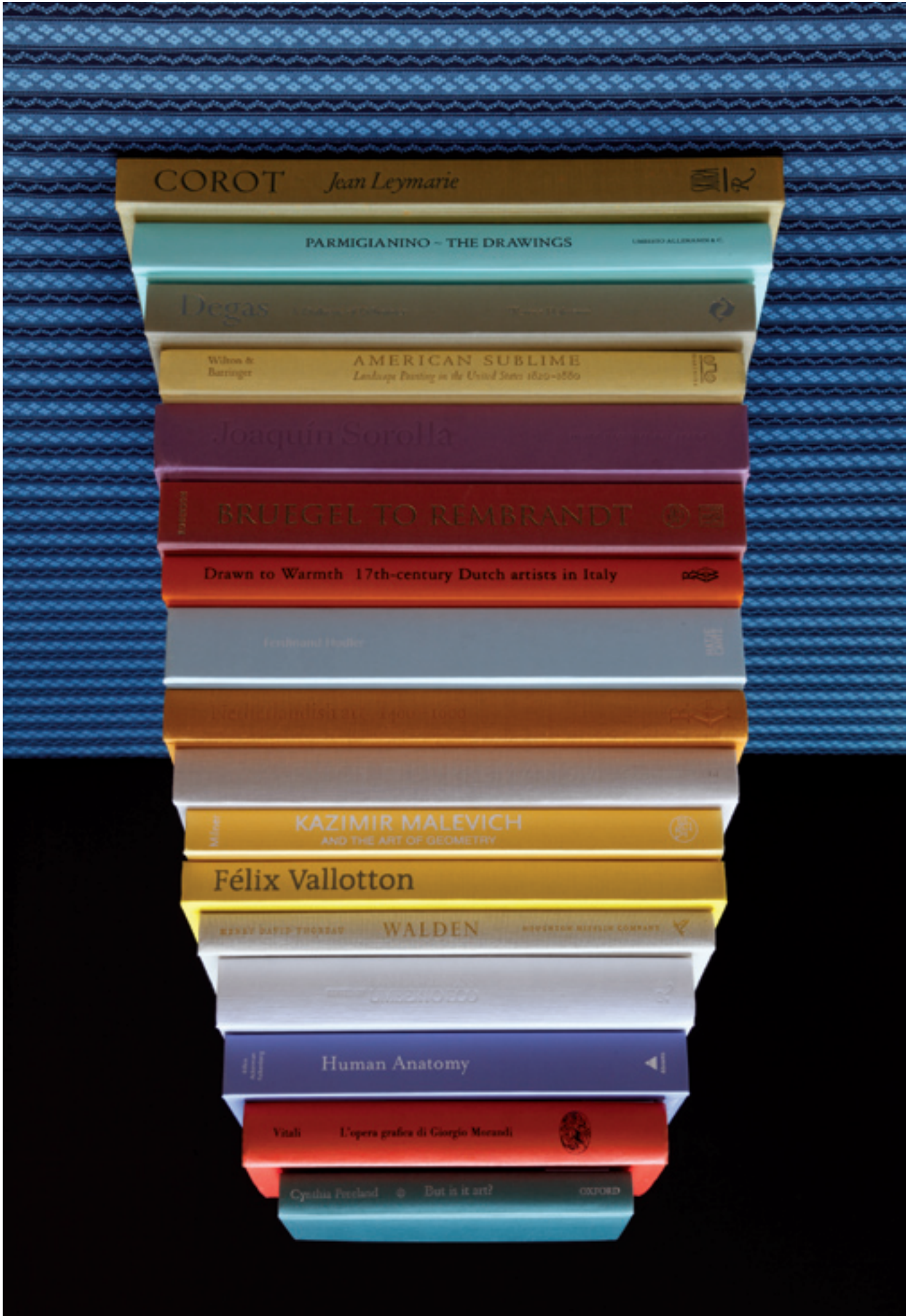




Looking at Ourselves





her Books, his Books (detail), 2010

MANUAL on books

suzanne bloom / ed hill

MAR 12 - APR 17, 2010

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february 27, 2009  
Chromogenic print  
22x15 inches  
Courtesy of the artist



Contributors

**1. Igor George Alexander** is a journalist, book editor and collector who has had a lifelong interest in photography. He took his first photograph with a Kodak Brownie 620 box camera. He wonders what ever happened to his personal Kodak Brownie Starmite that replaced it.

**2. Deborah Bay** is a Houston photographer whose work has been shown at Dallas Contemporary, the Galveston Arts Center and the Center for Photography at Woodstock. Her work is in the collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. She is an HCP board member.

**3. Peter Brown** is a Houston photographer whose recent book *West of Last Chance*, a collaboration with the novelist Kent Haruf, won the Lange-Taylor Prize. His other books are *Seasons of Light* and *On the Plains*. A recipient of many awards, he teaches at the Glasscock School of Continuing Studies at Rice University and is a founding member of HCP.

**4. Jim Casper** is the founder, editor and publisher of *Lens Culture*, an international online magazine ([www.lensculture.com](http://www.lensculture.com)) and organization celebrating contemporary photography, art, media, and world cultures. In 2009, Casper launched the annual *Lens Culture International Exposure Awards* for global photography, and is currently organizing *Lens Culture FotoFest Paris 2010*, an important forum for international portfolio reviews.

**5. Dr. Jörg M. Colberg** was born in Germany in 1968. After studying physics/astrophysics, he moved to the U.S. in early 2000. He is the editor of the blog 'Conscientious', one of the most widely read and popular blogs dedicated to contemporary fine-art photography.

**6. Bevin Bering Dubrowski** is the Executive Director of HCP. Bevin received her B.A. from Emory University in Art History and Studio Arts with an emphasis on photography. Previously Bevin served as the director of Bering and James gallery in Houston, TX. Bevin is a photographer and continues to create and exhibit work.

**7. W.M. Hunt - Bill Hunt** - is a New York-based collector, curator and consultant, a champion of photography. He is partnered with Sarah Hasted and Joseph Kraeutler in their gallery, HASTED HUNT KRAEUTLER [www.hastedhuntkraeutler.com](http://www.hastedhuntkraeutler.com). The "RE: groups" selection has been gathered over the past ten years but never been exhibited before opening at HCP in March 2010. Mr. Hunt speaks frequently about photography and collecting and serves on the boards of the W. Eugene Smith Memorial Fund, AIPAD (The Association of Photography Art Dealers), and The Center for Photography at Woodstock. His photography collection *Dancing Bear* with magical heart stopping images of people in which the eyes cannot be seen has been exhibited in Arles, Lausanne, and Amsterdam is the basis for his upcoming book, *The Unseen Eye*, with Thames & Hudson.

**8. Tracy Xavia Karner, PhD**, is an author, curator, visual artist and sociologist. At the University of Houston, she serves as the Director of Visual Studies and is an Associate Professor in Sociology.

**9. Amanda Maddox** (not pictured) is the assistant curator of photography and media arts at the Corcoran Gallery of Art. She received an A.B. in English Literature from Brown University and an MPhil in the History of Photography from the University of St Andrews.

**10. Edward Osowski**, a former president of HCP, is a retired public librarian. He received his Ph.D. in English literature from Rice University where he studied under J.A.Ward, author of "American Silences: The Realism of James Agee, Walker Evans, and Edward Hopper."

**11. Madeline Yale** serves as an adjunct curator at HCP in addition to being an Advisory Council Member. After stepping down from her role as executive director, Madeline now resides in Dubai and London and is working on photography-based research projects.



# FOTO FEST 2010 BIENNIAL

## CONTEMPORARY U.S. PHOTOGRAPHY

MARCH 12 – APRIL 25, 2010  
HOUSTON, TEXAS

[WWW.FOTOFEST.ORG/BIENNIAL2010](http://WWW.FOTOFEST.ORG/BIENNIAL2010)

EXHIBITIONS MARCH 12–APRIL 25, 2010

### CONTEMPORARY U.S. PHOTOGRAPHY

*Whatever Was Splendid: New American Photographs*

Aaron Schuman, curator | RECEPTION, MARCH 12, 2010

*Assembly: Eight Emerging Photographers from Southern California*

Wallis Annenberg Photography Department of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), curatorial team | RECEPTION, MARCH 17, 2010

*The Road To Nowhere?*

Natasha Egan, curator | RECEPTION, MARCH 25, 2010

*Mediation: Performing for the Screen*

Gilbert Vicario, curator | RECEPTION, MARCH 29, 2010

### EXHIBITIONS BY PARTICIPATING SPACES

Ninety-six Exhibitions Citywide. Photography, Installation, Video.  
[www.fotofest.org/biennial2010/spaces](http://www.fotofest.org/biennial2010/spaces)

### DISCOVERIES OF THE MEETING PLACE

Ten contemporary artists selected from FotoFest's 2008 Portfolio Reviews.  
RECEPTION, MARCH 27, 2010

## CURATORIAL FORUMS

### CURATORIAL DIALOGUES

*Looking at the Contemporary Curatorial Process*

- Aaron Schuman with Madeline Yale | MARCH 14, 2010
- Edward Robinson (LACMA) with Anne Wilkes Tucker MARCH 19, 2010
- Natasha Egan with Clint Willour | MARCH 26, 2010
- Gilbert Vicario with Fernando Castro | MARCH 31, 2010

### CURATORIAL SYMPOSIA

*Curating Contemporary Photography*

Anne Wilkes Tucker, Charlotte Cotton, Gilbert Vicario, Daniel Joseph Martinez | MARCH 28, 2010

*Curating Contemporary Art, Texas*

APRIL 8, 2010 (TBC)

[www.fotofest.org/biennial2010/forums](http://www.fotofest.org/biennial2010/forums)

## PROGRAMS

### WORKSHOPS

**BEYOND PRINT: CREATIVE COMMUNICATION IN THE DIGITAL AGE**

Mary Virginia Swanson and Katrina D'Autremont with a panel of art and online media experts and a special presentation by the American Society of Media Photographers (ASMP). | MARCH 16, 2010

**MEDIASTORM, BUILDING MULTIMEDIA PLATFORMS**

Brian Storm shows how to redefine visual images to incorporate audio, video, and animation for the internet. | MARCH 21, 2010

[www.fotofest.org/biennial2010/workshops](http://www.fotofest.org/biennial2010/workshops)

### PORTFOLIO REVIEWS EVENINGS WITH THE ARTISTS

MARCH 12–APRIL 1, 2010

Sixteen days of portfolio reviews. *Four Evenings with the Artists* with public presentations of art work by artists and participating art galleries.

EVENINGS WITH THE ARTISTS | MARCH 14, 19, 26 AND 31, 2010

[www.fotofest.org/biennial2010/meetingplace](http://www.fotofest.org/biennial2010/meetingplace)

### FINE PRINT AUCTION

MARCH 23, 2010

A rare selection of eighty contemporary works by U.S. and international artists benefiting FotoFest's artist and education programs. Auctioneer Denise Bethel, Senior Vice President of Sotheby's Inc., New York.

Online Preview and bidding.

FEBRUARY 6–MARCH 23, 2010

Preview Exhibition of Auction Prints.

MARCH 3–23, 2010

[www.fotofest.org/biennial2010/auction](http://www.fotofest.org/biennial2010/auction)

### PHOTOGRAPHY BOOKSTORE AND BOOK SIGNINGS

MARCH 12–APRIL 1, 2010

Selection of limited edition and contemporary photography books curated by the well-known book distributor and gallery PHOTO-EYE from Santa Fe, New Mexico. Afternoon book signings by invited artists.

[www.fotofest.org/biennial2010/meetingplace](http://www.fotofest.org/biennial2010/meetingplace)



Greta Pratt, *Alice Chatman*, 2009  
From the exhibition *The Road to Nowhere?*

### FILM PROGRAM

APRIL 2–18, 2010

Screenings of *VISUAL ACOUSTICS*, about the life and photographic works of Julius Shulman (1910–2009) and films about Robert Frank, *AN AMERICAN JOURNEY* and *A PORTRAIT OF ROBERT FRANK*. Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Film Department.

Films selected by Texas film-makers on *THE AMERICAN DREAM 2010: VISIONS OF 21ST-CENTURY LIFE IN THE AMERICAS FROM NORTH TO SOUTH*. Southwest Alternate Media Project (SWAMP).

[www.fotofest.org/biennial2010/film](http://www.fotofest.org/biennial2010/film)

### OTHER PROGRAMS

- Curatorial and Artist Tours of Selected Exhibitions.
- Collectors Evenings.
- Citywide Museum and Gallery Trek.
- Tours for Students and Teachers.
- FotoFence 2010 Exhibition of Student Work from FotoFest's school-based Literacy Through Photography visual literacy and writing program.

FOTOFEST 2010 CALENDAR

[www.fotofest.org/biennial2010/calendar](http://www.fotofest.org/biennial2010/calendar)

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spot

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# In this Issue

### Looking at Ourselves

As the entire photography community gears up for the 2010 FotoFest Biennial, we are all thinking about this year's theme: Contemporary U.S. Photography. With this in mind, the *spot* team began developing this current issue along similar lines. In *Looking at Ourselves*, we explore the variety of who we are and what we share in contemporary U.S. society. Madeline Yale explores the ambiguous sense of belonging and relatedness in the work of Anthony Goicolea. This theme is further illuminated in the portfolio of Dennis Yermoshin as he documents his family's transition to the U.S. from Azerbaijan. Edward Osowski's essay captures the alchemic southern imagination of Keith Carter's photographs while Bill McCullough's portfolio offers a humorous look at our strange rituals. In our *spotlight*, where we showcase the work of one HCP member, Peter Brown introduces us to Sharon Joines and her images of rural Texas culture. Tracing our photographic roots a bit, Dr. Jörg Colberg interviews W.M. Hunt about his collection of vernacular images, *RE: groups*, and Igor Alexander explores ruptures and continuities in photographic practice since 1960 with Yasufumi Nakamori's current exhibition at the MFAH. Looking forward as well, in the first installment of our ongoing series about the Houston photography community, Deborah Bay provides an overview of all the Houston galleries who represent and support photographers. We also turn the lens (or pen) towards our HCP-selves with an overview of "What's Happening at HCP" by our new executive director Bevin Bering Dubrowski, and book reviews of two recent publications by HCP members: *Looking at the U.S. 1957-1986* by Fred Baldwin and Wendy Watriss and *Hard Knocks* by Shelley Calton.

