

Vol. 2/No. 3
June 2012

Loupe

**Journal of the
Photographic
Resource Center**
at Boston University



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COVER PHOTOGRAPH

Jessica Ferguson, *Winter garden*
(constructed), pinhole cyanotype,
2010.

From the Publisher

As this issue of *Loupe* gets ready for press, all of us here at the PRC (staff, board, interns, volunteers, and members) are extremely busy getting ready for the New England Portfolio Reviews (May 11-12), *PRC in NYC* (May 16-20), *EXPOSURE* 2012 (June 5-July 18), and all of the other programs that we do over the course of the year—including *Loupe*.

In April, we sent out a survey to *Loupe* readers, and I want to thank everyone who replied. The responses have been overwhelming, encouraging, and enlightening. In addition to much praise and some criticism, the more common responses included: a) publish more frequently, b) include more members' work, c) add more pages, d) incorporate more in-depth and substantive essays, and interestingly, e) decrease the size. We liked the design of an oversized publication but apparently our readers find it difficult to shelve. While we cannot accommodate all the suggestions we received, we will do our best to be responsive to our readers and members.

One suggestion we have received frequently is to show more diversity of work. To that end, in this issue, we are focusing on alternative and non-traditional processes. Of the three portfolios in this issue, Jessica Ferguson's work is the most traditionally alternative, using large format pinhole cameras, handmade papers, and found objects to make photo sculptures. Michael Kolster uses an 8 x 10 inch view camera and a wet-plate collodion process to bring us a compelling social and ecological narrative of the Androscoggin River in Maine. And finally, Richard Sobol pairs up with Dominican painter and poet Riccardo Toribio to combine digitally captured inkjet prints and applied oil paint to create exotic photo paintings of traditional ways of life in the Dominican Republic. As the photo world becomes more digital, we are finding a greater interest older traditional methods. At the PRC we are committed to exploring all types of serious investigations of photographic practice.

My heartfelt appreciation goes out to Janelle Lynch, guest editor of this issue and author of our feature essay, "A Digital Legacy: Christine Elfman in Context." Lynch recently exhibited her own masterful photographs at the PRC in *Los Jardines de México* this past winter. (see www.bu.edu/prc/exhibit/exhibit2011_lynch.htm)

Glenn Ruga

PRC Executive Director & Loupe Publisher

Jessica Ferguson

Photo Objects

I believe in honoring and attending to our inner geography, the landscape of our imagination.

—Jessica Ferguson

Bones, stones, book boards, and texts—these are just some of the myriad objects that Jessica Ferguson collects and uses to construct ephemeral tableaux, which she then photographs with a pinhole camera. To make her “photo objects,” as she refers to them, she takes the image of the assemblage and collages it with found text or diagrams onto antique book board covers, sometimes layering fabric and other relics. In *Memling Columns*, made with a cyanotype of the Northern Renaissance painter, Hans Memling, a dried flower adhered under the image reads as a tribute, giving the viewer a clue about Ferguson’s influences.

Ferguson also draws from her background in weaving, collage, and papermaking. She doesn’t have training in photography, but she does cite David Hockney, Olivia Parker, and Rosamund Purcell’s photocollages, still lifes, and constructions as among her early inspirations. She took a pinhole photography workshop in the early 1980s because she wanted to make her own images rather than use found ones and she has been working with the camera, which she also makes, since then. Ferguson prints the negatives and then she integrates them with the other materials onto book boards. She has loved books since early childhood—reading them, coloring in them, experimenting with them by seeing how they would change if left outdoors—so it is logical that she incorporates them in her art practice and that her final pieces have weight and texture.

Walking through her studio, Ferguson intuitively chooses the objects for her construction, selecting items that resonate—that have significance alone or in dialogue with another object. Light plays an important role in her process, too. Ferguson considers the object’s physical characteristics and how light will reflect off of its surface.

Ferguson prints on hand-sensitized artist papers using the cyanotype process, the same chemistry from which blueprints are made. There is an inherent historical connection in her choice of this printing method, as it is what Anna Atkins used in 1839 to make the first photographically illustrated book, *Photographs of British Algae*. Ferguson also uses the ziatype, a variation of the platinum and palladium processes, as well as the argyrotype, adapted from the 1842 iron-silver argentotype process and related to the more commonly known sepia print.

There is a handmade quality to Ferguson’s photo objects that endows them with a deeply personal nature. The antique boards, book pages, and exposed binding invite a reading of the image. Each suggests an homage to a person or place—some lost, all loved—or a reference to an unfulfilled wish or perhaps a monument to an experience or a dream. They have an antiquated feeling, which is countered by the timelessness of such expressions.

