chasanoff, it seems, is not the object itself, but what the picture says to the viewer’s psyche, questions to answer, puzzles to solve, connections to analyze. Not one of the over 1000 images in the collection does not tell a second look. Whether it invokes optical illusion, manipulation, irony, each image insists on viewer involvement.

Maggie Oivy has worked with various aspects of the Chasanoff Collection during the past two years and has benefited greatly from the challenges it poses, both from intellectual and artistic standpoints.

FOOTNOTES


2 Illustrations for this article are photographs by artists in the Chasanoff Collection but not included in the exhibition chosen to offer a wider appreciation for the depth and breadth of the collection. Parker’s Can Dance inspired the title for this essay. Several sentences of pea pods and peas surface within the collection, but they do not constitute a Chasanoff "category" such as "the letter P"—as represented by the Denny Mores photo. After Chasanoff had acquired a number of photographs, he recognized certain patterns in his collection. These patterns were identified and cataloged, and from these themes, "themes" were designated. Some photographs were assigned more than one slot. However, this process was specifically not meant to be a static outline for future acquisition. It was simply an assessment of what was already there.

Photographs from The Allan Chasanoff Photographic Collection, courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.
The Rite of Women's AUTOBIOGRAPHY

By Kathleen H. Heist,
Valuable Papers with Magazines Case #1, 1995-96

The Visual Diary: Women's Own Stories organized by the Houston Center for Photography March 4-April 10, 1994

Patricia Lee Young

Editor's note: The Visual Diary is an exhibition of six portraits, photographs, videos, and book artists drawing on the tradition of the written story to create visual text. The exhibition is held in conjunction with HCP's national Women in Photography Conference. The show is curated by Adie Turn, video artist and Program Coordinator at HCP and Nell P. Hiebner, writer and graduate assistant at Ohio State University.

In the pivotal scene of Sarah Orne Jewett's The Country of the Pointed Firs (1886), a parable of stories constructed as women's autobiography, the narrator imagines the lost and found wholeness of womanhood through a communion between herself and her summer lodger in the coastal village of Damariscotta, Maine. The writer seeks in the picturesque town and Almira Todd's house refuge from some undisclosed but appreciable emotional crisis that had splintered her sense of identity. She had planned to vacate her personal fragment left in the "dark woods" of the country and, as a professional writer, commit a "piece of writing" she was being paid to do. Instead, she discovers that fragmentation and marginality had always been woman's reality and wholeness but an illusion. Viewing the problem in terms of the canonized dualities of professional and personal, interior and exterior, civilization and nature, male and female, merely scratched the surface, perhaps the problem itself. Coming to understand the doubled condition of woman's discontinuity and existence on the peripheries, Patriarchy has always and necessarily and rigidly bifurcated woman's wholeness and holiness to man, thus dividing her—and society—from her rich, unique, and sacred nature. She had become a spectacle but not the subject of her own life.

For woman, autobiography is the first stage, the first flower of operation in ordinary reality. The act of writing must, therefore, be an unwriting and unmaking of canonized images and processes, the denaturing of patriarchal representations of woman which have fixed her value as an objectification/projection of male desire and experience and into which she vanishes. The narrator of The Country of the Pointed Firs gets back to (the self) by writing autobiographically. As Jewett represents it, woman's autobiography is a sexual reclamation of woman's autonomy over her life and her discourse. Anticipating Carolyn Heilbrun's perspective in both Reinventing Womanhood (1979) and Writing a Woman's Life (1980), and even the core of Julia Kristeva's theory in Revolution in Poetic Language (1984), Jewett apprehends that turning discourse around is central to the remuneration of thought and social change. Those prosaic "literary employment" binding women to patriarchal prescriptions about art and representation are transgressed, so that woman can have her "say."

Women's autobiography is the use of an apparatus, in this case discourse, to reverse what apparatus was originally authored and authorized by patriarchy to do to and objectify the female self, to curtail the powerful feminine flow, and to suborn women into the "employments" of writing herself out of existence. Women have resisted the dominant discourse and eventually routed it in, but learned as well that they were left out of it. Poetic discourse, as is close as antithetical language gets to approximating itself and the reality of the repressed maternal, the essentially feminine: its nonlinear process, its interiority, its integrative modes, its unremarked acceptance of difference and arbitrariness.

In the pivot scene, as a woman can find the women in her own making. Without the artist's willingness to reclaim and accept her womanly self, which means working through women, rather than her culture will see wholeness. Hence, when the novel's character Mrs. Todd invites her young lodger to accompany her to the pasture to gather pennyroyal, an herb used primarily for mosquito control in the region but also to remedy reproductive health, she initiates a process of mystical reconnection with the woman seen in the artist's book, Reading Dick and Jane With Feb, 1989.
Never saw the witch again and they lived hapelie ever after.
The End

Once, I called my mother
"Mrs. Mu Chang Moon."

She replied, "I have my own name.
My name is Hwaja Lee."
When I was ten, I asked my mother what menstruation meant.
She said I should look it up in a book; that's what her mother had told her to do, and what was good enough for her, was good enough for me.
continued from page 11
last event of the subject's present existence. In other words, the image used to confirm existence, the filling of a space, simultaneously predicated erasure, an emptying, a change or death.