*Looking at Ourselves* is a fortuitous issue for a visual sociologist to come on board and I am delighted to be heading up the *spot* editorial team! Much thanks goes to David Crossley, Peter Brown, Paul Hester, David Jacobs, Paul Zeigler, and Jeff DeBevec for their long-standing support and diligence in keeping *spot* running for nearly thirty years. In recent years, *spot* has also been fortunate to have the insights and innovations of Madeline Yale, Toby Kamps, Ebony Porter, Bevin Bering Dubrowski, and Mary Magsamen who have all left the publication in good stead. On the nuts and bolts side of the editorial process, Jason Dibley and Maria Ciepiel have been indispensable. And I do not know where we would be without the brilliant visual magic of Antonio Manega, the designer who is the mastermind behind *spot*'s stellar "look."

Our plan is to continue to develop *spot* as a visually stunning, informative resource for not only the Houston photography community but anyone anywhere who loves photography as much as we do here at HCP! We welcome your feedback, story ideas, comments and suggestions.

We hope you enjoy *Looking at Ourselves*!

Xavia

Tracy Xavia Karner  
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# WHAT'S HAPPENING AT HCP!

This is my first time to write to *spot* readers as the Executive Director of HCP, and I am pleased to report on the rich diversity of programs and exhibitions accomplished over the course of the past few months. HCP has reached thousands of people through education, exhibitions and HCP publications. HCP's staff, teachers, volunteers, and members have worked steadily to fulfill HCP's mission to increase society's understanding and appreciation of photography and its evolving role in contemporary culture. The upcoming exhibition schedule, along with the wide array of education, outreach and membership programs, promises to offer new and exciting perspectives and opportunities. Don't forget to visit HCP's website for information on upcoming events, membership and online exhibitions. I hope to see you or hear from you soon – please stop by or write in with your ideas, suggestions and news; HCP would love to know what's happening with you.



Bayou City Arts Festival  
HCP in the Creative Zone  
Courtesy of Rachel Hewlett

## ► Education, Outreach and Exhibitions, OH MY!

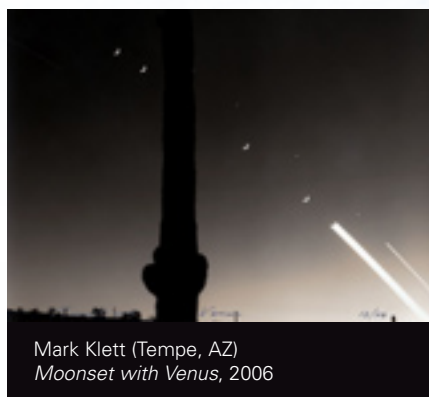
Education this fall and winter was highlighted with Master Classes led by Craig Barber on pinhole techniques, Sally Gall with an artistic development retreat and Eli Reed on finding the image.

As part of Gall's visit to HCP, she gave a visiting artist lecture, *Photographing for 25 Years*.

HCP continues to reach out to the community with programs such as *PictureThis!* at M.D. Anderson and Texas Children's Cancer Center and *Collaborations*, which just began its seventh year. HCP also participated in the Creative Zone at Bayou City Art Festival and served as a non-profit partner at the 2009 ViaColori Festival, benefitting The Center for Hearing and Speech. Thank you to all of our teachers and volunteers.

Check out our upcoming Master Classes – *Creating a book with Blurb* with Susan Hayre Thelwell, learn *Lightroom* with Scott Martin, and *Shooting and Critiquing* with Henry Horenstein. For information or to enroll, visit [www.hcponline.org](http://www.hcponline.org).

► **HCP's Benefit Print Auction** at the Junior League of Houston on Thursday, February 25, 2010, was a huge success. More than 80 prints were on view at HCP during the *Auction Exhibition*, including images by Larry Fink, Louis Faurer, Steve Fitch, Amy Blakemore, Joni Sternbach and more. Members were treated to a gallery tour with



Mark Klett (Tempe, AZ)  
*Moonset with Venus*, 2006

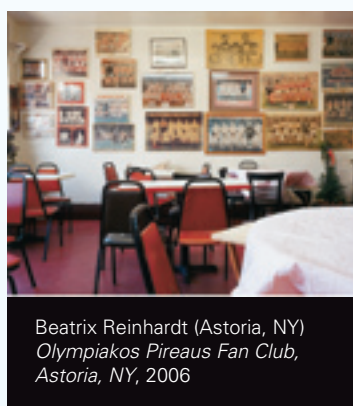


Larry Schwarm (Wichita, KS)  
*Fire Whorl*, Lyon County, Kansas - 1994, 1994

Anne Wilkes Tucker, the Gus and Lyndall Wortham Curator of Photography, MFAH, and Clint Willour, Curator, Galveston Arts Center. HCP also hosted a panel discussion on collecting photography with panelists Del Zogg, Burt Nelson, Morris Weiner, Catherine Couturier and Gemma DeSantos.

► **Membership at HCP continues to grow.** We have more members than ever and would love for you to be part of our photography family. Turn to page 46 for more information on membership or go online ([www.hcponline.org](http://www.hcponline.org)) and join today!

► **Current and Upcoming HCP Exhibitions are a must see!**  
**FotoFest 2010 Related; RE: groups; Members' Only: America**  
**March 12 – April 25, 2010**

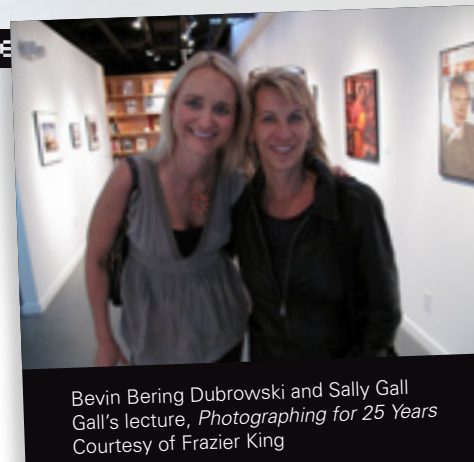


Beatrix Reinhardt (Astoria, NY)  
*Olympiakos Pireaus Fan Club*, Astoria, NY, 2006

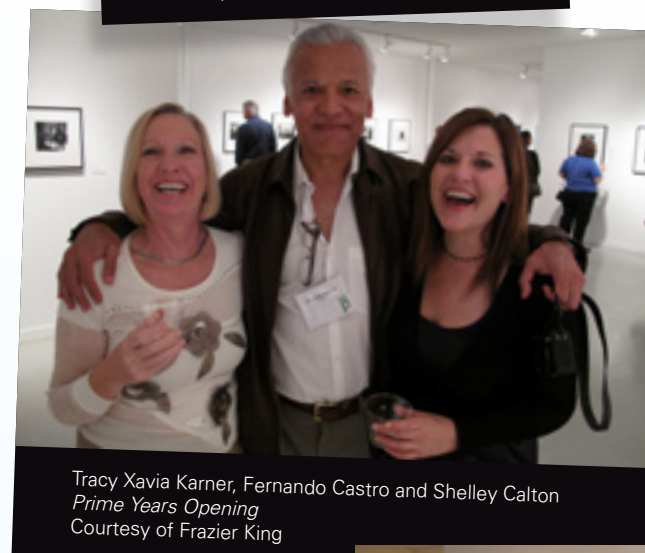
HCP has chosen to address this year's FotoFest theme, Contemporary U.S. Photography, through the concept of personal, new, waning and rediscovered cultural histories. HCP will host three separate exhibitions: Anthony Goicolea's newest series *Related*; WM Hunt's *RE: groups: American Photographs before 1950*, curated by the collector himself; and *Members' Only: American Clubs* by Beatrix Reinhardt.

► **28th Annual Juried Fellowship Exhibition**  
**May 7 – June 27, 2010, Juried by Brian Paul Clamp**

HCP's 2010 Juried Fellowship Exhibition will showcase the work of the two fellowship recipients selected by Brian Paul Clamp of ClampArt. A record number of HCP members submitted to this year's fellowship competition. Scott Dalton was selected as the recipient of the Carol Crow Memorial Fellowship, which is reserved for artists from the Houston area. Clamp selected Matt Eich as the recipient of the HCP Fellowship, which is open to all national and international members.



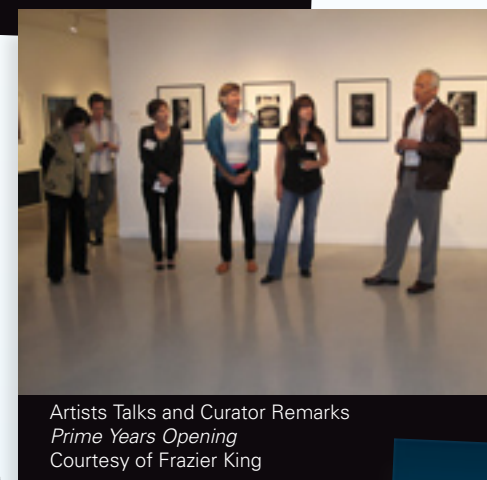
Bevin Bering Dubrowski and Sally Gall  
Gall's lecture, *Photographing for 25 Years*  
Courtesy of Frazier King



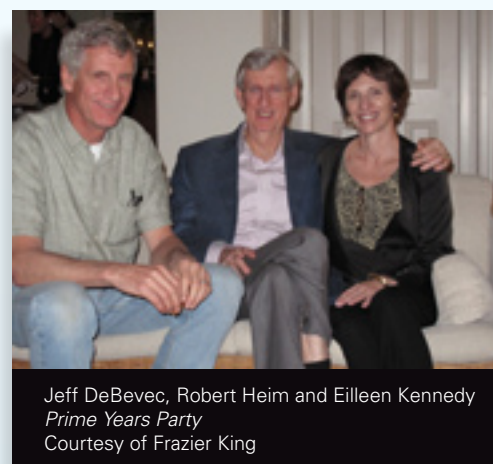
Tracy Xavia Karner, Fernando Castro and Shelley Calton  
*Prime Years Opening*  
Courtesy of Frazier King



Photogravure Workshop  
Courtesy of Rachel Hewlett



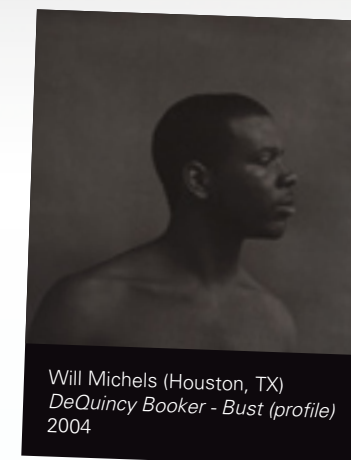
Artists Talks and Curator Remarks  
*Prime Years Opening*  
Courtesy of Frazier King



Jeff DeBevec, Robert Heim and Eilleen Kennedy  
*Prime Years Party*  
Courtesy of Frazier King

► **Will Michels: Made by Will**  
**May 7 – June 27, 2010**

Showcasing the photographer's work over the last two decades, *Made by Will* is the first comprehensive survey of Will Michels' images. Focusing on his portraiture, the exhibition includes self-portraits, artistic studies and Greco-Roman-like busts. Michels, a native Houstonian, was a previous recipient of the Carol Crow Memorial Fellowship at HCP.



Will Michels (Houston, TX)  
*DeQuincy Booker - Bust (profile)*  
2004

► **Collaborations VII: Portraits of Self**  
**May 7 – June 27, 2010**

Drawing inspiration from Will Michels' exhibition of portraiture, this year's *Collaborations* is all about self-portraits. An annual outreach program organized by HCP, *Collaborations* is a unique opportunity for young artists to thrive on the interactions with other participants, to gain knowledge about building a well-designed exhibition, and to work successfully with other artists from different backgrounds, education and photographic styles. *Collaborations* will include students from ten ethnically and socioeconomically diverse high schools.

► **28th Annual Juried Membership Exhibition**  
**July 9 – August 22, 2010**

Show us your images! See information about our Annual Juried Membership Exhibition Call for Entries online at [www.hcponline.org](http://www.hcponline.org). The deadline for submissions is April 1st, 2010. This year's juror is Hannah Frieser, the Director of Light Work. Now in its 28th year, the Juried Membership Exhibition provides all HCP members with the chance to exhibit recently created bodies of work. The exhibition continues to present the most innovative trends and approaches to photography while showcasing the diverse photographic work of HCP's members.

Thank you to all the readers, members, contributors, teachers, students, volunteers, supporters, staff and members of the Board of Directors and Advisory Council for the energy and creativity you share with HCP. I hope to see you all at HCP soon!

Best regards,

*Bevin Bering Dubrowski*

Bevin Bering Dubrowski  
Executive Director



Keith Carter *Fireflies*,  
University of Texas Press,  
Austin, 2009  
Book Signing at HCP on  
December 19, 2009  
Courtesy of University of  
Texas Press





# RE-IMAGINING PERSONAL HISTORY: Anthony Goicolea's *RELATED*

by Madeline Yale

If we hold an early Daguerreotype in our hands, a shimmery ghost-like figure faces opposite, arrested in photographic form contained by glass and enshrined within its casing. A memorial trophy, an early Daguerreotype is a possession of a history past and a reference to social trends of an era. The evolution of these keepsakes before the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century spawned the business of vernacular portrait studios, an important period in the history of the medium when photography became a fashionable method for middle class citizens to cherish and parade their loved ones. When we gently rotate an older Daguerreotype with our wrists, the luminous figure transitions back and forth from the dead to the living. Likewise, when looking at a gelatin silver negative of a human face held up to a light source, the figure appears inert, waiting to evolve into a positive; what we perceive in our mind's eye is alive and, perhaps, more real. These acts of conversion suggest dichotomies in meaning and reveal the analog signatures of the media employed.