In 2011, Ferguson’s photo objects were exhibited at the Fox Talbot Museum in the United Kingdom, which acquired *Tome XXIV* for their permanent collection. She enriches her studio practice by curating, teaching at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts and participating in international art exchanges, most recently related to the pinhole camera in Poland. Ferguson’s current such project, *Al-Mutanabbi Street Starts Here*, is in remembrance of the 2007 Baghdad car bombing in its historic area of booksellers and seeks to contribute to the rebuilding of what was lost that day.

—JL

Jessica Ferguson’s photo objects combine her handmade pinhole photographs with found papers, antique book boards, and other materials. She uses a variety of large format pinhole cameras and films, sometimes with a 19th century lens, and makes contact prints on handmade papers.

Tome XXIV, pinhole argyrotype, 2010.

Jessica Ferguson



Open book/figure (constructed), pinhole cyanotype, 2010.

Blue "E" (constructed), pinhole cyanotype (waxed), 2008.



The in the

in the

Jessica Ferguson



Blue moon (diptych) (constructed), pinhole cyanotype, 2006.

Eve/2 skulls (constructed), pinhole ziatype (gold-toned), 2010.

Fig. 2.

Fig. 3.

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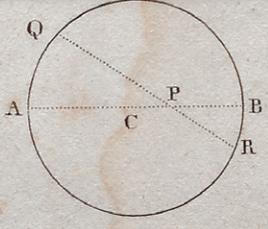
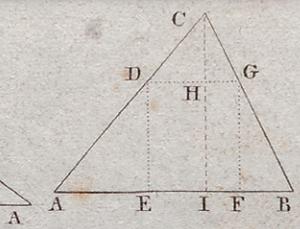
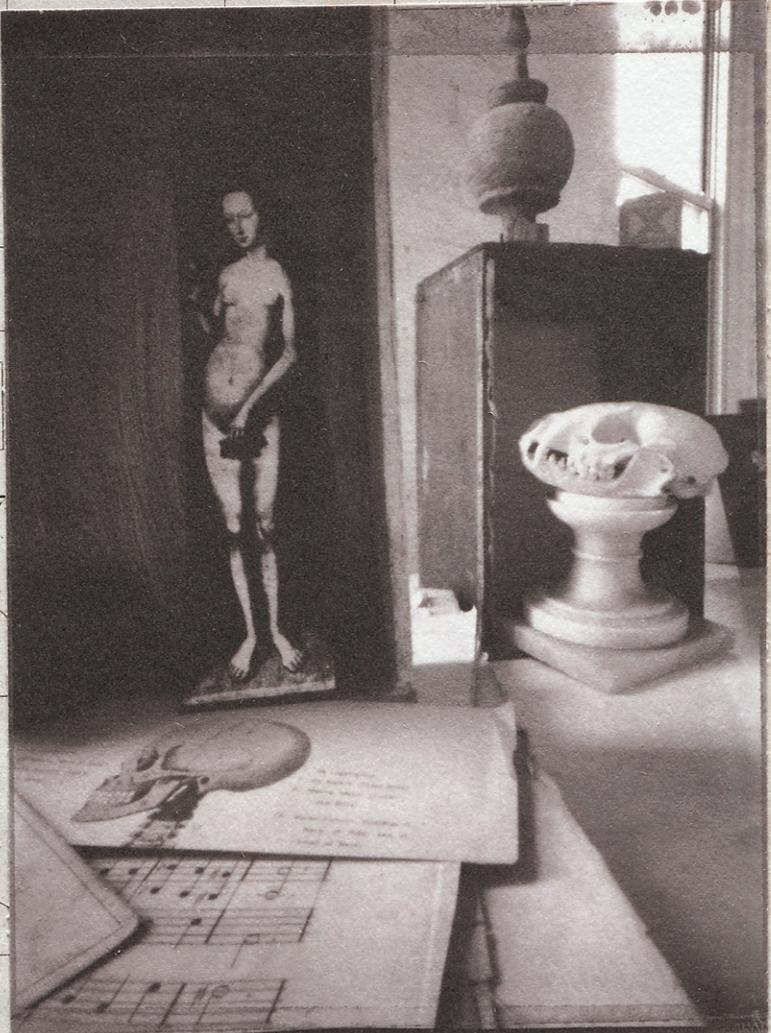
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Fig. 4.

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Fig. 7.



Jessica Ferguson



Excerpt (constructed), pinhole cyanotype, 2006.

Memling/columns (constructed), pinhole argyrotpe, 2003 (refurbished 2010).