The daguerreotype Mrs. Todd exhibits to the young writer in the pennynoyal film certifies life and communicates continuity, just as the "primordial" pennynoyal does. The portraits announce autobiographically, "I have always been." Most importantly, Mrs. Todd verifies over and over that she was a girl and that she has and always had, a mother. There is connection. If there is a sinister component, it is, of course, that the separate portraits suggest an insipicuous separation of women, in light of the togetherness of the Blackerets. Mothers and children are separated biologically, but patriarchy has, through language and technology, separated mothers and daughters spiritually as well, which means they cannot apprehend the fullest meaning and power of their original, material connection. Cynthia Greig's collection in "The Visual Diary" combines the diaries of nine-tenth century women with photographs of direct intimacy to metaphor and reverse woman drainer of her self and her discourse.

In the twentieth century, photography evolved into a major agency of woman's entainment in a discourse, now visualized and repeated constantly and accessible moment after moment. Woman—her role and certainly her cosmetic beauty—had always been fixed, rigidified because she has become, in her own eyes, an objectification of man's desire and needs. In terms of popular appeal, photography immobilised and confined woman to this script. They had no need of their mental and physical fullness or their voice, only of an ambition and a capacity to stay young and ideally beautiful for men—and silence—forever. The primordial pennynoyal mattered not a whit.

Women became practitioners of photography forty years after its invention. They had always been objects of the male gaze. Male photographers acted as gods creating them in their own idea of female beauty. The whole and dynamic woman was destroyed and replaced by a commodified fixed image which woman herself bought. Appropriately, in "The Visual Diary," Karen Johnson depicts her mother through a series of photographs of objects and object fragments. Woman became the ultimate object, a technology like the camera itself, a tool of male power used most effectively against herself.

Now, with the twentieth century ending, women are rewriting the story of photography by using it to write and ritualise their own stories and to make themselves the subjects of their own unique discourse. What is so fasci-photographic image into soundtracked video—Mindy Ferber's stunning Diarism, for example, celebrates and symbolises the release into language and mobility while retaining a connection with origin. Ferber gives her mother and herself place and voice. Perhaps the most compelling technical and theoretical process occurring before our eyes, in terms of linking autobiography and photography (two forms of making visible text on a page) is the combination of photographic image and written text—dissolving in own discourses, but also with woman's way of relating to her own existence and to others. She is more inclusive, more able to represent, because her body itself represents, paradox, and the human practice of objectifying is in her less fixed, more amorphous. She is also more inclined toward openly admitting "I" wish to relate to my subject, rather than creating distance and hierarchal authority. In the process of composing autobiographically, she can, in Emily Dickinson's words, feel "my life with both my hands."

Patticia Lee Tongue is an associate professor of English and Women's Studies at the University of Houston.

FOOTNOTES AND SOURCES CONSULTED


... Writing a Woman's Life.


Measures of Light

Organized by the Southwest Craft Center
Presented in conjunction with San Antonio's Contemporary Art Month
July 22–August 1, 1993
Paul Hester

When I was a student at Rice University in the late 60s, we had a meter that measured light by comparing the value of available light to a standard gray dot contained within the meter. You aimed the thing at a surface, and turned a dial until the gray in the meter was the same as the light you were seeing.

I thought about the meter during my drive to San Antonio to see this exhibition. It seems we are always using the comparative method of that light meter to evaluate many things. Do I measure up to my ideal of someone else that I respect or dislike? Do I measure up to what I think I should look like? We are constantly measuring the light outside, and twisting our internal dials up or down to bring our image of ourselves into conformity with the external bright spot of the moment.

Whose San Antonio did I expect to see in these photographs? A selection by the Chamber of Commerce of “What to See and Do in San Antonio?” What I found, with few exceptions, were pictures made in the public domain: streets, bus stops, parades, intersections of one photographer’s very private responses to public situations.

In an era of photographers striving to make their practices equal to those of the other arts through the use of color, large prints, painting on the surface, and elaborate studio set-ups, these quiet, unassuming observations in black and white appeared obstinately “untrendy.”

What I was confronted with was the discrepancy between what I saw in her pictures and my idealized preferences for the way the world should look. She demanded that I admit my biases and assumptions and take another look at the world. I wasn’t a question of whether I liked or disliked her photographs, but whether or not I liked the world I had been going around with my meter, comparing this subject with that, this moment with that, establishing a hierarchy of value, and her photographs whispered, “Are you sure about that?”

Bankhead is certainly playing by the rules of the documentarians: 35mm, eye level, straight ahead, “everyday.” She photographs what anyone can see, nothing obviously exotic or bizarre or inaccessible. But within this framework, what she has chosen to show us? What does she intend for us to see? She studied photography in the early seventies with Russell Lee, one of the exceptions to the photographic tradition exemplified by the Farm Security Administration (FSA) in the 30s. With these photographs, we have the privatization of the public experience; the documentary style has been cut adrift from any connection to a larger social purpose of the FSA. We are now suspicious of the ability of government programs to make any improvements in our quality of life, suspicious of all gestures in the public arena, from press conferences to beauty contests. Our expectations are reduced to mistrust. One picture shows a young man seated in a church, looking down into a plastic drinking cup. Wombpills in the other pew are listening to the off-camera priest, but this young man seems disengaged. Why is he here? In another, we approach an African-American woman seated at a bus stop, looking suspiciously over her shoulder at us. Meanwhile, innocent bystanders line the wall in shadow. In a third, a young girl stands holding two balloons in the midre of hundreds of discarded beer cans, and the other remains of a street party.