In his recent series *Related*, first generation Cuban-American Anthony Goicolea forms a series of visual binaries – black-and-white, left-and-right, negative-and-positive – to propose a series of metaphors about his familial and cultural history. On view at Houston Center for Photography from March 12 – April 25, 2010, *Related* exists in several parts. The artist forms a series of dualities referencing film-based wet photographic processes by re-drawing photographs of his family in negative and photographing them in positive. Placing these images in environments near his childhood homes, the artist then re-photographs his constructions. In addition to these environmental images, Goicolea constructs large landscapes of his interpretation of Cuba. Through the process of transcribing these images through several generations and visiting sites of ancestral importance, Goicolea mediates his lineage, nostalgically re-creating what is both real and imagined.

After the 1961 Bay of Pigs Invasion, both paternal and maternal sides of Goicolea's family exited their homeland for the United States. A relatively affluent Catholic family struggling to live freely within a burgeoning Communist regime, the Goicoleas settled around Miami and Atlanta and began a new chapter. As newer generations were born, a mix of Spanish and English was spoken in their homes. While they maintained a continuity of Cuban and Catholic traditions, partial assimilation into American culture naturally ensued. What tangible evidence remains of the Goicolea's Cuban heritage are a few keepsakes including studio portrait images taken prior to 1961.

Using these black-and-white studio portraits as source material, Goicolea began the series *Related* in 2008. These vernacular images depict more than twenty of Goicolea's light-skinned maternal and paternal ancestors. Like the traditional Daguerreotype, the family members are styled in their best clothes for the camera's gaze, wearing the fashions of the era. Most relatives featured are within their formative years to youthful adulthood; the younger versions postured in informal attitudes which reflect their age, the older ones sitting in staged formality, more erect and reserved. The

opposite:  
Anthony Goicolea (Brooklyn, NY)  
*Related*, 2008  
Chromogenic print, 26 x 20 inches  
From the series *Related*  
Courtesy of the artist  
and Postmaster (New York, NY)





Anthony Goicolea (Brooklyn, NY)  
*Aunt diptych*, 2008  
 Chromogenic print, 24 x 16 inches  
 From the series *Related*  
 Courtesy of the artist  
 and Postmasters (New York, NY)



sitters' eyes usually focus on objects askance, with facial expressions ranging from resolute determinism to flatly optimistic. The stark studio backgrounds and vignetted lighting give supreme focus to the subjects.

Working in his Brooklyn-based studio, Goicolea carefully draws replicas of these family studio portraits in negative on Mylar or on canvas. This deliberate act of image reversal is both tedious and thoughtful, allowing the artist to reflect upon familial resemblances, to mentally convert figures into their polar opposites, and then recreate the transformed originals in pencil and ink. *Family Geometry*, a large ink drawing on blackened canvas, visually portrays the artist's family tree.

It is impossible to view Goicolea's drawings of these vernacular portraits without experiencing some degree of aesthetic shock. As in *Aunt Diptych*, Goicolea re-imagines his ancestors as apparitional beings, the eyes of whom are the most haunting features. In this new generation of pseudo-analog gelatin silver negatives, the images appear unfinished, resembling Surrealist blueprints beckoning to become actualized or enlivened. We are forced as viewers to conduct our own conversions of these people in our minds. Yet metaphorically, Goicolea's conversion makes sense: it references the artist's dislocation from his ancestral roots.

Goicolea chooses to create another generation of these studio portraits by photographing the negative drawings, creating duplicates, flipping these duplicates from left to right, and converting them to positive photographs. These newer generations are more obviously nostalgic and are paired with their doppelgangers. This "flipping" of images from left to right is curious; his mother's embroidered initials on *Mother I* diptych almost appear as a mistake. However, this reversal is intentional and decidedly photographic. (A few examples exist of this kind of inversion in photography, most notably Manuel Alvarez Bravo's 1931 *Optic Parable* and William Wegman's 1970 *rhoJ*.) As viewers, our initial discomfort with the negative image is subdued, through its juxtaposition with the positive complement.

Goicolea transported these family portraits to sites near his upbringing in the outskirts of Atlanta and Miami and re-photographed them affixed to telephone poles or trees. These environmental portraits are deadpan constructions; straightforward depictions of Goicolea's family in unsympathetic daylight. These portraits suspend his family in an indeterminate state, alluding to an important phase of migratory transformations.

The pain of loss is strongly evident in this portion of Goicolea's *Related*, yet it also alludes to challenges of immigration and assimilation. Fastened to trunks, the family portraits become missing posters or wanted ads. Additionally, the telephone poles resemble Christ on the cross, a Catholic allegory referencing an experience



Anthony Goicolea (Brooklyn, NY)  
*Family Geometry*, 2008  
Ink and acrylic on canvas, 50 x 66.5 inches  
From the series *Related*  
Courtesy of the artist  
and Postmasters (New York, NY)





above:  
Anthony Goicolea (Brooklyn, NY)  
*Day for Night*, 2008  
Chromogenic print with acrylic, ink and crayon  
50 x 57 inches  
From the series *Related*  
Courtesy of the artist

right:  
Anthony Goicolea (Brooklyn, NY)  
*Mother I diptych*, 2008  
Chromogenic print  
16 x 24 inches  
From the series *Related*  
Courtesy of the artist  
and Postmasters (New York, NY)



Anthony Goicolea (Brooklyn, NY)  
*Father I diptych*, 2008  
Chromogenic print  
16 x 24 inches  
From the series *Related*  
Courtesy of the artist  
and Postmasters (New York, NY)




which is both personal and universally experienced amongst immigrant populations.

Anthony Goicolea is the first of his family to visit Cuba following their escape in 1961. In May 2008, Goicolea spent two weeks photographing sites of ancestral interest, and attempting to locate old family friends. Using rough maps drawn by his family, Goicolea found landmarks in various stages of decay and was unable to make any family contacts. In the act of searching for these familial connections, Goicolea's longing for a sense of the place echoed in his family's romanticized accounts was unrequited.

Out of this cathartic expedition, Goicolea created a series of landscape images of contemporary Cuba. In *Day for Night*, a mixed media piece featuring a dilapidated art school on the outskirts of Havana, Goicolea inverts the source imagery by darkening a

daytime sky, which contains drawn trajectories of hurricanes that passed through Cuba since 1961. Other images are equally romanticized, where the artist's drawings alter his family's remembered landscapes and suggest architecture of the past or metaphysical reconstructions.

From its initiation, *Related* is quite personal; it tells a complex story about Goicolea's heritage including stories of loss, alienation and assimilation. The constructions intersect vernacular studio photography with fine art, thereby moving beyond the traditional definitions of photography and notions of authorship. Using these techniques, Goicolea challenges the viewer to navigate within a language of ancestral references, constructed mythologies, and to unearth metaphors about his Cuban-American experience, which are embedded in each layer of his artistic process. 



The exhibition *Unseen and Rediscovered* and its companion publication were presented by the Art League of Houston (Sept. 18 – Oct. 30, 2009) to celebrate Keith Carter being named “Texas Artist of the Year” by the Art League, the first photographer to be given this honor. This exhibition also prefaced three other events in 2009: the publication of *Fireflies* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009) and two concurrent exhibitions at the Witliff Collections at Texas State University, San Marcos (Oct. 17, 2009 – March 13, 2010). And in 2010, Carter has been awarded the *Lenses of our Perception Lecture* by the Visual Studies program at the University of Houston. He will deliver the lecture the evening of March 24, 2010 at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

Choosing to avoid the predictable expectations and pitfalls of an exhibition of “greatest hits,” Carter and his wife Pat presented something fresh and unexpected. They selected from nearly forty years of work, thirteen images that ranged from 1970 to 2001 and another twenty-one made between 2008 and 2009. The range of work is large; one might have wished for greater concentration, but the variety cannot be faulted.

Space, here, does not allow a close look at each of the five sections that divided the exhibition and catalogue. However, each section presents tantalizing hints of bodies of work left to be exhibited more fully. In *Vintage*, which gathers seven of his earliest images, one observes Carter training his eye by looking at American masters. In *Ear of Corn* and *Ranchos de Taos* (both 1972) Carter experiments with the visual vocabulary of artists as wide-ranging as Wynn Bullock, Paul Strand and Ansel Adams. The romantic delicacy of Bernice Abbott flavors *Toy with No Child* and Walker Evans’ example can be seen in *Pine Springs Café* (both 1972).

*Portraits*, the second section that includes six commissioned portraits, includes *Horton Foote*, another Texas artist whose approach to story-telling finds a visual counterpart in Carter’s picture-making. Foote’s portrait also introduces the viewer to

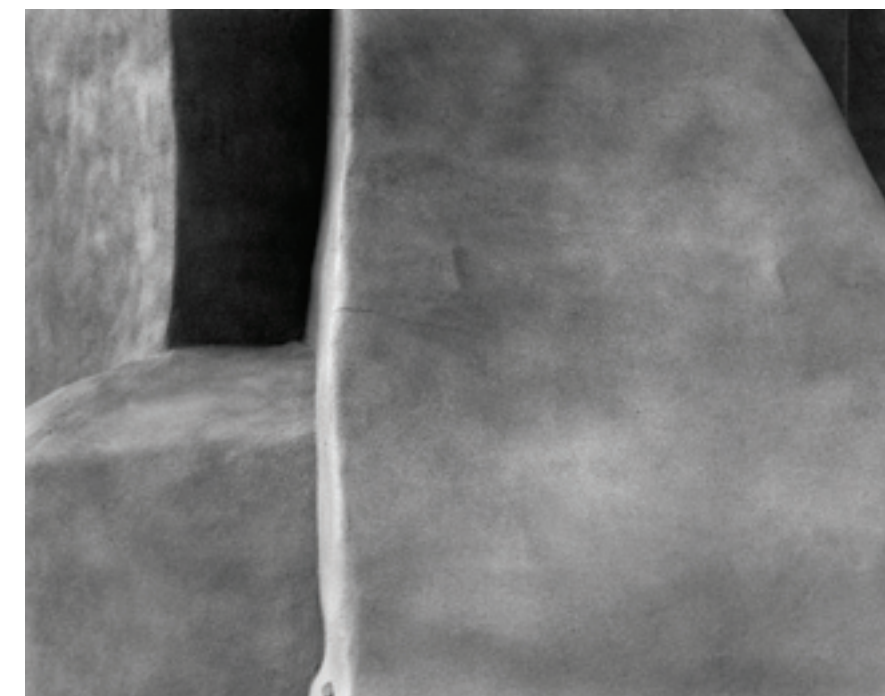
what may be called Carter’s signature style, the subtle interplay of in- and out-of-focus elements in the photograph. His is a way of dispensing with accurate and precise description for something that might be called the visual equivalent of feeling. This section also includes a wonderful example of just how well Carter employs indirection and suggestion. His portrait of W.B. Yeats offers the poet’s writing desk and chair. Here, in photographic soft shadows and imprecise description Carter offers a “ghost” portrait of Yeats and asks the viewer to consider just what constitutes a portrait.

*Unseen*, the third section, offers examples of previously exhibited bodies of work – one of which, *Splendore di Capelli*, or, in translation, *The Splendors of Hair*, emerges as a body of sensual work. While some of Carter’s earliest images focused on women’s hair – braided or loose and free – these new works suggest a greater concentration and closer attention to the erotic qualities implicit in the subject.

Arriving at the fourth section, *Natural Histories*, one finds Carter attempting something new in his picture making: These six photographs are the first works to be exhibited that employ computer manipulation. Existing negatives were scanned, digitized and computer manipulation was then used to produce the images and prints. He combines three bodies of work: pieces from a 1992 project, *River Pierce*; work from an unpublished series titled *Boneyard*; and images of lichens on grave markers from Holy Island, Ireland. Carter has used his previous work as starting points for a new narrative project and perhaps more significantly, as a new way of approaching the task of making art itself. Combining, recycling, manipulating and re-working have been the tools of artists for decades. Here Carter presents his efforts in this visual conversation.

The images from *River Pierce*, before their inclusion and re-imagining, were strange, frightening and disorienting. Here were naked men, women, and groups, often with their bodies covered with muck, making movements through a shallow river. What they depict – a group of human-like beings emerging from the mud of pre-history – makes them both fascinating and troubling.

The activities depicted are equally strange in the new pieces. Carter has stitched them into a body of work that was made at a “graveyard” for airplanes, a location in the Arizona desert where airplanes are shipped when their years of service have ended. Stripped of their function, they resemble beached whales or dead elephants in this odd barren landscape. On second glance, they might be giant versions of children’s toys, enormous but powerless.



