WINTER 2010

# imprints

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**On the Cover**

Congratulations to Erika Nusser who won this issue's cover competition! Here is more about the cover in her words:

Exploring female imagery has always been the source of inspiration for my photographic work. *Ginger is* from the series Behind Closed Doors, which is part of a larger series of portraits of burlesque performers in their homes. These photos capture private and intimate moments outside of the burlesque club.


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# From the Editor

imprints

Winter always brings with it the feeling that I want to hole up and just make art. In years past that has meant spending hours in the darkroom coating paper with cyanotype, platinum and SE2. Then hours more processing contact prints and toning and eventually getting one print that I thought really got at what I was after in the first place. My hands always bore traces of fixer and my clothes had splotches of blue and brown on them, and I loved every minute of it.

These days I spend hours in front of my computer messing around with images, not in the same ways, but in new, different and no less exciting ways. The things I can do with pixels are just as revelatory to me as were those days of alchemy in the chemical darkroom. They are parts of the whole of photography. They can inform each other and keep us moving forward as artists. We can choose one method over another or combine and re-combine in ever broadening spectrums of creation all the techniques we know. Just as a painter chooses her brushes, we can now choose not only the cameras and media, but also the techniques from traditional to digital, and from hand-applied to computer generated. All of this grows the art of photography into something ever evolving and ever interesting.

In this issue we revolved our minds around these sorts of ideas. We have interviews with photographers who range from Jill and Dan Burkholder who each approach photography in very different but equally reminiscent manners, to thoughts by several of our members on why they have chosen one form over another exclusively. An article by David Ruskin on hand-coloured photographs, an interview with Kate Somers, a Curator about what art is in general and several more practical pieces on how to write a review and an artist statement. We also have your ideas, dear members, about what the "Art of Photography" means to you.

We also held our first call for cover art for this issue and will continue to do so in future issues. It was gratifying to see the range of works sent to us and we appreciate all the wonderful images we have such fun going through and happily arguing over. It was a hard choice for us but also led to some really interesting discussions about the nature of reading the photograph. Look for more on this both here and in future issues.

Cheers,

Amy Kosh
Editor-in-Chief

# *A Conversation with*
# Jill and Dan Burkholder

*by Amy Kosh*

*Amy Kosh sat down to talk with Jill and Dan Burkholder, two talented visual artists, on the art of photography.*

Jill and Dan Burkholder. Photo by Amy Kosh

**AK:** Let's talk about your ideas about the art of photography.

**DB:** Photography has always been a great place for people who like change. We started with Camera Lucida and in 100 years moved to fixing images to different materials. Now digital has energized the pace of change in the medium, and that's a really exciting moment to be living in.

**AK:** The idea of craft has come up in almost every discussion of photography lately. When you see pieces that are done well, whether a painting, sculpture or digital photograph, there is a sense of craftsmanship to the work.

**DB:** I'm glad you brought that up. There is almost a rebellion in the fine art world against craft and beauty. We know there doesn't have to be craft or beauty for art to be created, but an article in the NY Times pointed out that even when we don't know the sociology of the time or the aesthetic conceits in very old works, we see the craft with which the pieces were created. I think people are hungry for it.

**AK:** In the days of silver printing, we'd go into the darkroom and do wonderful things with film and chemicals; different techniques to get a certain look to the prints. That was the craftsmanship of it. How can we get that sense of craft to be recognized in the digital age?

**DB:** There is no virtue to difficulty. Some people think lugging a big camera around makes them artists. In the right hands big cameras are great tools, but in others hands they are just big cameras. Making the process difficult doesn't make your art better.

**AK:** Both of you work at different ends of photography. Jill, you're working with encaustic and Dan, you're shooting with an iPhone. Yet Dan's work has the look and feel of painting, and Jill is using a classic painting technique on digital photographs. There's a really interesting place where both of these ends of the spectrum meet.

**JB:** In mine, the image spits right out of a digital printer. So I start with the technological layer.

**DB:** We are both drawn to the textural quality in each other's work, but I could never do what Jill does. I have no skills working with those kinds of classic materials.

**JB:** It is always a dance between classical style and the future of photography. One of my favorite examples is the lovely but odd way I work in Bromoil. I shoot digitally, make a digital negative, then take it into the classic darkroom, bleach and then do the ink and brushwork.