Does Judy Bankhead love or hate what she is photographing? The FSA and the Photo League photographers (among them Aaron Siskind, one of Bankhead’s teachers in graduate school at Rhode Island School of Design) photographed from a stated desire to change the world. Can we figure out her position toward what we see in the pictures? Are these choses to decipher her attitude toward what she is showing us? A man is standing with a rolling suitcase, a body covered with a black cloth embroidered “Angelica Chapel.” He is waiting in front of two elevator doors. Will he go up or down? Questions of choice.

The traditional stance of the documentary style presumed an objectivity that implied neutrality. “And that’s the way it was.” I disagree of much that I see in her pictures, but what it means to get old in our society, the way cities are organized around the convenience of fire-butching mechanical monsters, the rules reserved for women in society or the camera lens pointing the same direction, her camera is looking the other way. She identifies her pictures with numbers, with holding any clues about why she took this particular picture, why the people are doing what they are doing, no easy label of a short title that is too easily dismissed as “what this picture is about.” She requires that we determine the story, examine our assumptions about what makes a good picture, about what is legitimate subject matter. She confronts us with the state of mind behind the fleeting perceptions that goes right by without so much as a second thought. It is right there on the wall for us to remember, analyze, dissect, person, and contemplate.

Notice a street scene looking toward an intersection, with telephone and light poles bordering the sky. On the left, the golden yellow of a McDonald’s drive rises above the artificial planting of a gas station. In the right half of the picture, the large bell tower of a church rises above a dense groove of trees. Three neglected metal frames for portable sign feet in the wide expanse of concrete foreground, offering to balance the scales in our weighing of these two cultural values. It is a subtle and delicately composed image, posing a philosophical question at the same time as it juggles the fragments of a city street into a whole worthy of our serious attention.

Susan Sontag wrote that all photographs attain the status of art by becoming old, I am curious how historians in the future will decipher our culture through Bankhead’s photographs. It is a wondrous thing that the pictures made in grocery stores were funded by the HEW grocery chain, showing us the idealized shoppers of advertising, but images to be hung in the corporate headquarters to remind the managers who the customer is. For example, the back of a man in a starched collared shirt, with a rag from a chenille bedspread in his lip pocket, a six-pack in each hand, in the setting back to his left an African-American woman on the cover of Black Hair Care magazine advertises . . . "All the Best New Looks for Summer." The pictures are full of gestures, carseases, facial expressions, postures, depicting with great care how people hold themselves, carry the baggage of their lives and their bodies. There is an extraordinary photograph of a woman waiting for the bus, standing in front of a luggage store window, holding an empty plastic clothes bag. Her face is tight, eyes closed, facing into the sun as if looking up light to keep warm. Her jacket is bunched up over her neck. A large white sign above her head, taped to the window, is advertising trash bags. Standing to her right with his foot on some pipes coming out of the wall of a young man. In contrast to his patient, bland expression, we see her taut neck muscles, the paleness of her skin. Her hair is pulled back, her glasses removed and in her hand. The shadow of a pole falls across the sidewalk and up the wall, separating them. There is a photograph of a man’s face with a mask of two eyes held over his eyes. The representation of the eyes are not “the real thing,” merely a picture of the thing, without any of its functions. Instead of seeing, they obscure the viewer’s sense of the scene. He is blindfolded, and the gaze of the man has been denied. The blindfold is also a disguise. Are they feminine eyes? Is it an attempt for a man to see the world through a woman’s eyes? What does it mean when he can’t see that his inability to see in her way, or is it a reference to the construction that she feels have been forced on her, or is she seeing the world through a man’s eyes (trucks drivers, male curators, male father)? It made me wonder about the curatorial process that selected these 100 images from the 45,000 negatives she made in this fifteen year period. It is different in style from the other pictures. Here the subject is engaged, involved in the making of the image. Does it refer to the protection of the self offered by the guise of documentary objectivity, where you remain invisible behind the camera, protected, not expressing yourself, only showing what was out there? The primacy of the visual in our culture is more apparent in the popular photogra phy. Success is based on appearance; Miss America is not the brightest or most talented, but chosen for how she looks when she walks around in high heels in her sitar outfit. In one picture, we see the back of a beauty contestant, her face and dress reflected in a mirror. (It suggests the manner in which we all evaluate ourselves in terms of how others see us.) But the photographer’s flash and own reflection are the central attraction in the mirror. Is the photographer comparing herself to this traditional standard of beauty? Am I pretty? If so, the bright light of her flash is insistent that she be judged by her actions as a photographer rather than her appearance, which is obscured.

Among the many photographs of single individuals, there are two of people eating lunch. In one an old woman who is in an aluminum folding chair near a campfire at continued on page 16
How do we see ourselves as part of the continuity of culture? In these photographs Bandhug offers a serious critique of the dominant cultural values, and an equally serious questioning of what is worth saving.

At the same time there is clearly great affection for the individuals she so carefully observes. She accepts our wars, speed bumps, and failures, and records each a quiet dignity and special place in her San Antonio. Her pictures both make me laugh and allow me to cry.

continued from page 16 night. She is turned away from the camera, pouring from a sauce pan into a big cup. A large tree branch intrudes into the frame between the woman and the viewer. In the other a man is seated in a cafe with an empty napkin dispenser, empty bottles and discarded plates and cups around him. His hand is stuck in a white paper sack. The camera's flash bounces brightly from a large photo mural of trees on the wall behind him. The images are of isolation, of the feeling of being outside, left out, shut out, alone in pieces of little warmth or comfort, of wandering around, on a search, looking for something.