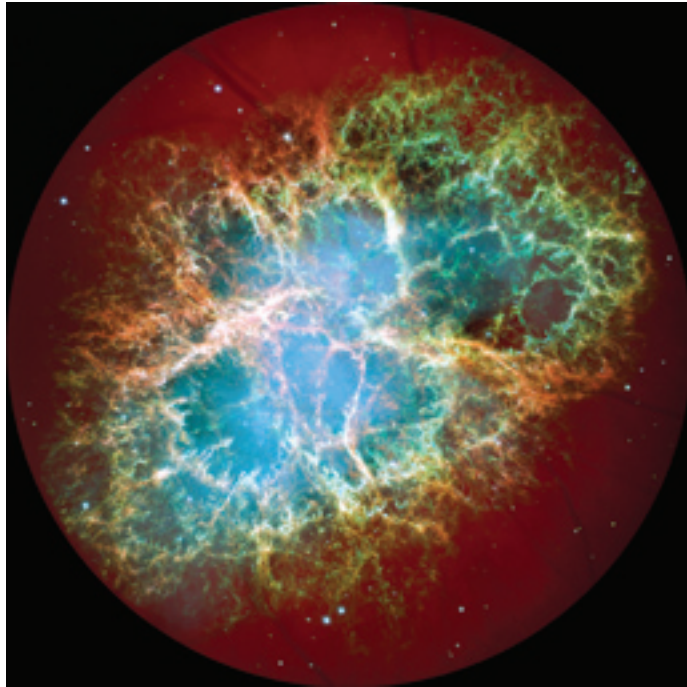
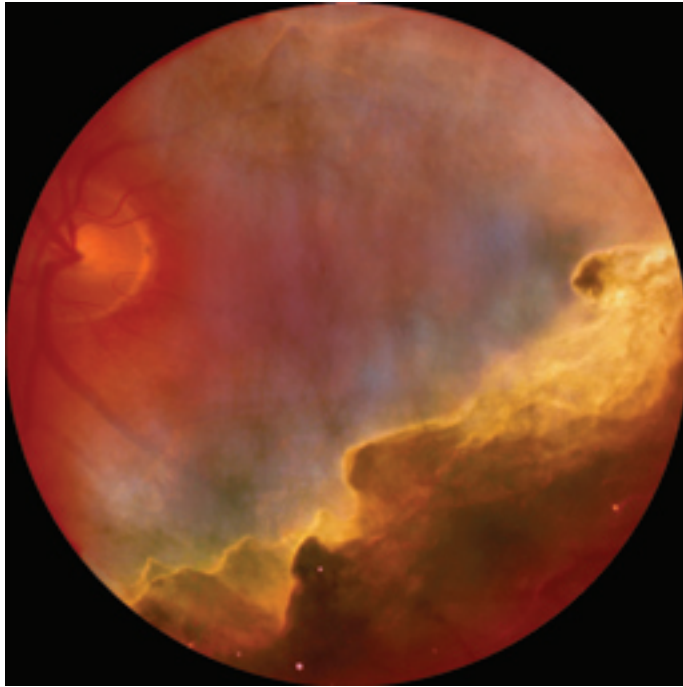
above:  
Keith Carter, (Beaumont, Texas)  
*Natural Histories #9*, 2008  
Digital pigment print  
15.5 x 15.5 inches  
Courtesy of the artist

right:  
Keith Carter, (Beaumont, Texas)  
*Rancho de Taos*, 1973  
Toned gelatin silver print  
7.75 x 9.75 inches  
Courtesy of the artist

# Visual Memoirs: the alchemy of Keith Carter

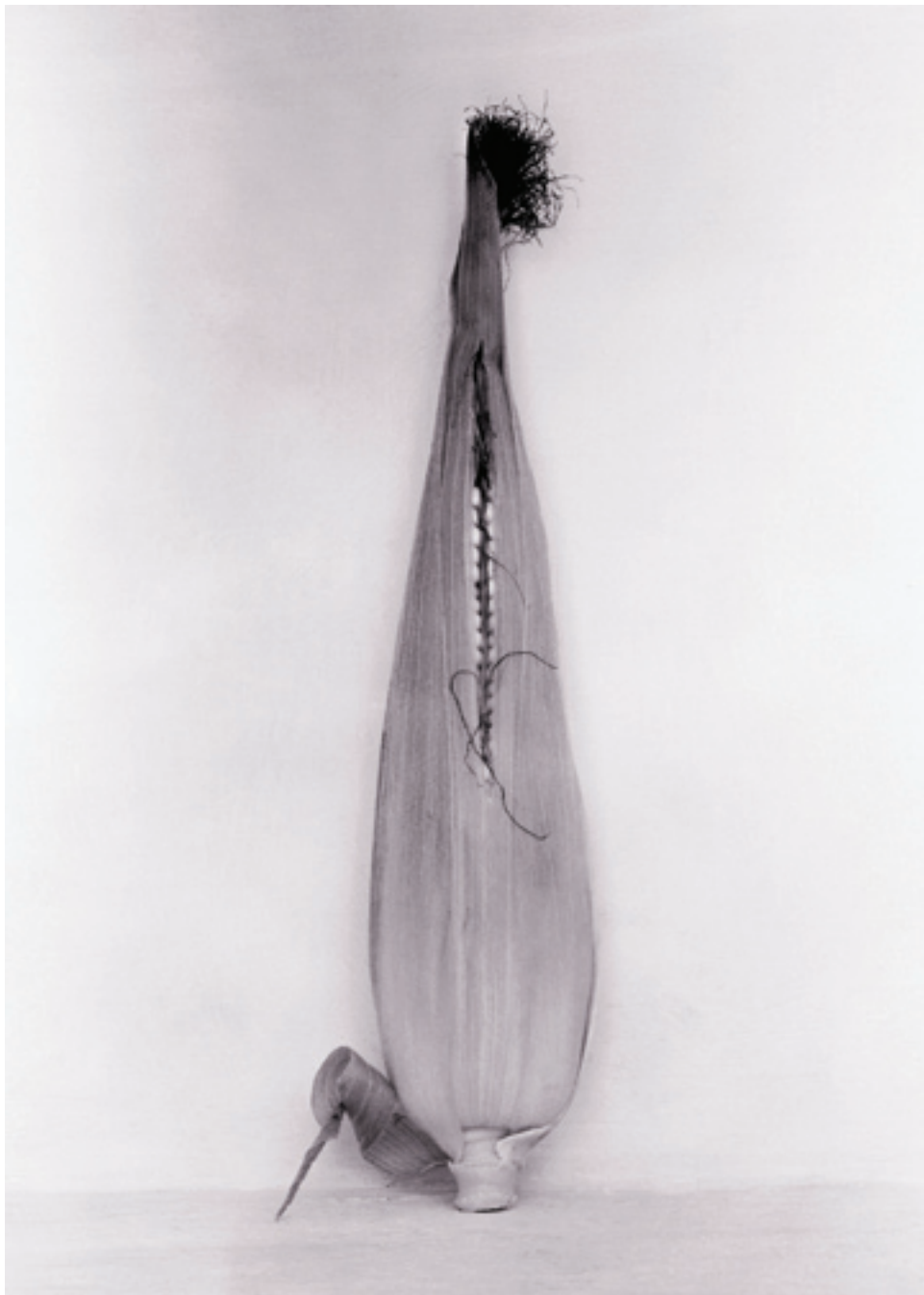
by Edward Osowski





above left:  
Keith Carter (Beaumont, Texas)  
*Perfect Storm*, 2009  
Digital pigment print  
36 x 36 inches  
Courtesy of the artist

above right:  
Keith Carter (Beaumont, Texas)  
*Celestial Havoc*, 2009  
Digital pigment print  
36 x 36 inches  
Courtesy of the artist



left:  
Keith Carter (Beaumont, Texas)  
*Ear of Corn*, 1972  
Toned gelatin silver print  
7 x 5 inches  
Courtesy of the artist

right:  
Keith Carter  
(Beaumont, Texas)  
*William Butler Yeats' Writing Desk*, 1996  
Toned gelatin silver print  
15.5 x 15.5 inches  
Courtesy of the artist



Layered into these collages are images of the lichens of Irish grave markers that give the impression of “found” images, which in their damaged state provide evidence of events out of time and out of history. These tableaux, made in secret, portray a post-apocalyptic world, one in which human-like beings scramble over objects they cannot identify. It is as if Carter is viewing these activities through a clearing in some forest and recording a world in collapse, a world in which civilization has disappeared, a world where technology no longer holds sway. One thinks of anarchy and destruction.

The dichotomies of civilization versus the untamed are the intellectual ideas becoming the creative building blocks that Carter combines in the concluding group, *Ocularia*. One notices immediately the size of these works (36 x 36), the largest he has ever exhibited. They are also his first exhibited works in color – the first, in other words, that move well beyond the subtle toning he achieves with photographs printed in his darkroom.


These works stand as gorgeous examples of abstraction, photographic versions of color-field painting. Carter has first used images made in the deep-reaches (and invisible to the human eye) of space with the Hubble Space Telescope. He has digitally added to them images of the interior of his own left eye, again a space invisible to the human eye without special tools. These are images of what lies beyond and within an eye which a year before was diagnosed with a vision reducing condition.

*Natural Histories* announced a dramatic shift in the materials

and processes of Carter’s picture-making. *Ocularia* takes those changes and adds something more. Carter’s visual talent has always been to find the unusual, the enchanting, the unfamiliar in what is often right before his viewer’s eyes. Here he brings us visions that he himself cannot see until they are digitized in his computer.

Additionally, Carter shifts the locus of his narrative concerns from something “out there” to the autobiographical, personal, and private. His body, his reduced vision, the disease that is compromising his viewing ability have become his focus, the place from which art is made. The names of these images, *Perfect Storm* or *Celestial Havoc*, (both 2009), introduce a new level of emotional drama and story-telling.

In the literature of the past two decades or so, a significant group of works have emerged that detail the personal, the most intimate, the most private events in their author’s lives. These memoirs find a visual equivalent in art (one thinks of Kiki Smith or Nan Goldin) in which the self is revealed through what is most messy – blood, hair, bruises, scars – what might be termed a secular version of the passion of Christ.

Carter challenges his viewers to accept his inward turn. He also asks them to accept that the remarkable silence, present in so many of his photographs, does not hold his interest in these works. For these are wildly baroque images filled with storms and clouds and dramatic sunbursts. And what they most resemble are the heavenly skies of the Venetian painter Tiepolo. 





# A SNAPSHOT OF OUTREACH AT HCP

EACH YEAR HCP BRINGS PHOTOGRAPHY INTO THE COMMUNITY THROUGH VARIOUS OUTREACH PROGRAMS AND EVENTS, HELD BOTH AT HCP AND AROUND TOWN.

## PictureThis!

Throughout the year HCP implements a photography program with pediatric patients at Texas Children's Cancer Center and The Children's Hospital at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Clinic. Working in the classroom, the clinic, and bedside, HCP brings photography to life with photo based projects using digital cameras, collaging, and drawing.

## Collaborations

Each year twenty students from a rotating pool of Houston area high schools come together to produce an exhibition of their own work with guidance and support from the HCP staff. Through meetings, lectures, critiques, and field trips, students collaborate on every aspect that goes into generating exhibition, from creating work to producing press materials and installing exhibits.

## After School Programs

HCP is part of various after school programs that provide academic enrichment opportunities through photography.

## PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS IN 2009-2010

**Project Chrysalis** - Project Chrysalis, a charter middle school, is small school alternative for the children living in Houston's East End. It provides an extended day, extended year program, which emphasizes project-based and interdisciplinary learning.

**McReynolds Middle School** - This program supports the creation of community learning centers that provide academic enrichment opportunities during non-school hours for children, particularly students who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools.

**River Oaks Elementary** - River Oaks Elementary is a neighborhood and Vanguard Magnet School serving a culturally and economically diverse group students in kindergarten through grade five in HISD.

**Houston Hope** - Houston HOPE is a non-profit organization that works with residents, community-based organizations, local businesses, government officials and the philanthropic community to improve the quality of life of seven of Houston's poorest neighborhoods.

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## INTERVIEW

# RE: groups

An Interview with photography collector W.M. Hunt



Ten years ago, New York-based collector, curator and consultant W.M. Hunt (Bill Hunt) began assembling his *Collection Blind Pirate*. Currently a selection, *RE: groups*, is being exhibited for the first time at HCP. Recently, he spoke at length with Dr. Jörg M. Colberg, editor of the contemporary fine-art photography blog *Conscientious*, about photography, collecting and this very remarkable and fascinating collections of images.

## by Dr. Jörg M. Colberg

Colberg: Your collection of photographs of large, often anonymous groups might come as a surprise to many who wouldn't have expected something like this from someone who has been dealing (with) photography for a long time. Why these photographs? What is it that appeals to you?

Hunt: It even comes as a surprise to me. Part of collecting it has been subversive, so thanks for noticing that. There were a few group images in the larger-known *Collection Dancing Bear* – magical, heart-stopping images of people in which the eyes cannot be seen – that were spectacularly odd: Klu Klux Klan, John Greenleaf Whittier funeral, some press prints. They have been included in the major exhibitions of the collection in Arles, Lausanne and Amsterdam. But then some oddities have crept into the collection.

There were some E.J. Kelty images, one with *Hunt Circus* on the left of the image, and *Bears* on the right, and another of Madison Square Garden filled to the rafters. I also love Mole & Thomas, their amazing formations of thousands of service men and women creating the Liberty Bell or whatever. These images may seem to fall outside the criteria of the collection, but I was so attracted to them that they got acquired. Collectors make rules and then break them.

Colberg: All of these photos also show American groups. Why only Americans?

Hunt: It was arbitrary, initially, but then it eliminated the need to include any of those totalitarian regimes.

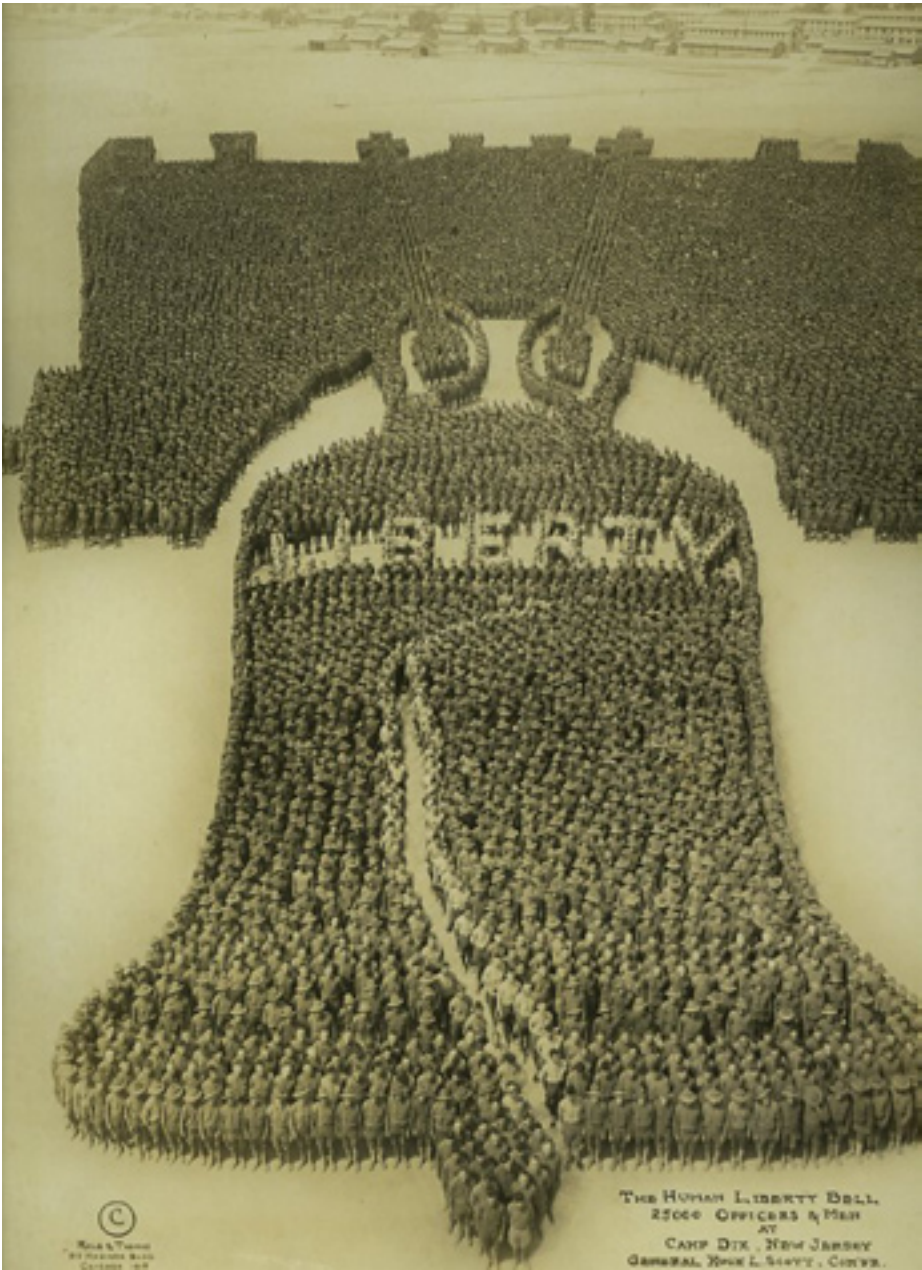
Also, there is something rambunctious about this kind of work. We deem most of this work as vernacular. It is, at the very least, a part of popular culture. I respond to its direct nature as a kind of American folk art.