Michael Kolster

A River Lost and Found:

The Androscoggin River in Time and Place

In 1971, Wendell Berry, the conservationist, poet and philosopher wrote *The Unforeseen Wilderness* advocating for the preservation of Kentucky's Red River Gorge. Ralph Eugene Meatyard's (1925-1972) evocative photographs of the landscape accompanied the text.

About the photographic artist, Berry wrote, "His search is a pilgrimage, for he goes along ways he does not fully understand, in search of what he does not expect and cannot anticipate. His understanding involves a profound humility... he has done away with expectations, he has ceased to make demands upon the place."

In his current series, *A River Lost and Found: The Androscoggin River in Time and Place*, Michael Kolster embodies the perspective of both of these men as he approaches his subject with respect and an open mind. He is at once an explorer seeking to learn about the environment in which he's chosen to make his home, as well as an image-maker intent on seeing, without preconception, the natural world.

A River Lost and Found is a collaborative project with Matthew Kingle, an environmental historian and a colleague at Bowdoin College, where Kolster has taught photography since he moved to Brunswick, Maine in 2000. Kolster makes images and videos, Klinger writes essays, and together they research archives and record oral histories of those who have a connection to the river.

For nearly four years, Kolster has photographed along sixty miles of the Androscoggin and its environs in color and black and white using film and digital technologies. In the last year, he has also incorporated the ambrotype into his practice. Employing his cameras as, what Berry called, instruments of perception or discovery, Kolster came to know the river, infamous for its extreme contamination as well as for inspiring the 1972 Clean Water Act.

Last year, Kolster was drawn to the ambrotype after identifying parallels between the Androscoggin's history and the alternative process, connecting its invention in 1851 with the period of industrialization that led to the river's demise. Ambrotypes are made on polished glass plates, coated with a collodion emulsion and a layer of silver nitrate, rendering them light-sensitive. After the wet plate is exposed, processed and dried, it is finished with a varnish. Kolster uses an 8 x 10 inch view camera to expose the plates and, when in the landscape, a portable darkroom to prepare and process them. They are highly detailed images on glass from which prints can also be made.

As his extensive inquiry and poetic vision suggest, Kolster has formed a bond with and commitment to the river—not to save it, as was the quest of Berry and Meatyard in relation to the Red River Gorge, but to dignify it, perhaps for the first time in its sullied history. Together, his ambrotypes are imbued with a relentless wish to understand the place, the changes that have occurred there and how they affect and are a mirror of life.

An exhibition of *A River Lost and Found* will open in July 2012 at the Bowdoin College Museum of Art and in November 2012 at the College of Southern Maryland. Kolster is pursuing a concurrent project, along the James River in Virginia, in collaboration with the painter, Erling Sjøvold.

—JL

Michael Kolster's ambrotypes are made with an 8 x 10 inch camera using the wet-plate collodion process.

*Just as much as the water flowing over your feet
is ever changing, something of the river remains.*

—Michael Kolster



Tree Partially Submerged, Gulf Island Pond, Greene, ME, 2011.



Pejeboscot Dam (diptych), Brunswick, ME, 2011.



Culvert, Brunswick, ME, 2011.



Overlook, Great Falls, Auburn, ME, 2011.



*Above Great Falls (triptych),
Auburn, ME, 2011.*



Gulf Island Pond, Turner, ME, 2011.



View of Bates Mill from Auburn (diptych), Auburn, ME, 2011.



Tree in Water Gulf Island Pond (diptych), Greene, ME, 2011.



Trees 4, Canoe Portage (diptych), Brunswick, ME, 2011.

Richard Sobol

Island of Dreams

After a few brush strokes he stepped back and nodded, understanding what I was envisioning.

—Richard Sobol

Richard Sobol's lyrically-painted photographs are vibrant, often fantastic depictions of the Dominican Republic and the people—and animals—that live there.

They conjure Charles Burchfield's watercolors, Gabriel Garcia Márquez's novels as well as 19th-century hand-colored photographic prints. His collaborator is Ricardo Toribio, a native painter and poet.

Their venture began in 2004 when Sobol was traveling in the Dominican Republic and saw an exhibition of Toribio's paintings in a small rural museum. Sobol was struck by how the work manifested his own perception of the place—spirited, warm, open, and free, despite its constraints. Sobol had a mutual friend arrange a dinner with Toribio and, following that, they met in the painter's studio, where Sobol presented him with five large photographs and asked if he would paint on them. They have collaborated for eight years now during Sobol's trips to the Caribbean. When they aren't in the studio together, they are traveling. Toribio is a musician as well, and music is an important part of their journeys.