**DB:** At times we take these completed Bromoil prints and use a flatbed scanner to capture all the textural qualities, and then make a large inkjet print which sometimes shows better than the original. So there you have a fully circular process.

**JB:** The exciting question for photographers becomes "what do you like to do"? That's different than in the past for photography where you might have had to put up with something in the process that you hated just to get to where you wanted to go. Now there are a number of different roads that will get you to an almost identical point. I think that's really liberating.

**DB:** We have the ability to hybridize the process. Maybe that's part of the rebellion against craft. Maybe craft has become so heavily associated with the computer that people think they have to be anti-computer. That it's too technical. The strength and the curse of photography is that it is the most democratic. But that leads to the attitude of saying, "I could do that if I had the right camera, printer, etc..." That leaves out the eye, hand and creative vision of the artist.

**AK:** When you are drawn to a photographic image, what is the initial aspect that draws you in?

**JB:** For me there has to be something that's unsaid. It has to have that element of mystery. Another layer that is open to questions. So I feel like I'm not seeing the whole meaning at first glance.

**DB:** Which is why "calendar art" will never be fine art. There's no room for the viewer and the story is all told. Art gives the viewer just enough and no more. If you tell too much you have taken the soul out of the work.

**AK:** Dan, some would say that all landscapes fall into that trap. As a landscape photographer, what is the unseen thing that you say in your work?

**DB:** Beauty and visual intrigue have been the two elements I have pursued. There has to be a balance between the two in every image and I am still trying to answer that for myself.

**AK:** As artists we seem to have a hard time talking about why a certain piece succeeds for us. For instance if you are a street photographer you have control over light, shadow, contrast and color. But most people don't consider that. They don't see the original scene next to your print so they can't see "aha! Now I see what you did and how your vision of the scene was different".

**DB:** How do you put your vision into those shots? How do you make them your own?

**JB:** If it's a straight treatment then it always is a matter of topic and composition to put that mark in there. But you'd have to see more than one image to see what the photographer was trying to do. Something that makes me respond, "oh, I didn't think of that".

**DB:** And you are tickled that the artist saw it that way. The challenge then becomes to work with "I wish I had seen it that way" without replicating the piece.

**JB:** The flip side of looking at that kind of artwork is that it gives you fresh eyes. The best people can tell you why the some pieces work and others do not.

**DB:** That's where it gets back to craft. Whether you are learning the grammar and syntax the tools of your trade or that you know them and are using them

**AK:** How do you define the art of photography for yourself? What's the art?


Fryman, by Jill Skupin-Burkholder

Fall Colors, by Dan Burkholder

**JB:** The art is being able to create a visual item that presents the same visual image you have in your mind and to transmit that to the viewer.

**DB:** Setting that sense of wonder adrift repeatedly and successfully.

*Notes on the processes that Dan and Jill use.*

*1. Bromoil is a direct variety of the Oil Print process. One starts with a normally developed print on a silver bromide paper which is then chemically bleached and hardened. The gelatin that originally had the darkest tones, is hardened the most, the highlights remain absorbent to water. This print can then be inked like the oil print.*

*2. Platinum printing over Gold Leaf is hand-coated platinum/palladium sensitizer brushed onto a thin vellum paper treated for maximum translucency. The 24K gold leaf is applied to the back-side of the print.*

## GURU'S CORNER

### *You have questions. We have answers.*

**I am going on an adventure trip and can only bring one lens. Which should I bring?**
This all depends on how and what you shoot. You can choose to take a "zoom" lens that will give you a choice of focal lengths at the cost of sharpness. Good all purpose "zooms" are 35mm-90mm or 75mm-120mm. Alternately you can go for a fixed focal length lens that will be sharper but give you less diversity. Good ones here would be a wide angle like 24mm or 28mm. Again it depends mostly on what and how you tend to visualize your subjects.

**I want to set up an inexpensive studio lighting system. Do you have any advice?**
Yes, and this is from our "in house" lighting guy. 1. Consider what you shoot most and will you need strobes or continuous (hot lights) lighting. 2. Do you need portability? 3. What accessories are available for the lighting sets, i.e. softboxes, booms, reflectors, etc. 4. Kits offer greater value than buying set ups as ala carte. Most manufacturer offer a beginner kit that includes stands, etc.