Colberg: I like the idea of turning this kind of American folk art into something bigger. There always is this distinction between high art and the rest and your collection shows that there really is only a barrier in our minds. This seems to tie in with how people look on places like Flickr for images; it's like visual data mining. Your collection would indicate that such an idea is not really new though?

above:  
Photo Central Studio (Fred Hess and Son) (Atlantic City, NJ)  
*Inter City Beauties - Showmen's Variety Jubilee - Steel Pier - Atlantic City, 1935*  
Gelatin silver print  
9 x 37.5 inches  
Courtesy of Collection Blind Pirate (New York, NY)



below:  
Mole & Thomas (Arthur Mole, English, 1889 - 1983  
& John D. Thomas, American, dates unknown)  
*The Human Liberty Bell, 25,000 Officers & Men, at Camp Dix, New Jersey, General Hugh L. Scott CMDR, 1918*  
Toned gelatin silver print  
13 x 11 inches  
Courtesy of Collection Blind Pirate (New York, NY)



below:  
Anderson (Studio) (New York, NY)  
*Veteran Firemen, 1886*  
Hand colored gelatin silver print  
19.25 x 34 inches  
Courtesy of Collection Blind Pirate (New York, NY)



Hunt: I try to resist categorizing. It works or it doesn't work, no matter the intentions. There is increasing recognition for collectors as artists when they demonstrate a unique ability to gather together disparate works into a coherent grouping. The National Gallery and the Met have both done exhibitions of vernacular, snapshot collections belonging to private individuals.

My collecting really has had no agenda beyond the visceral. I saw it; I liked it; if I could, I bought it. As a dealer, the idea of stroking the collector through the purchase was initially completely foreign to me. I have never brought any sense of investing to this either. (This is colossally ironic because the collection is probably my annuity.)

Responding to your statement, though, collectors like Andre Jammes and Sam Wagstaff loved the "stuff" in photography, not just the classic beauties. Look also at Walker Evans' collection of road signs. Totally wild.

Colberg: There seems to be some rules that come with your collecting. Did you have these rules in place before you started, or did the rules evolve along your collection?

Hunt: Most often I imagine that one doesn't know they have a collection until they look at all the stuff in the room, and then they realize that it is a collection. I don't think I consciously set out to collect. Initially, I did look for a photograph of someone in which his or her eyes were covered, then I looked for another and so on. Then one day you look around the room and you've got a collection.





Press Dept.  
Bell Telephone Exhibit -  
New York World's Fair  
(Operators 1-19), 1939  
Gelatin silver print  
8 x 10 inches  
Courtesy of Collection Blind Pirate  
(New York, NY)



With *RE: groups* I discovered that there were more than I had imagined, enough for a show, and that they were indeed mostly American and mostly made before the contemporary era. Once I recognized the “unconscious” rule, it became a conscious rule. Part of the reason for maintaining the cutoff date is to avoid dealing with a living artist. No offense, but I deal with artists all the time. The *Collection Blind Pirate* gives me the latitude to work alone, in monologue as opposed to dialogue. It’s funny, but I was showing the *RE: group* photographs to the photographer Nadav Kander last week and he made a comment about them, that they lack tension, and I recognized that I haven’t had any sort of real conversation with anyone about these pictures. Houston will be a major unveiling for me.

There is a second guide point that the groups either be orderly – the image should look like a musical score with the blacks and whites mixing in an engaging design – or that there be total chaos like ants spilling out over the ground. Either the group acts in a coordinated fashion strictly outlined by the photographer, or it is a mess and the photographer must decide how to capture that.

Colberg: I am focusing on the collector bit so much, because I just finished reading some books on collectors, and in each of the cases mentioned in those books the collectors are usually driven by very strict rules. If you don’t mind, one more question about the collection itself: Do you actually look at what you have regularly? In those books, many of the collections are so huge that the collectors have no time to look at what they have. And some don’t even *know* what they have; they re-find stuff in their own collections occasionally. Does that happen to you?

Hunt: Your instinct is correct that I don’t *actually* look at the collection piece-by-piece very often, even much at all. There is a good assortment around the apartment, but do I take them down and consider them for a while? No. I do, however, play the collection through my mind’s eye all of the time. And I do look at the collection as a whole. I literally stand there and think, “Wow, look at all of these pictures!”

At a walk-through of an exhibition of the big collection, a young student asked me, “Why do you have to own them?” Deathless pause. “Because then they’re mine!”

Again, I stand in the middle of all of them and marvel at how strange it is to have become a collector. So much stuff. Last summer I kept having Collier Brothers fantasies that something would fall on my head.

I do have a theory about collecting that it has to do with a lack of nurturing in childhood. I asked a client how long he had been collecting. “7 years ago ... since my wife died.” Heartbreaking.

You know, Joe Baio in New York? He was a child actor, and I would offer that he might have been robbed of a certain part of his childhood. The photographs are his way of handling that.

Collecting certainly has to do with insisting on a certain order in one’s life.

Your thoughts?

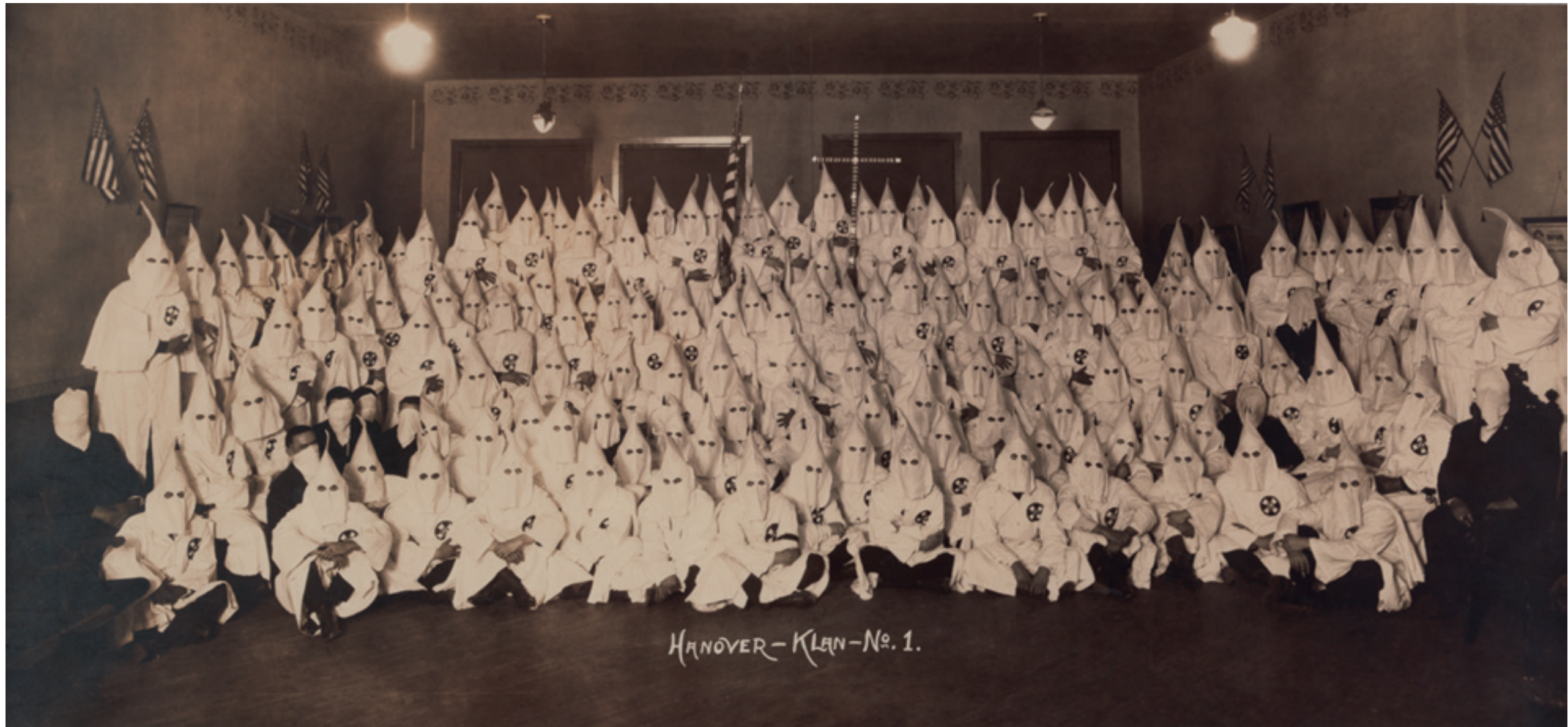
Colberg: I actually don’t know what it is about collecting. Why do I collect old plastic pocket transistor radios even though I never even listen to the radio? I have no idea.

Hunt: Maybe they’re like shells and rocks? They feel good.

Photographer or Studio Unknown (Michigan)  
*St. Clair River Dance Club*, 1950’s  
Gelatin silver print  
8 x 10 inches  
Courtesy of Collection Blind Pirate (New York, NY)







top left:  
 Photographer or Studio Unknown  
*Hanover - No. 1 (Ku Klux Klan)*, 1924  
 Toned gelatin silver print  
 8.25 x 17.5 inches  
 Courtesy of Collection Blind Pirate (New York, NY)

below:  
 Photographer or Studio Unknown (Ohio)  
*C.H. & D. R.R. Shops*  
 (Cincinnati, Hamilton @ Dayton Railroad - Ohio)  
 (Men in Plaid), early 20th Century  
 Toned gelatin silver print  
 10 x 13.375 inches  
 Courtesy of Collection Blind Pirate (New York, NY)

Colberg: So where/how do you find these photographs? Do you go to flea markets, Ebay...?

Hunt: I always maintain that the photographs find me. I found a killer photograph at the Rhinebeck Antiques Fair several years ago, *The Radio City Music Hall staff, 1939*. It is unusually large with everyone from the Rockettes to the ushers. It didn't look like much at the fair, but I framed it and "shazam!" I sold it to my neighbor and will always regret it, although she may loan it for the Houston show.

I look at antique markets and some flea markets, although Ebay seems to have killed that. Lots of times these photographs are in the wrong places, antique stores that have them as part of an estate. But Ebay has been a major source. I have lots of keywords and then I get an alert and I can look online.

Part of the growth of this collection is due to still having the collecting addiction and finding that keeping costs to a couple of hundred dollars doesn't break the bank. I am not as obsessed with this *Collection Blind Pirate* although it has gotten out-of-hand in a most remarkable way.

Colberg: Let's maybe talk about some of the images you have. If you would have to pick just one favorite which one would that be and why?

Hunt: *The Klan*. It is crazy. The idea that all of these men would assemble for a group "banquet style" photo and that some of them would forget their hoods and put napkins over their faces. Mind blowing. Insisting on anonymity in a photograph that is a representational report. Where in the U.S. was this made? Hanover ? Where? Chilling.

Colberg: Images like the *Dance Club* grouping, what appeals to you in those kinds of images? There must be thousands and thousands of those around.

Hunt: Undoubtedly, but there is only one with my parents in it, *The St. Clair River Dance Club*. I grew up knowing most of those people. There is a Sam Wagstaff story that the first picture he bought was a sports team photo he found at a flea market; it had his dad in it. Once upon a time with these images, someone knew all of these people. They were quite personal. 📌

An extended version of this interview can be found at <http://jmcolberg.com/weblog>.





*All the world's a stage,  
And all the men and women merely players:  
They have their exits and their entrances;  
And one man in his time plays many parts...  
(Shakespeare, As You Like It)*

## Strange Rituals: the Photographs of Bill McCullough

As social beings, we seldom stop to think about the parts we play, the lines we deliver, or the roles we inhabit. Why do we engage in strange rituals of drama and performance? It is just this graphic, bizarre kind of human subtlety that interests Bill McCullough. While other photographers may use the body as canvas (think Cindy Sherman) or create composed tableaux (e.g., Gregory Crewdson or Robert and Shana ParkeHarrison), McCullough finds human drama at its height in the “big huge popcorn machine of emotions, family, and kinetic interplay” of that common, yet strange ritual: weddings. “Weddings,” McCullough explains, “with their amplified emotions, provide a continual array of situations for a photographer to capture. I view them as giant kinetic events; in that compressed atmosphere I am constantly moving because time is finite and the number of interesting situations seemingly infinite.” McCullough has an instinct for the quirky side of social life. His images show the “other” side of the wedding performance – terrified grooms, unsupervised children, bored guests, bridal fury – layered within the elaborately decorated “set” of a church or reception hall. Weddings are the social drama in which most people play a starring role in at least once, and some times more, during their lives. We all know the shared script and have rehearsed our parts in this strange ritual. In McCullough’s images we can recognize ourselves in many of the roles and laugh at the bizarre drama of our social theatre.