For more than three decades, Sobol has enjoyed a varied and successful career as a documentary photographer, photojournalist, children's book author, and leader of international workshops for youth about wildlife conservation. From 1999-2004, he chronicled the planning and construction of a new Frank Gehry building at MIT and was privy to the extraordinary amount of collaboration involved in the project. He cites this experience as the impetus for his overture to Toribio to work collaboratively.

Sobol's images in *Island of Dreams* are made with a digital camera and printed on ink jet paper. They authentically depict—and capture the spirit of—quotidian life, celebrating its tradition, color, beauty, and joyfulness. These are the inherent qualities of the culture that drew Sobol to it and that compel him to return—in addition to its love of

music and dance. His subjects are people of different generations, animals of varying breeds—a boy and grandfather awaiting customers at their roadside drink stand, a pig in background; a donkey and motorcycle parked on the street, side by side; and a woman toting a tub of fried chicken, perhaps on her way to the market. The narrative potential is vast, but the essence of the images is the same—an embrace of what is most dear. And in this tropical landscape, that is the sun, sea, and all that lives between. Sobol eloquently captures the Dominicans' appreciation for simplicity, because of his regard for the same.

Toribio uses oil paint and his gestures are simple, decorative, often repetitive swirls of color that animate the sky or water, much like Burchfield did in his landscapes. But the Dominican does it with a childlike whimsy whereas the American's strokes were forceful and determined. Toribio's markings add even more life to the lush tropical vegetation, a street vendor's chestnut hair and the façade of a *tienda*. His introduction of fanciful detail elevates Sobol's narrative beyond the confines of realism and draws on the magic of Caribbean culture.

Island of Dreams has been exhibited at the Museum at Altos De Chavon and at galleries in Santo Domingo and Sosua, all in the Dominican Republic.

—JL

Richard Sobol uses a digital camera and makes 24 x 36 inch photographs with an inkjet printer. His collaborator, Ricardo Toribio, adds oil paint to the surface.





Street Scene, San Jose de los Matos, Dominican Republic, 2005.

Richard Sobol



Perla, La Vega, Dominican Republic, 2007.



Sosua, Dominican Republic, 2007.

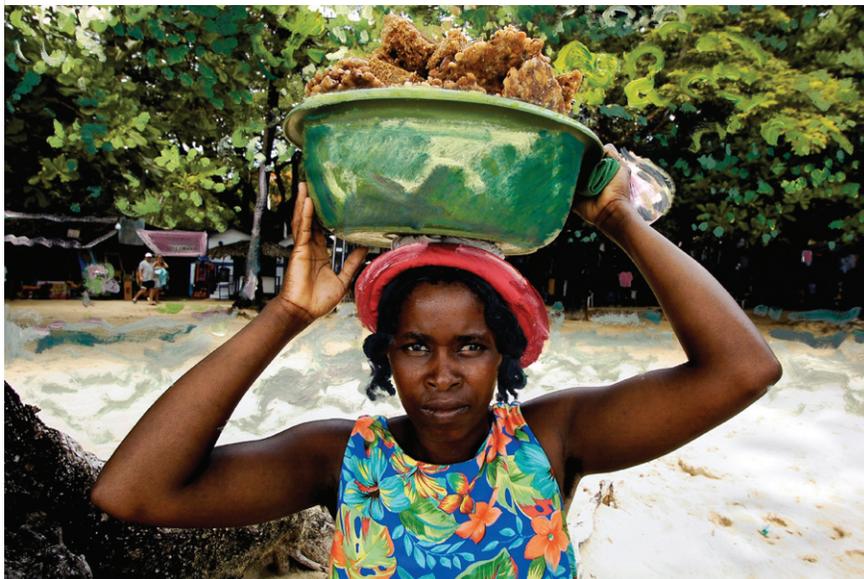


Semana, Dominican Republic, 2006.

Richard Sobol



Lucie, Sosua, Dominican Republic, 2008.



Cabarete, Dominican Republic, 2009.



Street Scene, Higuey, Dominican Republic, 2008.





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The Photographic Resource Center is a vital forum for the exploration, interpretation, and celebration of new work, ideas, and methods in photography. We inspire our members and the broader community with thought-provoking exhibits, educational programs, and resources that support the advancement of the photographic arts.