This observation prompts me to ask what the significance of this show is for the photographer. Fifteen years is a large chunk of work to summarize in 100 pictures. Especially if the period began the year your father died, and ended in your fortieth year, with your mother dying just as you are finishing the editing. This is the exhibition of a mid-life artist, asking the question of what comes next through the process of examining what she has been doing for fifteen years. It is a dividing line between one way and another, between what was and what will be. To look at these 100 pictures in that light, is to find in them an attitude toward the future. In the opening sequence of the exhibition is a photograph made on the edge of town, standing on the sidewalk, looking toward the undeveloped landscape. The sidewalk ends abruptly, grass continues, an old newspaper lies on the ground. It is a question about continuity. Skinny trees, worthless now, but implying a faith that someone will enjoy the shade of this tree, even if it's not you who plants it. Or is this sidewalk an implication of interruption? The absence of people in this photograph and so many others: the empty chairs by the swimming pool, empty chairs at the awards ceremony, empty streets and parks, abandoned childhood toys, a vacant merry-go-round.

The question of what comes next is both personal and public. It deals with the photographer's own life and work, and it involves a larger question about history and memory.

Paul Hester is a photographer. He recently moved his headquarters to Fayetteville, Texas.

Sally Gall is an artist. 1984.

Ed Osowski

During the summer months New York galleries mount exhibitions that do little to tax the brain but do much to please the senses. One can almost hear curators breathing collectively with relief and saying, "Enough of theory! Bring on the pretty pictures." Several months ago, I saw "The Body in Nature" at the James Durrenger Gallery. This exhibition was filled with delightful, haunting, and, in some cases, downright silly images of people out-of-doors. It was also filled with the subtle message that there were better things to do than to look at. An acquaintance recently described to me a quickly exhibition of photographs, titled "On the Elbow," at the Widkin Gallery in which over 50 photographs called attention to that under-appreciated modernist claim of Alfred Stieglitz and his followers in which the medium is of less importance than the image and idea presented.

Of the twenty-six artists included in the exhibition, thirteen were photographers. And in the installation of the works—fifteen photographs and thirteen pieces in other fields—the photographic images were equal to the engravings, paintings, and pieces of sculpture capturing what Herbert called in published notes the "sense of lawlessness (that) the rules have been thrown out, order as we know it has been turned upside down, and a sense of abandon arises."

Working within the confines of the CAM's somewhat restricting Gallery Two, Herbert turned the room's limitations into an asset. The works were arranged with the same dense, crowded feel one finds in a forest. It was also an installation keen on setting up visual echoes—allowing the Steichen to speak to an equally stunning Sally Gall photograph Untitled, 1984, which, in turn, seemed caught up in conversation with Sylvia Mangold's

Sally Gall, Untitled, 1984

Judy Blankewish, Untitled, 1979

Judy Blankewish, Untitled, 1975

Trees Abound

Seeing the Forest through the Trees

Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston

August 14-October 10, 1993

Ed Osowski

1990 etching Pio Oak. Earle Hudnall's Strangler Fig Tree, 1990 and George Tic's 1970 Oak Tree, Helderel, New Jersey, were small photographs but rich in feeling and seemed partners with Page Kemper's delicate broccoli In the Garden Counting to Ten, 1993. Hudnall's work, in turn, was balanced with Lucan Johnson's small 1992 painting Untitled (Mary Et Vens).

The works by Hudnall, Tic, and Kemper made it clear that less can be more especially when set against Rodney Graham's three enormous sepia prints of British oak (all from 1989). Graham prints his images large—approximately three by five feet—and hangs them upside down. Those two facts alone make them of interest. Including three works by Graham—the only artist so singled out—was Herbert's only wrong step. For size that conveyed significance one contrasted the Graham works, inflated and self-important, with Frank Martin's The Oldest and Wast of

Judy Blankewish, Untitled, 1979

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Uncivil Wars

Civil War Series by Cindy Sherman commissioned by the Spoleto Festival in Charleston, South Carolina and shown in 1991 at the Gibbes Museum of Art as part of the group show Places with a Past: New Site Specific Art in Charleston at Texas Gallery June 15-July 26, 1993

Ed Osowski

At forty, Cindy Sherman is approaching the chronological midpoint of her career. An exhibition of six photographic images from her "Civil War Series" and a seventh untitled image provided an opportunity to review her career and achievements.

Central to Sherman's photographic work has been her use of the human figure. As she gained recognition as a personality, the presence of her image became a defining factor in her photographs. Part of the visual pleasure of viewing her photographs was finding Sherman beneath the disguises and identifying what had been added to create the image seen in the photograph.

Throughout her career, what Sherman has done by her persistent use of the body has been quite simple, to reject the vocabulary and aims of modernism. Her early works, now so familiar that they seem to have been always part of the visual and intellectual terrain of our times, hardly need to be described.

In brief, they are intelligent, politicized, and charged by their engagement with social and cultural issues. But they are also anything but more illustrations of a critique of the culture.

The viewer of a Sherman photograph senses that there is a narrative at work in the images — that the photograph is part of a story — but that the remaining parts of the text will not be supplied. Sherman challenges the viewer to provide the remainder of the text and furnish only that one image with which to reconstruct the text.

The second room at Texas Gallery was devoted to the six images from the "Civil War Series." In these works, signs of death are everywhere — a leg, a foot, an arm, a hand, an open palm. Pieces of bodies we believe have fallen in battle. What makes these works unusual for Sherman is her departure from each photograph's surface. The viewer never sees a face and thus is never able to identify the sex of these body parts. To suggest that these

"must" be men simply because women did not fight in the American Civil War is to fall into Sherman's trap. Nothing about these images places them firmly in our Civil War. They could be Sherman's version of events in Bonn or refer more broadly to domestic violence — the civil/domestic wars that terrorize women.