– Tracy Xavia Karner



above:  
Bill McCullough (Austin, Texas)  
august 23, 2008  
Chromogenic print  
36 x 24 inches  
Courtesy of the artist



left:  
Bill McCullough (Austin, Texas)  
april 1, 2006  
Chromogenic print  
36 x 24 inches  
Courtesy of the artist



above left:  
Bill McCullough (Austin, Texas)  
february 27, 2009  
Chromogenic print  
22 x 15 inches  
Courtesy of the artist

above:  
Bill McCullough (Austin, Texas)  
october 12, 2002  
Chromogenic print  
36 x 24 inches  
Courtesy of the artist



“A wedding is like a tornado; it’s like shooting in a tornado...”  
 – Bill McCullough



above:  
 Bill McCullough (Austin, Texas)  
*april 26, 2008*  
 Chromogenic print  
 24 x 36 inches  
 Courtesy of the artist

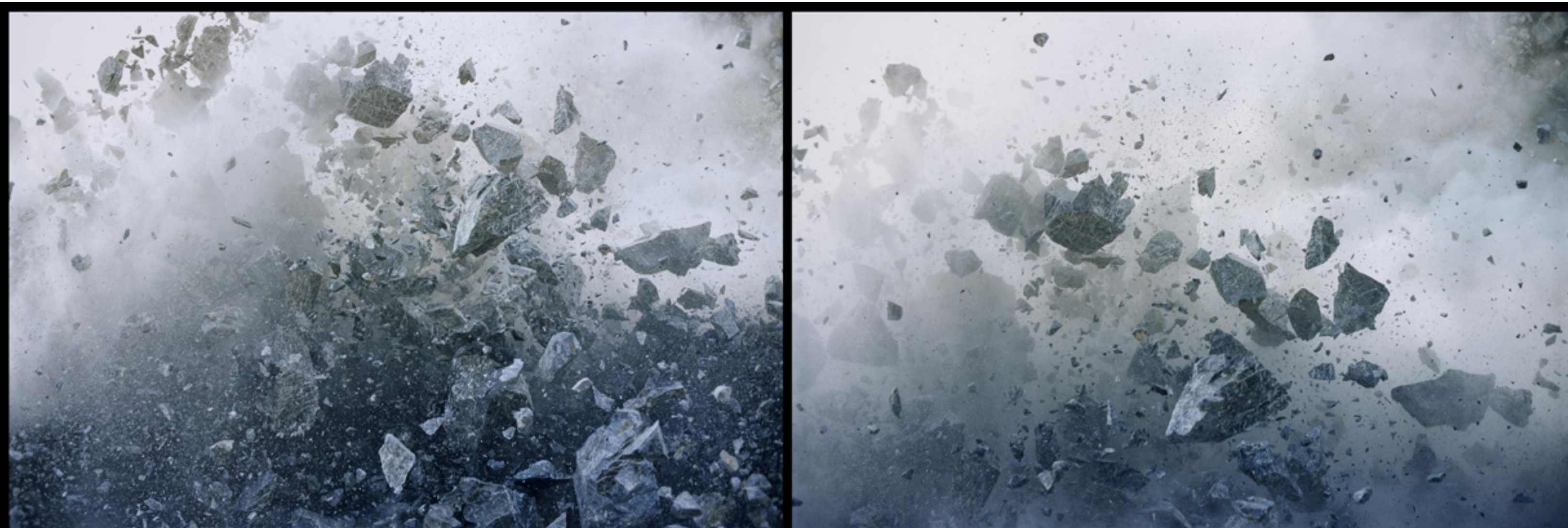
right:  
 Bill McCullough (Austin, Texas)  
*black suit in garden, dallas texas, 2005*  
 Chromogenic print  
 36 x 24 inches  
 Courtesy of the artist

opposite, top  
 Bill McCullough (Austin, Texas)  
*boy with gum, 2006*  
 Chromogenic print  
 24 x 36 inches  
 Courtesy of the artist

opposite, bottom  
 Bill McCullough (Austin, Texas)  
*march 14, 2009*  
 Chromogenic print  
 24 x 36 inches  
 Courtesy of the artist







# Ruptures and Continuities: Photography made after 1960 from the MFAH Collection

by Igor George Alexander

In the summer of 2003, on the day before the July 4th holiday, the Whitney Museum of American Art opened the exhibition *The American Effect*. Guest curator Lawrence Rinder devised a way to invert the Whitney's stated mission of displaying American art by organizing a show of foreign artists who had created works about the United States. Rinder enlisted the aid of a young Japanese-born, American-educated lawyer with first-hand knowledge of the Tokyo art scene to help him find works for the exhibition. The newly minted assistant curator, Yasufumi Nakamori, found a number of works for Rinder, including a 1996 painting on a folding screen by Makato Aida entitled *A Picture of an Air Raid on New York City*. In the image, a World War II aircraft with the Imperial Japanese Army insignia circles over Manhattan, its landmark buildings on fire. Less than two years after the destruction of the World Trade Center complex, the show certainly received attention. Even the normally anything goes *ArtForum* ran a review that found the exhibition disturbing enough to declare it "hectoring and jejune."






Bernd Becher (German, 1931 - 2007)  
and Hilla Becher (German, born 1934)  
*Water Towers*, 1980  
Gelatin silver prints  
Overall: 61.25 x 49.25 inches  
Image (Each): 15.9375 x 12 inches  
Courtesy of The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, gift of Louisa Stude Sarofim  
© Bernd and Hilla Becher, courtesy Sonnabend Gallery

The theme of the 2010 FotoFest, the thirteenth biennial in the series, is contemporary U.S. photography. The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, which has mounted many major exhibitions in conjunction with FotoFest, is presenting *Ruptures and Continuities: Photography Made after 1960 from the MFAH Collection*, a major photography show of nearly two hundred works from the museum's world-renowned, permanent collection chosen by Assistant Curator of Photography, Yasufumi Nakamori, who came to work at the MFA in February, 2008. The show, as Nakamori envisions it, examines "...how...European and North American-based photography practices spread throughout the world over time."

*Continuities* between photography and the art of painting have existed since the medium's invention; the Victorian master Julia Cameron's works often reference the style of pre-Raphaelite painting. Pictorialists such as the early Edward Steichen took cues from Impressionist painting and Man Ray's images reflect his Surrealist ties and so on. The MFAH exhibition includes three "mini-retrospectives," in Nakamori's words, of American photographers Richard Misrach, William Eggleston and Lewis Baltz. In particular, Baltz took cues from Minimalism, most directly with his images, taken in 1974, of building facades around Orange County, California. In the exhibit, *Ruptures* are represented by those artists who took

photography into directions unique to the medium – Conceptualists such as John Baldessari, Sherri Levine and William Wegman, working within the "cultural prison break" that was the 1960s in the United States.

Overall, the exhibition includes works by over eighty artists working from the 1960s into the present in twenty different countries, divided into five themes: Self-Performance (think Cindy Sherman); Transformation of the City (Eggleston and the powerful Chinese newcomer Sze Tsung Leong stand out); Directorial Mode and Constructed Environments (David Levinthal and others); New Landscape (Misrach and Baltz) and Memory and Archive (notably, *La Fête du Pourim* by the French Conceptualist Christian Boltanski).

This exhibition, with its over-arching meta theme, promises to be thought-provoking, suggesting that Houstonians can expect more fine work in the future from Nakamori. 

*Ruptures and Continuities: Photography made after 1960 from the MFAH Collection* will be on exhibit at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston from February 21 through May 9, 2010.



Gordon Matta-Clark (American, 1945 - 1978)  
*Conical Intersect*, 1975  
Gelatin silver print  
10.6875 x 15.625 inches  
Courtesy of The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, The Allan Chasanoff Photographic Collection  
© 2010 Estate of Gordon Matta-Clark / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York



## Dennis Yermoshin: *My Fellow Americans*

I was born in Baku, Azerbaijan, in 1982. My family and I came to America as refugees in 1991 as a result of the Nagorno-Karabakh War, which began in 1988, shortly before the fall of the Soviet Union. The U.S. Embassy in Moscow relocated us to Providence, Rhode Island. We did; like many other refugees, we had no preference. We were the first members of our family to come to America, so over the years my immediate family was instrumental in helping our extended family move to the United States. My family quickly developed strong friendships with other refugee and immigrant families that settled in Rhode Island, most of whom also came from Azerbaijan. These friendships slowly formed a social group, united by common culture.

Eleven years after I came to America, I began photographing my family and friends while enrolled in my first photography class at the university. The focus was to explore the different generations of Soviet immigrants and refugees who came to Rhode Island during the 1990's. By photographing my subjects in their daily environments such as their homes, their jobs and in their neighborhoods, I wanted to capture the relationships that had developed between these places and the people since they had moved to America. Fascinated with the idea that the foundation of America was built by immigrants, I wanted to explore the roles that we play in American life as workers, as parents, as siblings, as friends and *as Americans*.

This series is about a reconstruction of a life left behind. It is a portrait of my family and friends; a specific group of people who, due to the failure of the Soviet government, ended up in America. Through these photographs I explore the process of adaptation and the endurance of nostalgia, two unconditional aspects of immigrant life.

—Dennis Yermoshin [www.yermoshin.com](http://www.yermoshin.com)



above left:  
Dennis Yermoshin (Houston, TX)  
Untitled 19  
(my parents, Carina and Michael), 2005  
Gelatin silver print  
6.5 x 9.5 inches  
Courtesy of the artist



above right:  
Dennis Yermoshin (Houston, TX)  
Untitled 5  
(my mother at a house warming party), 2005  
Gelatin silver print  
6.5 x 9.5 inches  
Courtesy of the artist

*All photographs were taken between 2003 and 2009  
in greater Rhode Island and Houston, Texas.  
They were captured with a 35 mm camera.*

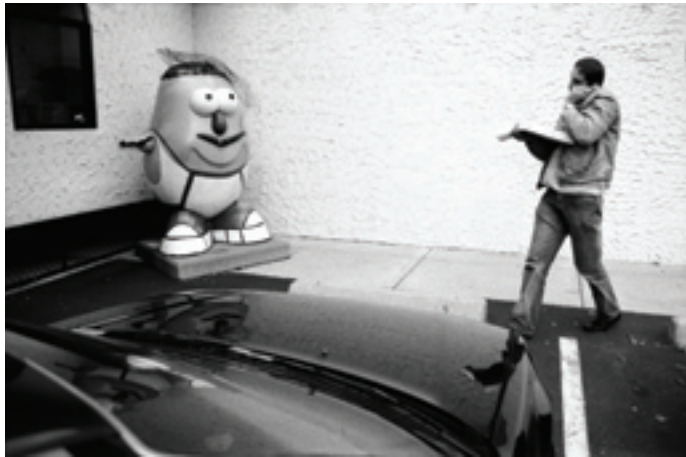


above:  
Dennis Yermoshin (Houston, TX)  
Untitled 20  
(departing plane), 2005  
Gelatin silver print  
6.5 x 9.5 inches  
Courtesy of the artist

right:  
Dennis Yermoshin (Houston, TX)  
Untitled 18  
(my nephew, Nikita), 2005  
Gelatin silver print  
6.5 x 9.5 inches  
Courtesy of the artist



below:  
Dennis Yermoshin (Houston, TX)  
Untitled 42  
*(my uncle, at his job)*, 2004  
Gelatin silver print  
6.5 x 9.5 inches  
Courtesy of the artist



above left:  
Dennis Yermoshin (Houston, TX)  
Untitled 26  
*(Yuriy Sarkisov)*, 2005  
Gelatin silver print  
6.5 x 9.5 inches  
Courtesy of the artist

above right:  
Dennis Yermoshin (Houston, TX)  
Untitled 6  
*(birthday party in Newport, RI)*, 2006  
Gelatin silver print  
6.5 x 9.5 inches  
Courtesy of the artist

above left:  
Dennis Yermoshin (Houston, TX)  
Untitled 39  
*(my cousin, leaving an Italian restaurant)*, 2005  
Gelatin silver print  
6.5 x 9.5 inches  
Courtesy of the artist

above right:  
Dennis Yermoshin (Houston, TX)  
Untitled 54  
*(my father's medallion)*, 2005  
Gelatin silver print  
6.5 x 9.5 inches  
Courtesy of the artist

top:  
Dennis Yermoshin (Houston, TX)  
Untitled 4  
*(my mother at a hairdresser's appointment)*, 2008  
Gelatin silver print  
6.5 x 9.5 inches  
Courtesy of the artist

My Fellow Americans is also available as  
a Blurb book. [www.blurb.com](http://www.blurb.com)



# Who's Who in the Houston Photography Community: GALLERIES

BY DEBORAH BAY      Photography shows up everywhere in town during FotoFest ... every couple of years. But good photography – from the sublimely beautiful to the challenging – is almost always on view here in Houston as an increasing number of commercial galleries have integrated photography into their contemporary art programs. You can find a broad sampling of some of the best in contemporary photo-based art as well as mid-century photography at galleries in and around the Museum District, along Colquitt's "Gallery Row" and at several other inner-loop locales. De Santos Gallery and John Cleary Gallery specialize exclusively in photography, while others promote photography as an integral medium of expression in contemporary art. In addition, Houston has many museums and other nonprofit spaces that show photography and photo-based art as part of their programming; *spot* will be taking a closer look at them in future issues. Here are some of the galleries where you can find work by emerging, mid-career and established photographers and artists working in photography.



Jeff DeBevec

**Anya Tish Gallery**, 4411 Montrose Blvd. Established 1996. Owner/director: Anya Tish. With an interdisciplinary approach that minimizes traditional distinctions between varied mediums, Anya Tish Gallery showcases contemporary painting and sculpture as well as video and photography from Europe and America. Works range from vintage Soviet documentary by Samariy Gurariy; surreal, mid-century montages by Polish artist Zofia Rydet; conceptual photography by St. Petersburg artist Andrey Chezhin; lenticular photography by Catalanian artist Begona Egurbide; politically-charged, figurative photography from Moroccan artist Lalla Essaydi and Houston-based Iranian artist Soodi Sharifi; large-scale portraiture derived from the public domain by German artist Maxim Wakultschik; to Swiss artist Katja Loher's video sculptures utilizing the choreography of live actors.