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Printed by DS Graphics, Lowell, MA

ISSN 2156-7050
Volume 2, Number 3
June 2012

Published thrice yearly (October, February, and June) by Photographic Resource Center at Boston University
832 Commonwealth Avenue
Boston, MA 02215
T: 617-975-0600 info@prcboston.org
F: 617-975-0606 www.prcboston.org

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A Digital Legacy: Christine Elfm

by Janelle Lynch

Contemporary photographers are exercising an enhanced freedom to realize their visions, as seen in the work by Jesseca Ferguson, Michael Kolster and Richard Sobol, featured in this issue. Today's image-makers are liberally experimenting with the latest tools and materials, introducing new working methodologies and revitalizing historic practices. Technological advancements have energized the field and are inspiring innovation that evokes the spirit of the medium's early years.

Allison Nordström, Curator at George Eastman House and juror of the PRC's 2012 juried exhibition, recently explained, "It seems the digital turn has expanded the field for photographic artists. In addition to the new technologies, artists can now draw from all the media, methods and imagery of the past, suiting the way of making an image to the desired look and implications of the work."

As Nordström alludes, another outcome of the technological developments is the revival of alternative processes—a return to a handcrafted, more intimate approach to making images. I asked Dan Estabrook and France Scully Osterman, both



Mark Osterman and France Scully Osterman, *View from Talbot's Grave*, from *The Light at Lacock* series, pigment print from photogenic drawing negative. 38 x 48 inches. © Scully & Osterman, Courtesy of Tilt Gallery, Phoenix, AZ.

Artists can now draw from all the media, methods and imagery of the past, suiting the way of making an image to the desired look and implications of the work.

Allison Nordström
Curator, George Eastman House

master practitioners and teachers of alternative processes, about the renewed interest.

Estabrook said, "I do see a hunger in young artists that may be related to the rise in digital media, or it may be related to the fact that something is being lost as we watch it disappear—that chemical photography, even the black and white print, is

really a dead technique."

Scully Osterman said that she finds some people choosing alternative processes because, "They think that it's going to be what makes their work interesting. We understand why our students fall in love with it—we try to push them further." She also sees students choosing them for the same reasons that she and her husband, Mark Osterman, did for their own practices in the early 1990s.

"You're making everything, it's very tactile, you have ultimate control and, in some ways, there's serendipity, which plays a role. Every time you handle it, you're affecting the final outcome. Every step

Janelle Lynch is a large-format photographer, teacher, and freelance writer about photography based in New York. The PRC recently exhibited work from her monograph, *Los Jardines de México* (Radius Books, 2011). Forthcoming exhibition venues include the Southeast Museum of Photography, Daytona Beach, FL and Robert Morat Galerie, Berlin.

an in Context

is visual. It's a sensual process. But the process is just a tool. The image is what's most important. Finding the right marriage is essential."

Mark Osterman is also the Process Historian at George Eastman House where, for the last ten years, he has been researching 19th century processes ranging from Niépce's heliographs to gelatin emulsions. To Osterman, "Every one of them is magical. A digital image is also magical. They all require things that are beyond our scope to understand."

Christine Elfman is a San Francisco-based artist who employs an innovative approach to her work, using historic materials to contemplate timeless themes. Elfman took her first alternative processes course as an undergraduate at Cornell University in 2003. Following that, she worked for a year as Scully Osterman's intern, assisting with workshops and tutorials at Scully & Osterman Studio in Rochester, NY. Today she uses the wet-plate collodion and anotype processes, painting, film, as well as emulsion-based and digital photography to investigate remembrance and the desire to preserve the ephemeral.

In *Storydress II*, Elfman explores the relationship between photography and memory, which have been inextricably linked since the medium's inception. The series was inspired by Elfman's relationship with her great-grandmother and her autobiographical reminiscences, old family photographs, as well as found images of anonymous people for sale at flea markets.

During my conversation with Elfman, she described an experience looking at photographs with

I felt compelled to make photographs about the feeling of wanting to remember and wanting to be remembered, all the while embracing the constancy of change."

Christine Elfman

her great-grandmother that evoked Roland Barthes' personal account, in *Camera Lucida*, of engaging in the same ritual following his mother's death. Elfman's and Barthes' quests, however, are conceptually distinct. Elfman's is a contemplation of the universal desire to remember and be remembered, despite life's ephemeral nature, while Barthes' is an ontological investigation of the medium and a meditation on the absence inherent in it. What binds them is the emotional intensity of their respective pursuits, as well as their steadfast confrontation with loss.

"My great-grandmother was unable to clearly see the photographs because she was losing her sight, and she couldn't remember every detail, even if she had been able to see the images. It was difficult to remember who it was, where it was, or when it was. It was a bitter-sweet experience for both of us. Her advancing blindness revealed the underlying futility of the attempt to capture things in time. I felt compelled to make photographs about the feeling of wanting to remember and wanting to be remembered, all the while embracing the constancy of change."