In two images, Sherman planted human dummies among the arms and legs. What are we to make of them? They seem to defy logic; these symbols of destruction and death, inserted like metaphors onto a battlefield strewn with fresh body parts. But the last thing driving Sherman is illustration. Her aim is to remind the viewer that merely illustrating scenes from the Civil War holds no appeal for her. These images are works representing the effects of any civil or domestic war, a reading supported by one image in which a vaguely feminine looking leg and thigh clothed in a white undergarment fills the horizontal space.

To search for actual images Sherman may have used as models is a vain exercise. While there may be hints of works by Alexander Gardner or Timothy H. O'Sullivan in certain images, they remain, at best, only tantalizing hints. Sherman's concern, surely, is not to pay homage to war photographers. Knowing the works of Matthew Brady and his contemporaries enhances our appreciation for what Sherman has done but doesn't explain what she has accomplished.

We remember that her "history portraits" point indelibly at the works they echo. So, these six works, quiet and calm and eerie, "feel" like Gardner's Home for a Rebel Sharpshooter. And, like Gardner's photographs, these are also manipulated photographs, bodies and props arranged to produce a powerful effect. What Sherman does quote are the silence and truce of the large body of Civil War photographs. Prevailing technology was incapable of supporting the picture-making of war photographers such as Cornell Capa. For Sherman and her nineteenth century ancestors war images become part of the meditative.

Instead, it seems more appropriate to consider the works of two contemporary artists — the filmmaker David Lynch and photographer Andy Serkis — when considering Sherman's work. In the trio of Lynch's Blue Velvet the camera focuses with great attention on a body in the grass — a striking similarity to Sherman's point of view. She has shot them at ground level, her camera barely removed from the scenes it captures. In Serkis's Movie photographs we find the same quiet brooding and evocative qualities that underlie Sherman's images.

Always concerned with directing the viewer toward the artificiality of her art, Sherman aims to liberate photography from its link to literal description and free it from illustration and verismimic. She has done this, not by opting for locating abstract images in the "real" world as Aaron Siskind has chosen, but through a more radical approach that teases us with appearance of reality. So these six "Civil War" images — with their layers of jelly spread thinly to resemble blood, with badly chewed wounds, artificial grass and fake insects — contain nothing to trick the viewer into thinking that Sherman has somehow stepped back in time. Her images could only be taken now. In these works, Sherman has dropped the theatrics of her older works for a new approach, a new angle. These are bravura works that achieve their hold on the viewer by how very different they are from her other works.

FOOTNOTES
1 Born in 1954, Sherman has been exhibiting for nearly twenty years. In 1976 she graduated SONY at Buffalo and was included in a group show at Buffalo's Albright-Knox Gallery. Four years later her brief apprenticeship ended with a one-person show at New York's Metro Pictures—still her New York debut. She received a one-person show at the CAM, Houston in 1982 and was featured in a 1982 Texas Gallery exhibition.
2 Sherman's earliest works resembled "8" movie stills. Between 1976 and 1982 she cast herself in various disguises — nude, writer, punk lady cowgirl. Initially, these images seemed derived from portraits such as those of Louise Bourgeois, Andy Warhol or Godard. Clearly it was Sherman beneath the wigs and costumes, both behind and in front of the camera, controlling the image-making process and, from an equally important feminist position, controlling the camera.
3 The author acknowledges and appreciates a conversation with Susan Morgan during which Morgan provided her views on Sherman's "titelactic."
LOOKING AT GALVESTON PAST

Ezra Stoller
Galveston Historical Society
September 4-30, 1993

Ed Ocsowski

In 1963, architectural photographers Ezra Stoller and Henri Cartier-Bresson were commissioned to produce photographs to accompany Houston architect Howard Barnstone's text *The Galveston That Was* (Houston: Museum of Fine Arts and New York: MacMillan Co., 1960). Working in Galveston for nine days, Stoller created a group of images documenting a wide range of nineteenth-century domestic and commercial buildings at a specific and rather depressing period in Galveston's history—before preservationists began efforts to save the city's architectural heritage.

During September 1993 thirty-two of Stoller's photographs (seven vintage prints and the remainder modern prints) from the Galveston project, including several omitted from the book, were shown at Galveston's Artists' Loft & Gallery. The exhibition was funded by the Galveston Historical Foundation (GHF), the Galveston Renaissance Foundation, and the Stoller Family.

Stoller began his career in 1939 and was a key player in the campaign to establish European modernism as the architectural style for American buildings by the 1960s. Barnstone, a supporter also of Mies van der Rohe's modernist vocabulary, and Stoller may have at first seemed an odd pair for a project seeking to rescue Galveston's past before it disappeared. (Cartier-Bresson's more humanistic and emotional style seemed more appropriate to capture the spirit of Galveston's past.) But Stoller's and Barnstone's modernism actually made them perfect partners. Their skeptical vision may have made them more receptive to the city's hidden treasures.