Courtesy of the gallery

**Barbara Davis Gallery**, 4411 Montrose Blvd. Ste. D. Established 1985. Owner: Barbara Davis. Showcases a range of artistic ideas, processes and sensibilities reflecting currents in contemporary art and culture. Exhibitions have included internationally acclaimed artists and emerging artists, establishing a context for broad understanding and dialogue in contemporary visual art. The gallery shows work by several artists who work with photography, including Joe Mancuso, Chuck Close, Debbie Han, Jenny Holzer and Li Wei.



Bevin Bering Dubrowski



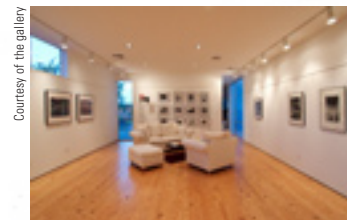
Bevin Bering Dubrowski

**Bering and James**, 805 Rhode Place #500. Established 2001. Principals: Blakely Bering, Austin James; director: Cali Alvarado. Promotes emerging modern and contemporary artists from around the world; approximately a third of artists represented are fine art photographers. Director Cali Alvarado says the gallery's photographers bring a "fresh and innovative" approach to their work. The first four photographers to join the gallery were discovered at FotoFest in 2008 and formed the core for an expanding group of diverse, contemporary photographic artists. Photographers represented are Bevin Bering Dubrowski, Joe Baraban, Peter Tonningsen, Shelley Calton, Catherine Cameron, Marie Docher, Øyvind Hjelmén, Peter Tonningsen, Angilee Wilkerson and Pablo Gimenez Zapiola.



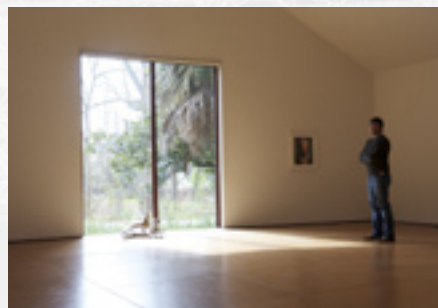
Courtesy of the gallery

**Colton & Farb Gallery**, 2445 North Blvd. Established 2004. Partners: Deborah M. Colton, Carolyn Farb; director: Lester Marks. Exhibitions highlight contemporary artists working in photography, video, conceptual future media installations, painting, works on paper, sculpture. Owner Deborah Colton says photography has always been a major emphasis of the gallery, which became part of Houston's contemporary art scene during FotoFest six years ago. The gallery has a particular interest in photography that references the New York art world in the sixties, as well as the late seventies and early eighties – not really documentary, Colton explains, but images that capture the spirit of the times, heady with experimentation and new forms of expression.



Courtesy of the gallery

**De Santos Gallery**, 1724 Richmond Ave #A. Established 2003. Owners: Luis and Gemma De Santos; director: Gemma De Santos. Represents American and international photographers, with particular interest in Spanish fine-art photography. Inventory described as "eclectic, varied, international and evolving." Artists represented are Bill Armstrong, Cara Barer, Linda Butler, Fernando Castro, Chen Chang-Fen, Michael Crouser, Luis Delgado, Naia del Castillo, Erika Diettes, Elaine Duignan, James Evans, Amparo Garrido, Lorena Guillen-Vaschetti, Ciuco Gutierrez, Anna Halm-Schudel, German Herrera, Henrik Kam, Paul Kozal, Fernando La Rosa, Roman Loranc, Gregori Maiofis, Maria Martinez-Canas, Jennifer McNichols, Tony Mendoza, Rafael Navarro, Burton Pritzker, Sang Nam Park, Jose Luis Santalla, Kiriko Shirobayashi, Sarah Sudhoff, Han Sungpil and Paul Ziegler.



Jeff DeBevec

**Devin Borden Hiram Butler Gallery**, 4520 Blossom St. Established 1984. Owners/directors: Devin Borden, Hiram Butler. Contemporary gallery representing Texas, national and international artists at the top of their fields in photography, painting, printmaking and sculpture. Photographers represented include Allison V. Smith, Peter Miller, Timothy Greenfield-Sanders, Dana Harper and Fraser Stables.



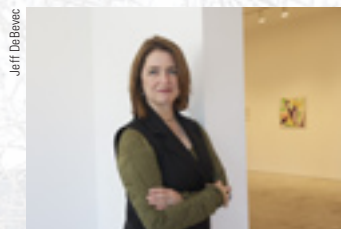
Jeff DeBevec

**Harris Gallery**, 1100 Bissonnet St. Established 1977. Owner/Director: J. Harrison Itz. Represents more than 50 artists (national and international), many from Texas. Photographers represented include Peter Brown, Gary Faye, George Krause and Jason Neumann.



Theresa DiManno

**Hooks-Epstein Gallery**, 2631 Colquitt St. Established 1969. Owner: Geri Hooks; director: Yvonne M. Garcia. Represents established, mid-career and emerging artists, with emphasis on sculpture and works on paper. Photographers represented are Julie Brook Alexander and Jim Falick.



Jeff DeBevec

**Inman Gallery**, 3901 Main St. Established 1990. Owner: Kerry Inman; director Patrick Reynolds. Nationally recognized venue that encourages innovative, thoughtful visual presentations and nurtures talent. "We've always included photography in our program," says director Patrick Reynolds. The gallery's program includes emerging to mid-career artists who use photography as their primary medium, and those who utilize photo-based media as part of a broader studio practice. Photographers represented are Amy Blakemore, Duncan Ganley, Todd Hido, Demetrius Oliver and Jason Salavan.

## De Santos Gallery

Eclectic. That's the word Gemma De Santos uses to describe the vision she and her husband Luis share for De Santos Gallery. "We show contemporary photography in all its forms, because that's what we know best and what we like," she explains.

"As long as we believe in the work, we will show it. If I don't feel something for the work, it probably won't be on the walls." "I try to bring the best" to the gallery, says De Santos.

The gallery represents both international and local photographers with originality and brings "something interesting to the table." Currently on view is an exhibition of James Evans's *Crazy from the Heat*: 20 years in Big Bend and Sarah Sudhoff's *At the Hour of Our Death*.

De Santos avoids trendy, topical issues that have become popular exhibition themes such as photographs of Katrina's aftermath or images from Cuba. Acknowledging that she could put together exhibitions of more commercial work to drive sales higher, she maintains that this is not her vision for the gallery. She generally shies away from landscape photography although one or two artists shooting in that genre are represented.

A risk-taker who likes to select work intuitively, she says, "I think it's important to give the viewer another experience. If I get an idea, I go with it." Sometimes one particular image provides the inspiration. Several years ago she saw a striking image by an Iranian photographer. It led to an exhibition of contemporary Iranian photography featuring glimpses of an Iran rarely seen in the West. That show was in mid-2006, when Iranian art was fairly new to the international art market and prices were relatively modest.

**John Cleary Gallery**, 2635 Colquitt St. Established 1996. Member of AIPAD. Owner/director: Catherine Couturier. Couturier's philosophy is "to be a bastion of excellence and honesty with a dedication to the medium in all its forms, but my highest goal will always be to show the best fine art photography I can." Artists represented are Stanko Abadzic, Theo Anderson, Kelly Anderson-Staley, Jeffrey Becom, Rita Bernstein, Susan Burnstine, Dan Burkholder, Marty Carden, Charles Cramer, Mitch Dobrowner, Jeri Eisenberg, Martin Elkort, Lisa Tyson Ennis, Elliott Erwit, Grant Ferguson, Mauro Fiorese, Blake Fitch, David Fokos, Eleonora Ghioldi, Charles Grogg, Jefferson Hayman, Josef Hoflehner, Henry Horenstein, Earlie Hudnall Jr., Adam Jahiel, Mark Jaremko, Thomas Kellner, Michael Kenna, The Great LIFE Photographers, The Estate of Ruth Orkin, Bill Perlmutter, Brent Phelps, Pentti Sammallahti, Hakan Strand, Maggie Taylor, Brad Temkin, Jerry Uelsmann, Andrew Ward, John Wimberley, Frank Yarnus, Blake Yantis, George Zimbel, Ryan Zoghlin and Ion Zupcu. Inventory includes works by masters such as Andre Kertesz, Henri Cartier-Bresson, Willy Ronis, Robert Doisneau, Dorothea Lange, Marion Post-Wolcott, Eva Rubinstein, Joe Schwartz and Brett Weston.



Courtesy of the gallery

**McClain Gallery**, 2242 Richmond Ave. Established 1980. Founders/ directors: Robert and Cynthia Cage McClain. Focuses on contemporary art by national, international and Texas artists in a full range of media, including photography and video installation. Works range from the large-format, reductive imagery of Bill Beckley to the social commentary of Nobuyoshi Araki and Massimo Vitali. Other photographers represented are Anne Deleporte, Vera Lehdorff, Robert Polidori and Jeff Shore/Jon Fisher.

The De Santoses are long-time supporters and collectors of photography. They opened the gallery in 2003 in a newly constructed stucco and glass building designed by architect Fernando Brave. Just a few blocks from the Menil Collection and close to the museum district, it provides an excellent showcase for contemporary photography. Luis De Santos shoots commercial photography, and the second floor of the gallery houses LADS Photography.

When the gallery was in its formative stages, the De Santoses received generous help and advice from many in the photographic community, including Anne Tucker of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Clint Willour of the Galveston Arts Center, Fred Baldwin and Wendy Watriss of FotoFest, as well as friends at the Houston Center for Photography.

Gemma De Santos will be reviewing portfolios at the Meeting Place for the first time this spring. She explains that the gallery's interest in Latin American and Spanish artists "just happened" and was not part of an overall plan. The gallery also accepts artists' submissions as its inventory continues to evolve.

De Santos believes that most collectors still prefer black and white photography. Many contemporary photography collectors have an interest in other forms of contemporary art as well, she's noticed, not just photography. Based on what she's seen at many of the large art fairs, she further notes that American interest in collecting contemporary photography seems to lag well behind the Europeans. But, closer to home, she's discovered that "Houstonians love Texas artists."



## John Cleary Gallery

It started in elementary school with the Lewis Hine photograph, *Mill Girl*. That image was in a textbook describing child labor and Catherine Courturier wanted it. She asked to make a copy in the office; she even considered cutting the picture out of the book.

Now the owner and director of John Cleary Gallery, Courturier remembers the power of that moment, the first time an image caught her attention. She received a Lewis Hine photography book for Christmas that year, and as a “gallerist” today she finds much satisfaction in helping collectors find works they connect with.

She aims to “show the best photographs, the best quality, the best examples of what people in Houston like to collect,” particularly very beautiful landscapes, cityscapes and seascapes. She says some of her collectors like “slightly edgy” work, but notes that “edgy” may be relative. In general, portraiture and political and religious images have not been popular with Houston collectors.

During the past year and a half, she’s been selling more contemporary art, primarily because of the economy. But she continues to maintain the gallery’s interest in mid-century French street photography with works by Andre Kertesz, Henri Cartier-Bresson, Willy Ronis and Edouard Boubat.

When the gallery founder John Cleary died early in 2008, Couturier was gallery director, juggling that job with being a mom to an energetic 20-month old boy. It was a challenging year of transition as her role at the gallery expanded and she assumed the responsibility of carrying on the John Cleary Gallery tradition.

She often considers what her friend and mentor John Cleary would think before she makes decisions about the gallery. “I take my job very seriously ... because it’s not just my name, but John’s as well.”

Yet she’s also incorporating and expanding her own vision for the gallery. ““The thing about photography,” she says, “is that there are so many different things it can be.” She mentions alternative processes such as tintypes, ambrotypes, printing on rice paper, and Dan Burkholder’s platinum/palladium over gold leaf process.

Courturier, who will be reviewing work at the Meeting Place during FotoFest, says the roster of photographers she represents continues to evolve. “I think if you don’t keep looking at work, you’ll miss the next Irving Penn.” As she walks through the gallery she talks about Mark Jaremkó’s shimmering *Nightsapes* exhibition and mentions one or two other photographers who were among her discoveries at FotoFest.

She emphasizes the importance of quality when presenting work. “It doesn’t matter how good the image is, if it’s not well printed and well presented” she won’t be interested.

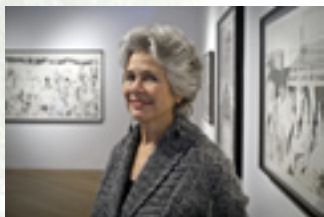
Her view on collecting photography is that “if you really want it, it will talk to you. I think of myself more as a facilitator. I’m not selling anything.” One of the best parts of her job, she says, is to work with a first-time collector, when they’re so excited to find the piece they want. “The art becomes part of their history, part of their life and their children’s lives.”

Theresa DiMenna



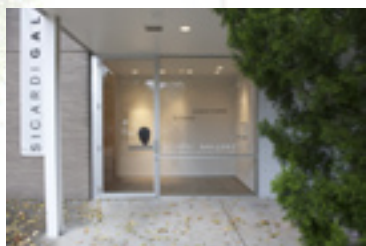
**McMurtrey Gallery**, 3508 Lake St. Established 1983. Owner/director: Roni McMurtrey. Representation includes a select group of internationally known photographers although gallery emphasis is on painting. Photographers represented are Kate Breakey, Keith Carter, Dornith Doherty and Diana Dopson.

Theresa DiMenna



**Moody Gallery**. 2815 Colquitt St. Established 1975. Owner/director: Betty Moody. Exhibits work by contemporary American artists in all media, with emphasis on Texas connections. Many are nationally and internationally recognized artists, although mid-career and emerging artists also are represented. Photographers represented are MANUAL, the husband and wife collaborative team of Ed Hill and Suzanne Bloom; Charles Mary Kubrick; and Sara Greene Reed. The gallery also has works available by William Christenberry.