Elfman recorded and transcribed her great-grandmother's stories, then shredded them—leaving some text in tact—to make a dress for the



Christine Elfman, *Cabinet Card #1*, from the series *Storydress II*, 2008, albumen print from wet-plate collodion negative, 4.25 x 6.5 inches. © Christine Elfman, Courtesy of the Artist

Christine Elfman, *Untitled #1*, from the series *Storydress II*, 2008, albumen print from wet-plate collodion negative. 6.5 x 8.5 inches. © Christine Elfman, Courtesy of the Artist

Continued on page 30.

By Erin Wederbrook Yuskaitis



A glimpse of Kristen Ashburn's and David Rochkind's work in *Global Health in Focus*. Photo by Glenn Ruga.

Global Health in Focus

This spring the PRC undertook an enormous three-part global health project, the brainchild of Executive Director Glenn Ruga. The project consisted of an exhibition entitled *Global Health in Focus*, a catalog publication, and a panel discussion on “Why Global Health Matters” held on March 7. This project aimed to educate our New England community about critical global health issues, utilizing documentary photography to offer direct insight into the individuals and communities affected.

From February 9 – March 24, 2012, *Global Health in Focus*, featuring the work of Kristen Ashburn, Dominic Chavez, and David Rochkind, occupied the PRC's main gallery. The exhibit focused on three of the greatest health challenges the world faces today: HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and access to clean water. Ashburn's provocative yet intimate photographs of people with HIV/AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa were presented in Duratran light boxes causing the images to glow from the inside, providing a truly haunting effect. The images Chavez took in Africa and Haiti of streams and rivers polluted with obscene amounts of garbage—and the people whose lives are affected—struck right to the heart and mind of the viewer. Roch-

kind's poignant and colorful photographs of the tuberculosis epidemic in South Africa, India, and Moldova provided an educational component in addition to an emotional understanding of the faces behind the statistics. Each photographer noticed the humanistic and commonplace parts of daily life that transcend ethnicity, socioeconomic status, religion, and health: bathing, playing, sleeping, thinking, hugging, surviving. *Global Health in Focus* did not portray cold, impersonal statistics of global disease; instead the featured photographs made the remote and abstract into a vital and urgent call for action.

The *Global Health in Focus* exhibition catalog features an essay by Stefanie Friedhoff, Director of Special Projects for the Nieman Foundation for Journalism at Harvard University, in which she explores the history and current state of “global health” and discusses the role of photojournalism in securing a way forward for these international concerns. The 32 color page catalog is still available for purchase. If interested, please contact the PRC.

The overarching goal of the “Why Global Health Matters” panel was to

bridge the arts, journalism, and medical communities by analyzing the ongoing universal concerns communicated in the exhibition and publication. By organizing and presenting this project, the PRC served as a resource not only for photographers but for professionals in the healthcare, human rights, and public policy fields, as well as demonstrating the power of the photographic image. The panelists included Jennifer Beard, PhD, MPH (BU School of Public Health); Dominic Chavez, featured photographer; Jonathan D. Quick, MD, MPH (President and CEO, Management Sciences for Health); and David Rochkind, featured photographer. Stefanie Friedhoff served as the moderator.

Recovery

Concurrent with *Global Health in Focus*, the PRC showcased the work of Willard Traub, a longtime PRC member, in our Members' Gallery. *Recovery* serves as a photographic meditation on affliction and rehabilitation, reflecting the artist's own experiences battling a rare form of blood cancer, and drawing on the strength of his talents as a photographer. Accompanied by poetry written during his recovery process, Traub's work offers an intimate view into a personal health crisis. This quiet yet evocative exhibit carefully examined the complications behind the healthcare industry of the United States by providing a private glimpse into the life of someone who relied on it.



Willard Traub stands in the Members Gallery featuring his work in *Recovery*. Photo by Glenn Ruga.



PRC 2012 Student Exhibition. Photo by Julie Kukharenko.

2012 Student Exhibition

From April 12 – May 5, 2012, the enormous and exciting annual Student Exhibition took over the PRC. This year's showcase featured 19 photography programs of the PRC's Institutional Members. The PRC's Institutional Membership is designed for universities and institutions that would like to fuel the creative process by taking advantage of the PRC's wide range of unique offerings. With this membership, the institutions' students have free, unlimited access to the PRC's gallery and library, in addition to free admission to all lectures and discounts on workshops. The PRC is thrilled to foster and maintain strong relationships with its participating Institutional Members. As in past years, each school was given the chance to select the specific pieces to be included in this exhibition in order to best represent its photography program. This year's Student Exhibition was comprised of 129 pieces of work, including two digital presentations.