Looking through Barnstone's book before viewing the exhibition, one realizes how differently Stoller and Cartier-Bresson interpreted their assignments. (Cartier-Bresson's images were not on display, so familiarity with them depended on familiarity with the book, scheduled for republication by Rice University Press in June). Stoller's images are precise, deep in direct, ordered, cool—all qualities one associates with the aims of architectural photography. Cartier-Bresson's works are much more of their moment and location, perhaps sentimental and when viewed against Stoller's coolness. But Stoller was also able to anchor the building's residents in a particular place—two goals of architectural photography—providing the facts of the building and offering the viewer the experience of how the building is used. As the exhibition demonstrated, Stoller brought these aims with him when he documented Galveston.

Stoller's approach eschewed nostalgia—for him the city's buildings could be likened to pieces of sculpture, abstract and pure, waiting for his camera to focus on them. The aggressiveness of the exhibition, however, ignoring the photographic evidence before their eyes, write in gallery notes that Stoller's mission was to depict the buildings as they had been used in the nineteenth century. The photographs speak otherwise: his *Derelict Residential, East End Galveston* deserves a close reading. Dating from 1888, the building was a grand structure that combined elements of the Greek Revival and Italianate styles and stood until 1991 when it was destroyed by a fire. In Stoller's photograph, its grand days are past. One sees clothing hanging to dry on the second floor porch and seven mailboxes by the front door; the tower windows lack covers. Barnstone's summary of its fate at the time of Stoller's photograph is brief: "The building is now a rooming house with eight or ten apartments in poor repair."

Somewhat frustrating, from an historical viewpoint, was GHF's failure to document fully many photographs exhibited. Several buildings—especially one of a wooden Gothic Revival church—were simply not identified. And the description "demolished," found in a number of captions, failed to distinguish between buildings ruthlessly destroyed and others, such as the Duragh House, which fell to an aristocrat despite GHF efforts to find a buyer for it.

Not since 1971, when Museum of Fine Arts, Houston showed the Cartier-Bresson and Stoller photographs from the book (they are part of the Museum's holdings) have these works been seen. In 1963 Stoller was the first photographer to receive the American Institute of Architects gold medal. His Galveston photographs offer the chance to study a master at work, applying his sharp definition and emotion-free stance, to a city and its romantic architecture that seems the direct antithesis of his modernism.

Just Plain Folks

Gus Van Sant: 108 Portraits

Twin Palms Publishers
Santa Fe, NM, 1992, 112 pages, $50

Michael G. DeVoll

I've always enjoyed a good book. "To be a good book," the context will interest me, but it should also be pleasing in its physical presence. This notion was nurtured during my years in the retail book business. I began noticing specific publishers or imprints that appealed to me. There were a few that stood out as having consistently high-quality workmanship—interesting cover art; paper that was pleasing to the touch; end papers with delicate, intricate or unusual printing; and exceptional reproductions and press work.

Of course, once I had admired a book as an object, the content also must have lasting impact. *Gus Van Sant: 108 Portraits* is such a book.

Published by Twin Palms Publishers, a small company specializing in high-quality photography and art books, this book stands out on fine linen because the dark, matte finish of the cover with its stark, white lettering has such graphic impact, a little severe yet clean. When you pick up the book, it is heavy, but not burdensome and the cover feels smooth, almost waxy. If you look under the slipcover (the only way to fully appreciate the craft of book binding), the black fabric cover is adorned with the title, appearing in black-on-black. You then turn to the heavy, black, matte, textured end paper inside the front cover. The title page (reproducing the same serif, capitalized type treatment from the cover) and the introduction are on a matte paper with white type reversed out of a lads, rich black ink printed full bleed. What follows is the real treat of this book, the 108 portraits. With such a build up, you expect high-quality reproductions and, typical of Twin Palms, you are not disappointed.

The publishers decided to use an older, more labor intensive process, the photogravure, that uses a chemically etched copper plate. If the photos were enlarged, the dot pattern of the standard halftone process would not be evident, but rather a mesh-like pattern resulting in much more subtle gradations, from crisp whites to deep, rich blacks. But as mentioned before, the subject matter of the book is what must ultimately hold your attention, and again, this book does not fail.

The 108 portraits were taken by the independent filmmaker Gus Van Sant between 1988 and 1992. These photographs started in the casting sessions for his films *Drugstore Cowboy* and *My Own Private Idaho*. In the introduction, he talks of the awkward moment at the end of an interview when the interviewer is tempted to rudely say "next," instead, Van Sant asked the subjects if he could take their picture. No one has yet to turn him down. Moving them to a pre-determined location with good natural light and an unobtrusive background, he'd give no other warning that "Okay, ready" and take
individual behind the facade. As you look through the book, the eyes strike you the most. These "windows of the soul" become almost haunting. Like the acquaintances with which the people choose to adorn themselves, the eyes are varied and telling. Many come across as innocent (Laura Parker, John Knight, Felix Howard, Rodney Eastman, Kenny Siwaun), others as not so innocent (Traci Leid, Jennifer Jason Leigh, Scott Caffey, Peter Gallagher, Peter Marcsh). Many, with their direct stare, have piercing eyes (Nicholas Kallis, Meg Foster, Udo Kier, Rodney Harvey, River Phoenix), others just seem tired (Amy Wright, William S. Burroughs, Josh Deprazie, Bill Richert, Grace Zabriskie, Pat Morris, Tristan, Steve Buscemi, Rick Schmutz). The years and wisdom of some are revealed in their eyes (David Byrne, Dennis Hopper, Allen Ginsberg, Tracy Chapman, Faye Dunaway). Others have a knowing sadness that belies their few years (Rebecca Brou, Mong Tran, Balthazar Getty). For any number of reasons, some have eyes that just seem empty (Jack Evans, Ione Sime, Keznu Rossen, Anthony Kiedis, Bernie Coulissen, Danny Pembö). The portrait of Bradley Gregg makes your heart ache because he looks scared and lost. As a whole, the book, with its superb craftsmanship and powerful imagery, is one that impresses you each time you look at it and stays with you after you put it down. Van Sant, in the introduction, talks about the "power a single person carries around with them" and the fact that they "embodies huge potentials for success or failure, for nervousness or calm, for saintliness or devility." He has captured these people in compelling portraits at various stages of their progressions through their potential. Some are more successful at projecting their "power" but the "sensuality" that is present indicates that there is also a certain amount of lack and timing involved in being "famous." This book allows you to peek in on a moment in these peoples' lives while reinforcing that we are all made of the same flesh and blood.