Jeff DeBevec



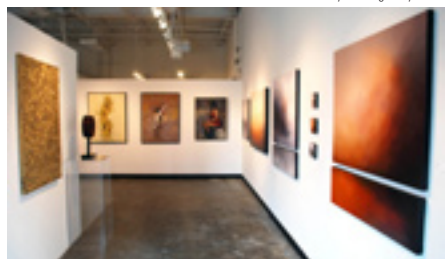
**Sicardi Gallery**, 2246 Richmond Ave. Established 1994. Owners/directors: Maria Ines Sicardi and Allison Ayers; curator of photography: Fernando Castro. Established 1994. Mission to facilitate cultural dialogue through art between Latin America and the United States and Europe. Exhibits primarily modern and contemporary artists with a connection to Latin America. The gallery’s artists working in photography include Liliana Porter, Luis Mallo, Oscar Munoz, Miguel Angel Rojas and Alexander Apostol. The Estate of Geraldo de Barros also is represented.



Jeff DeBevec

**Texas Gallery**, 2012 Peden St. Owner: Fredericka Hunter. Established 1971. Gallery shows contemporary art, mostly by living artists, and has exhibited a number of high-profile artists. Hunter believes photography is an integral part of contemporary art. Although the gallery doesn’t show photography that often, “we love it. It’s a very important expression. ... When it’s really good and really beautiful, who cares” about the particular medium, she says. The gallery has had occasional shows by artists/photographers such as William Wegman, Lee Friedlander, Sally Mann, Thomas Joshua Cooper, Sally Gall, Casey Williams, Robert Mapplethorpe and Cindy Sherman.

Courtesy of the gallery



**Thornwood Gallery**, 2643 Colquitt St. Director: Jason Ledford. Established 2001. Represents painters, sculptors and photographers from around the world; gallery also has Dallas location. Photographers represented are Misha Gordon and Michael Levin.



Courtesy of the gallery

**Wade Wilson ART, Inc.**, 4411 Montrose Blvd. Suite 200. Established 2006. Owner/director: Wade Wilson. Showcases contemporary photographers, painters and sculptors whose work explores use of light and color. Photographers represented are Libbie Masterson, Ann Stautberg and Jennah Ward.

# BERING & JAMES



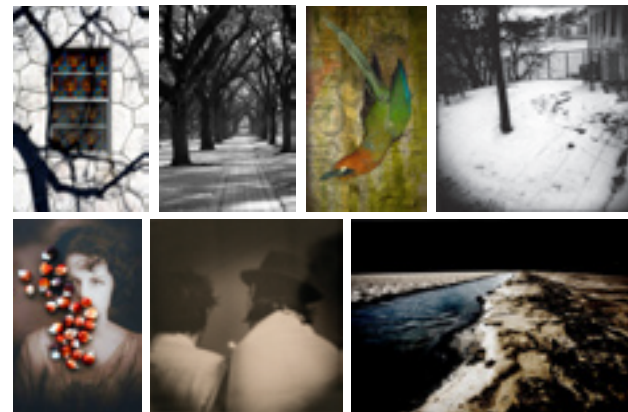
## Traces of Her

Solo Exhibition by Shelley Calton  
Tracy Xavia Karner, Guest Curator

### Opening Reception

Thursday, March 18, 2010  
from 5pm — 9pm

*Exhibition dates:  
March 12th through April 12th*



### Gallery II Collaborative Group Photography Show

*Exhibition dates March 18th through April 12th*

Bevin Bering  
Catherine Cameron  
Marie Docher  
Oyvind Hjelmen

Peter Tonningsen  
Angilee Wilkerson  
Pablo Gimenez - Zapiola  
Joe Baraban



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For more information, contact Catherine Couturier at John Cleary Gallery

[martycardenphotographs.com](http://martycardenphotographs.com)

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## John Cleary Gallery



## Fine Art Photography

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## BOOK REVIEW

# Looking at the U.S. 1957-1986 Photographs by Frederick Baldwin and Wendy Watriss



*Looking at the U.S. 1957-1986*  
Photographs by Frederick Baldwin  
and Wendy Watriss  
Mets & Schilt uitgevers, 2009.  
207 pp., \$65

Thousands of contemporary photographers and art collectors know Fred Baldwin and Wendy Watriss as the high-energy couple who curate, organize and host FotoFest, the world's best international photo festival that takes place every two years in Houston.

What comes as a pleasant surprise, however, is to discover the tremendous photographic output that the two have generated themselves over the past 40 years, working both individually and collaboratively as photographers, journalists and activists for human rights and social justice.

An excellent retrospective book, *Looking at the U.S. 1957-1986*, offers an extended look at nearly three decades of cultural and political life in the United States. The work touches on some of the most important U.S. historical moments of the last half century such as the Civil

Rights Movement, the Ku Klux Klan, Agent Orange, the Vietnam War Memorial, and more. They traveled with and photographed well-known figures from that era, including Martin Luther King Jr., John F. Kennedy and Robert Kennedy.

They have also immersed themselves in local issues in various parts of the South. Over an extended period of 13 years of self-initiated investigations, they have documented rural life, poverty and the struggles for survival and dignity in small communities throughout Texas. The photos are rich in humanity and very quiet in drama. They are not typical news photographs. Instead, they reveal complex stories in a matter-of-fact way that is quite refreshing. The long-term personal involvement in their subject matter allowed them to photograph in a very intimate manner. And that close-up, relaxed reality keeps these photos alive and stimulating today.

Xavier Canonne, who organized this retrospective, writes in his introduction: "They worked in concentric circles, discovering and recording moments of daily life, the evidences of social class, and the


ceremonies – religious, scholarly, social and sportive – that shape collective existence and reflect its origins. Everything in this work has informative value: people's dress, their hair, their food, their way of standing in front of the lens or ignoring it..."

Each photo series is introduced by short, concise, insightful text written by the photographers themselves. In an excellent interview at the end of the book, Fred Baldwin and Wendy Watriss talk of many issues; they speak articulately and passionately about their personal beliefs. At one point, Wendy discusses their work in the context of the U.S. today:

*What is depicted in these works is still relevant today. One of the young African American men who assisted Fred in working with the Civil Rights Movement in Savannah was the first black student to integrate Armstrong Junior College in Savannah. This man is now Mayor of Savannah. This story is very relevant to the current U.S. president, and what Barack Obama says he stands for.*

*The realities and results of the Vietnam War interconnect with much of what is happening to U.S. soldiers in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars – and certainly the official treatment of veterans' health and psychological problems related to these wars and the first Gulf War.*

*Certainly, the histories and ways of life we photographed in Texas 20-30 years ago continue to be relevant to contemporary political and social developments in Texas and the United States.*

This book is an important reminder of the power of photography (and personal activism) and how it can affect positive change, directly or indirectly. Anyone who is interested in the history of the United States, human rights and documentary photography will find value in this work. 

*Jim Casper, editor and publisher*  
Lens Culture  
[www.lensculture.com](http://www.lensculture.com)





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## Letters to the Editor

Hello *spot*,

The image shown on top of page 16 of "Mathew Brady" was actually photographed by Timothy O'Sullivan on July 6, 1863. O'Sullivan was working for Alexander Gardner and both worked to create a document called "Gardner's Photographic Sketchbook of the War."

To see the entire photographic image with O'Sullivan's and Gardner's credit lines go to <http://rnc.library.cornell.edu/7milVol/570/plate36.html>. The same image by O'Sullivan may also be viewed by going to Library of Congress images of American Civil War.

The image is striking and on close examination, you may notice that corpses have begun to bloat. Mathew Brady's men did not arrive on scene until July 10, well after all war dead had been interred. O'Sullivan and Gardner began photographing images on July 4, one day after battle. The claim that image was taken by Brady on same day of battle doesn't hold much water in light of the fact that bodies within the extant image had already bloated and discolored; that wouldn't have been so on first day of battle.

Even after 140 years, keeping the record straight seems important since many Civil War images are mistakenly credited to Mathew Brady. So it goes,

Wade Crowder  
Dallas



Timothy O'Sullivan, *Harvest of Death, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, 1863*

Searching for the name of the photograph as listed in the Library of Congress will uncover many, many copies of this image attributed to Mathew Brady. Two of the most prevalent series are in features called "10 Photographs That Changed the World" and "13 Photographs That Changed the World," both of which credit Brady and tell the same general story I told in *spot*. But here's one place (<http://godgunsandgrits.blogspot.com/2009/04/scenes-from-forgotten-war-like-ghosts.html>) that says "His name was Timothy O'Sullivan and many of the photos of the American Civil War which were credited to Mathew Brady were actually taken by O'Sullivan on the battlefields. He worked for Brady and sent his glass-plate negatives to Brady in New York, who etched his name on the plates." O'Sullivan called the picture "Harvest of Death." You can see more about it at <http://www.getty.edu/art/gettyguide/artObjectDetails?artobj=64592>.

David Crossley  
Editor, *spot* Fall 2009

## BOOK REVIEW

# Hard Knocks: Rolling with the Derby Girls Photographs by Shelley Calton.

*Hard Knocks: Rolling with the Derby Girls*  
Photographs by Shelley Calton. Foreword  
by Tracy Xavia Karner.  
Kehrer Verlag, 2009. 96 pp., \$38.

Shelley Calton's latest book, *Hard Knocks* (2009) is an outsider's look inside the contemporary Houston Roller Derby scene. Through a series of photojournalistic images, the female athletes appear as one might imagine: tough, sexual, intense women who skate hard, who adopt burlesque personas like "Agent Belligerent" or "disMae West," and who don't give much away. But looking beyond the expectations that roller derby may connote, this body of work is particularly revealing when situated in another context, one that reveals the nascent implications of Calton's seemingly straightforward project.


In the relatively short history of photography, there is a force with which ideas, subjects and formal languages recur. It is most evident in works such as *After Walker Evans*, an endeavor by Sherrie Levine that involved re-photographing a group of images made decades earlier by Walker Evans, or in Kenneth Josephson's series *History of Photography*, with its references to other photographers. These types of projects inevitably invite one to think about the original images that inspired them, as well as the relevance of their contemporary re-appropriation or re-appearance. In the case of Calton's book, there are at least two forebears to consider: *GUAPA (Good Looking)* by Tracey Moffatt and *Carnival Strippers* by Susan Meiselas. Reviewing these works as a triumvirate tells us something about how *Hard Knocks* adds to a larger dialogue about the practice of reading photographs.

*Hard Knocks* shares its subject matter, women's roller derby, with Moffatt's *GUAPA (Good Looking)*, a project produced in 1995. Completed about ten years before Calton finished her photographs for *Hard Knocks*, *GUAPA* offers a more stylized, critical perspective on the sport. Moffatt,

an Australian artist who made her project while living in Texas, employed models to recreate the spectacle of violence that defines roller derby. Because the women in *GUAPA* appear against a white background, isolated from the context of the rink, the raw physicality of the sport becomes all that you see. The idea that roller derby is theatre was not lost on Calton while making *Hard Knocks*, but it also was not the primary interest. Her documentary approach toward the women of the Houston Roller Derby implies an attraction to the grit and the passion of the sport.

Decades before *GUAPA* and *Hard Knocks*, there was Susan Meiselas' *Carnival Strippers* (1976). As its title indicates, this book features women who strip and dance on the carnival circuit. Their profession, like roller derby, is based on an inherently physical, sexualized performance. The format of Meiselas' book, whereby images of the strippers in action comprise one section and portraits of those women are grouped in another, is mirrored in *Hard Knocks*. Calton begins her book with a dark set of portraits of nine women from the Houston Roller Derby;

then, she guides readers inside the rink. In both this book and in *Carnival Strippers*, the women take center stage in a series of less-than-glamorous scenes, their bodies sprawled and displayed before the camera without much affectation.

Among these three bodies of work about women, there is a common point of intersection and separation in the erotics of looking at such photographs. After Meiselas recognized her subjects as individuals with stories to tell and attempted to show them as anti-erotic subjects, and after Moffatt fictionalized and posed women to represent the artifice of performance, Calton seems to realize that her subjects, tackling gender differences and expectations through their sport, essentially help viewers to think about the naturalized, sexualized codes of looking at photographs. *Hard Knocks* acknowledges that there is a history to photography, and that it doesn't repeat itself. 

Amanda Maddox  
Assistant Curator of Photography  
and Media Arts  
Corcoran Gallery of Art







## Sharon Joines Wharton County Texas

By Peter Brown

Sharon Joines has lived in the small town of Wharton, Texas, for the past thirty-six years and has photographed Wharton and its surrounding county for the last five. Her work is wide ranging and her photographs are revealing, truthful and speak to this small community's breadth. They open the land and its people to the viewer in subtle and sympathetic ways and they are lyrically beautiful and often gently funny. According to Joines, photographing Wharton County is a lifetime project and given the considerable access and trust that she has developed over the years, an archive of depth has already begun to emerge. Wharton was home to the playwright Horton Foote who once advised Sharon in relation to her work, "Be sure to avoid theatrics." Horton Foote avoided "theatricality" in his plays which are transparent descriptions of life in Wharton. I think that Sharon Joines has done the same with her photographs. Quite simply, they show life as it is lived in this small but resonant part of our world.

Sharon Joines' *Wharton County* is on exhibit  
 March 12 - April 25, 2010, at Stern and Bucek Architects,  
 1610 Commerce Street, Houston, Texas.

This from Sharon Joines:

*Wharton County; 60 miles southwest of Houston;  
 population 41,000; 1090 square miles*

When I first came to Wharton I was referred to as "that girl from Houston" and it fit, because I really was a city girl with a slightly superior attitude. After I married a native Whartonian I was called "Tom's wife." A few years later when our children were born, I was identified as their mother and shortly after this, people began to call me Sharon which I considered progress. Today, along with most of the people in and around Wharton, I have developed a deep respect and love for this place, its history and its people.

The true character of a place does not fully reveal itself until a relationship is built. It is also true that a relationship built on trust is not gained easily or quickly. The images I am making are a testimony to what I have come to believe make life in a small town unique. The experience has proven to be both liberating and full of lessons.

Since 2004 I have photographed the towns of Wharton, El Campo, Pierce, East Bernard, Boling, Iago, Glen Flora, Egypt, Bonus, Burr and Hungerford, to name a few. My purpose is to document Wharton County, recording the way the passage of time affects the place I call home.

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