New Thematic Approach to Programming

The PRC's January board meeting unveiled a new strategic plan for the organization. As the "new" PRC continues to find ways to offer unique opportunities for the New England

photography community, the strategic plan calls for the implementation of a thematic approach to programming. These cross-program themes reinforce big picture ideas about contemporary photography as well as strengthen the organization's focus within its exhibitions, lectures, workshops, and Nights at the PRC.

Women in Photography



Beth Hanks presents her work at Women in Photography Night. Photo by Marisol Marquez.

To kick off our spring Master Lecture Series, the PRC was absolutely thrilled to host renowned photography critic and historian Vicki Goldberg as the first speaker. On February 22, Goldberg lectured on the influence of women in the 20th century photography world, from Margaret Bourke-White to Nan Goldin to Barbara Kruger. Her presentation delighted the sold-out crowd and provided an interesting analytical and historical perspective on work produced by

female photographers. In conjunction with Goldberg's lecture, the PRC held Women in Photography Night on March 14 to celebrate work by contemporary female photographers. Hosted by local photographer and educator Lisa Kessler, five women presented their work to a warm and supportive audience. As the first Night at the PRC for the spring season, Women in Photography Night was also dedicated to the memory of Paula Lerner, a beloved member of the New England photo community.

Applied Creativity



Peter Vanderwarker demonstrates photo techniques at his workshop. Photo by Bruce Wahl.

Local architecture photographer Peter Vanderwarker presented a lecture on March 22 offering advice on how to break through mental and artistic blocks. His talk ranged from sharing the best food to eat during creative breakdowns, to analyzing some of his successful images, to discussing the best ways to enhance potentially un-creative projects. Additionally, Vanderwarker offered a weekend workshop expanding upon the ideas from his lecture and providing shooting assignments to the attendees to pump up their creative muscles. Vanderwarker's energy and enthusiasm encouraged participants to look for new ways to apply "learned" creativity to their daily lives as photographers.

Cutting Edge Technology

On April 18, Nathaniel Raymond of the Satellite Sentinel Project (SSP)

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Center Weighted

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presented the third Master Lecture of the spring, discussing SSP's role in monitoring human rights abuses in Sudan and Syria by utilizing satellite imaging. Raymond analyzed some of SSP's recent images, which can often be quite beautiful despite featuring horrific atrocities. Additionally, his talk outlined the relationship between human rights advocacy and photography. The use of satellite imaging is literally changing the face of war photography in the 21st century.

The Staying Power of the Photobook

Building on the momentum of the Indie Photobook Library's exhibition and Book Night at the PRC (both held in the fall), the PRC decided to expand programming based around the photobook by inviting Harvey Stein, a well-known New York City-based photographer and author of six photography books, to present a workshop at the PRC. On April 21, Stein discussed information needed to create a convincing presentation to a publisher and other pertinent topics in a morning seminar. During the afternoon session, Stein worked specifically with ten individuals, evaluating each participant's book project in a small, interactive group setting.

Workshop Assistantships

Last fall, the PRC began a new program to give emerging photographers the opportunity to work closely with master photographers through our Workshop Program. For our regularly scheduled workshops, we seek assistants who will serve as a representative of the PRC and the right-hand person of the presenter. These assistants not only handle administrative and audio/visual tasks, but they also photograph the workshop and write commentary for the PRC's blog (www.bostonphotographyfocus.org).

This program has been quite a success, and as a result, the workshop assistant positions have become quite competitive. We'd like to thank our most recent workshop assistants from the fall and spring: Paris Visone, Andrew McFarland, Stephanie Robb, David Finks, Bruce Wahl, and Michael Ruggiero.

Christine Elfman

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life-size sculpture she constructed using plaster casts and papier mâché. Although it's a female figure, it doesn't necessarily symbolize her great-grandmother, but perhaps the viewer, or Elfman herself.

Storydress II epitomizes a recent statement by Ariel Shanberg, Executive Director of The Center for Photography at Woodstock. "Photography has been freed from the responsibility of 'depicting images' and 'telling stories.' Increasingly, artists are exploring the ontology of the processes and establishing new languages. This dialogue within alternative practices is one of the great legacies of the digital revolution."

To create *Storydress II*, a poignant meditation on ephemerality, Elfman's grandfather built her a replica of an antique 6.5 x 8.5 inch field camera. With it, Elfman made wet-plate collodion negatives and then gold-toned albumen prints that she burnished onto antique cabinet card mounts. That was the most common process for portraiture in the 19th century. Appropriately, albumen prints tend to fade over time.