Michael G. DeWolff is administrative director of the Houston Center for Photography and a frequent contributor to SPOT.
Pixel Vision
The Reconfigured Eye: Visual Truth in the Post-Photographic Era
By William J. Mitchell
MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, 1992
224 pages, $19.95
Mark Frohman

On the first page of William J. Mitchell's study of the impact of digital technology on contemporary thought and practice, three short paragraphs ("snapshot")lavish the history of image-making, taking us from Pliny the Elder's mythic account of the origins of painting to Henry Fox Talbot's chemical fixing of a shadow in 1839 to scientist Russell A. Kirsch processing patterns of light and shade for the first time in digital information in the mid-1970s. Painter Paul Delachaux's familiar proclama-
tion, "From this day on, painting is dead.", upon seeing the first Daguerreotypes that appeared in Paris simultaneous with Talbot's invention is quoted as an exclamation point to this desiccated pictorial rupture (or is it per-
fetion?) of Western modes of visual representa-
tion. Although no such statement of grand importance accompanies the discovery of Kirsch and his colleagues at the National Bureau of Standards, one can sense Mitchell beginning to mount photography's own epit-
aph. He continues writing, not quite articulating it, throughout the book; but more on that later.

It is interesting to consider that while photo-
ography's radiating sense of itself as one sort of image into obsolescence due to its assumed verisimilitude, digital-imaging processes are not claimed to register the real more accurately, but, if anything, in traffic with the same sort of face, digital imagery bypasses the question—or more profoundly, does away with the dis-
tinction between fact and fiction altogether.

One would think that given the history of evolving representational strategies (even within painting and drawing), we would have expected this. Yet the future is difficult to foresee, and photography has done a fine job in shaping the appearance of the world to our conception of it— and vice versa. Besides, in the case of digital technology, what is possible today was barely conceivable a few months ago. It is not surprising that the intel-
lectual and artistic communities have been slow in acknowledging digital-imaging as the conce-
nuous paradigm shift that it is. It's teenagers across the country who have embraced it. Some of this, no doubt, has to do with its base in computer technology—the humanities being generally intimidated by things scientific. Yet it also, I suspect, is related to the fact that we were just getting used to the way that photogra-
phy functions, and disfunctions, in the light of post-structuralist theories of meaning and representation without something as rad-
ical as digital imaging clouding up the waters again.

The Reconfigured Eye sets us up to delve headlong into such issues, following the ground broken by Fred Ritchin in In Our Own Image: The Creative Revolution in Photography (Aperture, 1991) which took a more intellectually-orientated and focused approach than Mitchell (Ritchin) was concerned with, primarily with photojournalism. Mitchell's book, developed from seminars and design studies taught at the Harvard University Graduate School of Design, is structured in ten chapters, then divided into smaller sections focusing on specific technological processes or ideas about the meaning, use, and history of images. For example, under the chapter "Infernal and Artificed," "Originals and Copies," "Mutation and Closure," and "Image Ethics Redefined," he takes on six of the issues of objectivity and truth, and the ends to which photography has been employed in their services, are raised thoughtfully, incorpo-
rating philosophical issues and historical ex-
amples. Mitchell has a working grasp, if not a
global knowledge, of visual history and pho-
nography traditions. Although he is familiar
with contemporary theories concerning the
ways that a photographic image can be made to serve different meanings in various con-
texts, he gives the impression of being surpris-
ingly free of any particular position or ideolo-
gies on the matter.

From The Reconfigured Eye, the effects of lighting, darkening and contrast enhancement, 1992

Any theorist pursues goals among all his
channel-charging, the questions raised and
points made are on target, but Mitchell
quickly deepen them to move on just when
we are beginning to be persuaded. In this
regard, Mitchell's book has at last a structural
resemblance to that most seminal of works on
Modernism and photography, Walter
Benjamin's 1936 essay "The Work of Art in
the Age of Mechanical Reproduction.

Many of the chapters end with stunningly
provocative statements: "A world-wide net-
work of digital imaging systems is swiftly,
silently constituting itself as the determinant
subject's reconfigured eye" or "We have
indeed learned to fix shadows but not to
secure their meanings or to stabilise their
math values; they still flicker on the walls
of Plato's Cave" which, for all their dramatic
deference, require the reader to follow up the
line of thought on their own. Consciously or
not, The Reconfigured Eye reflects the world
view posited by its very subjects: its individual
parts are as artificed and fragmented as the
multitude of parts that make up the digi-
tal image's illusion of wholeness.