In addition to Barthes' writings, Elfman cites as influential to her practice Early Renaissance paintings of Mary Magdalene, Ingmar Bergman's and Andrei Tarkovsky's films, and the artist Tacita Dean's multi-disciplinary practice. Elfman also acknowledges the importance of her own work among conservators at George Eastman House and the Image Permanence Institute. "There I became interested in how I could make something that was about the desire to preserve things and the inherent futility in that. I think of it as taking time to make things that time takes away."

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Stream, Sea, and Clouds, Rodeo Lagoon, California, 1962, photograph by Ansel Adams. Collection, Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona. © 2011 The Ansel Adams Publishing Rights Trust.

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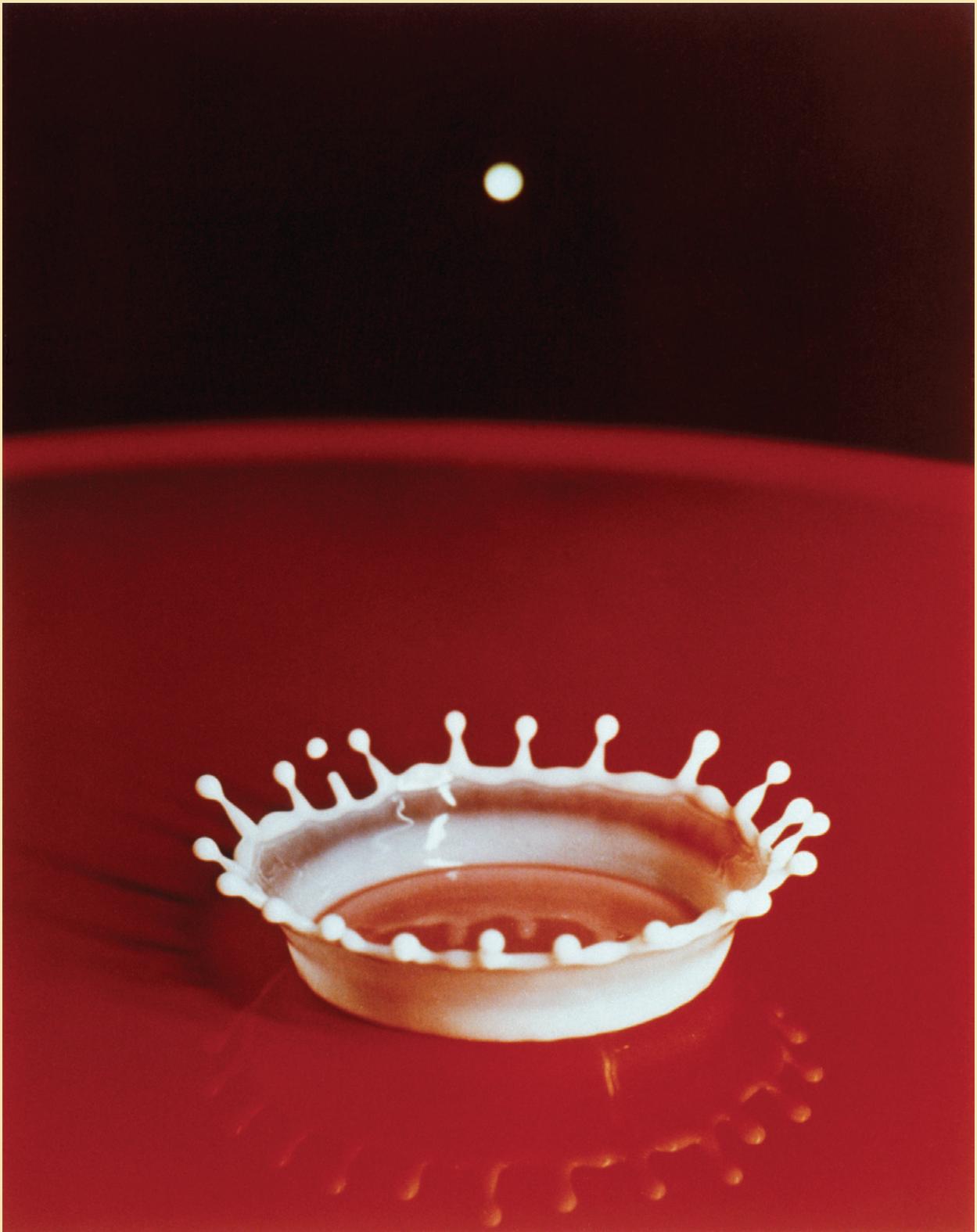
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