Mitchell covers a lot of territory in the
way that both artists and scientists have con-
tributed to the development of visual conven-
tions, the adaptation of the techniques of
drawing, painting and photography to com-
puter software, which has simplified difficult
time-consuming processes to the push of a
button or a roll of the mouse. The growing
image banks accessible to anyone with a
modern and countless other thought-bytes.
However, between such observations, several
chapters are solely concerned with explaining
the many different capabilities of current
graphics software in terms that seem too tech-
nical and specific for the book's premise. Why
such detail is necessary to get his points across is left without explanation and gives The Re-
configured Eye the quality of two very different
texts; one, a critical history of image-making,
the other, a beginner's guide to computer
graphics.

The one idea that does recur throughout is
that aspect of the new digital image process
that most forcefully distinguishes it from chem-
ically-based photography. Throughout the '70s and '80s, when photography came under
greater critical scrutiny than it ever had be-
fore, theorists consistently remarked on the
one quality of photography that could be claimed as an essential identifying feature—
Mitchell even has a section titled after it—
"The Adherence of the Referent." In semantic
analysis the, "referent" is simply that which is
referred to, that which a certain representation
means to depict. For our purposes, the refer-
ent is whatever the photographer aims his
camera towards.

In their various writings throughout the '70s,
critics Roland Barthes, Susan Sontag, and Ros
alind Krauss all came to the conclusion that
photography is a "poor" art, not a referent to
the referent, in the way footprints point to a
human presence or smoke indicates a fire.
Photographs in the modern era have served as
proof that something existed in a certain way
at a certain time. In a section entitled "The
Missing Witness" Mitchell states: "The tradi-
tional photographer's essential message is always, as John Berger trenchantly remind-
ed us, I have decided that seeing is worth
recording." With digital imaging, a referent is
no longer necessary, nor is the photographer
who previously served as witness and bearer
of the image's origin in the objective world.
People can be added, or removed, to events
they never witnessed, in places they've never
been, with people they've never met, all with
out leaving one's computer workstation.
Images can be multiplied from a single
source, as in a November 27, 1989, cover showing eighteen Grimman F-14 fighter jets taking off in formation when there
was really only one. Photographs of the rings
of Saturn and the mountains of Venus have
been shown to the public even though no human has ever actually gazed upon their
real surfaces; the photographs were simulat-
ed from digital radar data collected in space.

It's true that there have always been photo-
graphic manipulations, but the processes are
difficult, and even the best results can usually
detect. With digital imaging, they can't.
It is a world of simulations that digital imag-
ity most convincingly creates, and simulation
is that Mitchell's field of exploration. The
condition demands, with increasing urgency,
a fundamental critical reappraisal of the uses
to which we put graphic artifacts, the values
we therefore assign to them, and the ethical
principles that guide our transactions with
them," the author insists. He's right, but this
statement coming at the end of the book, indicates that Mitchell is not going to be the
to give it to us.
The Reconfigured Eye is not as important a book as we would like it to be (it's no On
Photography for the computer generation); it
may not leave us with many conclusions, yet
does offer a whole host of questions un-
addressed by either optimistic future-looking or apoca-
lypse. Why? If nothing else, it's a given account, almost an inventory, of the myriad
complex ways humans have developed for
representing not only the world but, in this
day and age, simply representing.

Mark Frohman is a freelance writer based in
Houston.
The cameras were trained on the "Eye of her Generation" rather than the reverse at January's press luncheon and exhibition tour of "Annie Leibovitz: Photographs 1970-1990" at the MFAH. The woman whose work has been dubbed by local press as symbolic of the last twenty years of portrait photography seemed, at times, uncomfortable with the role reversal but warmed to the overwhelmingly positive reception of the Houston media. Photograph courtesy of Marta C. Baldyga.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR
continued from page 3
I spoke with Marion on a few occasions about what might have been. There was really no place for her to turn. She could have gone back to newspaper photography. How about Life magazine? Marion would have quit the first time a Life editor saw her out to do a "Life goes to warrened forest" complete with "darkies." With Marion's political beliefs, she would have been out of place with that conservative rag. It didn't occur to these FSA folks to move into a cabin and follow the art muse as did Edward Weston. The society put no value on fine art in any event. Not she did the best she could, as did other FSA photographers.

These people were not the victims of their spouses. They were victims of an indifferent America which placed no value on the art impulse and shunned the truth like some vineyard brew. They were ahead of their times. If they worked today, they would all be doing coffee-table books, like so many of the young photographers who read in their footsteps. And the big museums would be giving them mammoth shows. They could bit the lesemaine circuit and segue the well-heeled with tales of life in the underclass.

No, Paul, your book was fine in many ways, but you were sacked into a feminist trap when you lay the blame for Marion's life after FSA on Lee Wocokin. They liked to fight over little things like what to put in the diary, but when it came to photography, he was her biggest fan.

Jack Welpott
Inverness, CA

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EXPAND YOUR HORIZONS!

The following organizations produce publications on contemporary photography. HCP is collaborating with them to expand the audience for all of our publications. Mention this offer and they will send you a complimentary copy. This is a great opportunity to follow the activities of other visual arts organizations. We hope you will participate!

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Buffalo, NY 14202
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San Francisco, CA 94105
415-243-9917
Houston Photolab now offers Kodak Photo CD production *in-house*. Have up to approximately a hundred images transferred to compact disk from 35mm negatives or film in just 24 hours! Archive your images for use with desktop publishing. Or, with a Photo CD player you can also view images directly on your own television. Visit our newly remodeled 5250 Gullton Ste. B location and see the Digital Revolution in progress. 666-0282

HOUSTON PHOTOLAB