**Is there a "rule of thumb" for matting an image, i.e., what size matte goes best with what size print?**
The rule of thumb is to have no less than 2" around the image with the top and sides being equal in width. One generally mats in the next standard size up from the image size, so 5x7 goes in an 8x10 mat, 8x10 in an 11x14, 11x 14 in a 16x20 etc. You can break this and go larger in mat sizing of course. These are generally accepted as the minimums for matting.

# Photo-Based Collage

## *A CONVERSATION*

*By Karen Corrigan*

The creative impulse is all-encompassing, from the first hand print smudged on a cave wall to the improbable gesture today of positioning Jeff Koons' sculptures in the garden of the Palace of Versailles. Photo-based collage is an equally evolving concept, pushing the boundaries of photography in new directions. From within the overreaching saturation of imagery in society today a new paradigm for photography is emerging. Visual representation is no longer the same as it was in the beginning.

The first glimmer of possibility began with an inverted image in the back of a camera obscura. Painters used the images as outlines for their drawings and paintings. Within decades of the viability of photography (1860-1870), creative middle and upper-class artists in the Victorian era were using carte de visite, watercolors and other materials as elements in photo collages.* Around 1902, Alfred Stieglitz's Pictorialist envisaged photography as an art just as worthy of attention as painting. An aspiration that took a few decades more to achieve, yet at the same time helped painting itself to evolve. Around 1912, Picasso and Georges Braque revolutionized painting and can be credited with making the first avant-garde collages. Other notable late 20th century artists, both painters and photographers, are not to be overlooked – Andy Warhol, David Hockney, Mark Rothko, Edward Weston, Marianne Brandt, Man Ray, Walker Evans, Mary Ellen Mark, Irving Penn, Henri Cartier-Bresson.

Photo by Lorna Bieber

Photo by Gail Gregg

Photo-based art entails assembling disparate materials – a photo, text, color. The artist's imagination welds scissors and glue, the traditional approach, or an image editor, for crafting an image. There may be impulse to draw on it with colored pencil or apply lines of charcoal or blocks of paint. A photographic artist is really no different than any other in the quest for balance and harmony. Recently, I had the pleasure to sit down with four visionaries who were forthcoming with their artistic ideas and inspirations. Advancing toward the future, photography is a tool in the collage a process.

PWP member, Barbara Freedman, achieves her photo-based collages digitally using an image editor to isolate elements, scale, and apply layers of color and pattern in a nuanced manner. In addition, she paints on paper either for backgrounds or to isolate elements and scans them into her images. Asked how her interest in photo-based collage began, she responded that "some years ago, I photographed some old synagogues on the lower east side. I was just learning Photoshop so I began practicing on these images of old buildings and in the process discovered a new world. My work took off from there." Ms. Freedman has also completed a collage project using Jewish texts and memorabilia that was very time-intensive.

Andy Mars, also a PWP member, prefers to embellish the

surface of her photographs – portraits, wedding events and other imagery – in a more hands-on traditional manner using muted pastels, paints, colored pencils and markers. "When I decided to start my own photography business, I wanted to do something a little different to stand out in the crowd. I decided to add color and texture to photographs for a more abstract, painterly quality." In some instances, she will prep a photo beforehand in an image editor before applying her enhancements. These individualistic treatments expand today's visual vocabulary. So, as a result, Ms. Mars' portraiture and wedding clients receive one-of-a-kind photographs.

Photo by Andy Mars

Any collage process is extremely gratifying; often it is stressful as the work demands close attention to detail. Gail Gregg, an exhibited painter, photographer and writer, presented a new collage project to us that combines advertisements culled from women's magazines of the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s with her own photographs of vintage doll houses and play furniture. In these playful images of period housewives, reveling in their new appliances and furniture suites, Ms. Gregg creates narratives that challenge notions about domestic bliss. These collages are a departure from her abstract paintings, yet reflect a similar sense of color, simplicity and a fondness for found objects. "In my new collages, I'm really enjoying the new freedom of Photoshop to scale and make changes to the images ... enhancements that wouldn't be possible with plain old scissors and glue." And they are notable for their precision and adroit hand.


Photo by Barbara Freedman

As an artist, it's more important to follow your feelings, and have fun while working very hard. Lorna Bieber does just that. The creative impulse is ever present and she showed us some stunning samples of her work. We all wanted to know how she realizes her collages without using a camera. Well, Ms. Bieber's tools are a photocopier and/or a scanner which she uses to manipulate found images by resizing, drawing or painting them. She explains that "working as a painter, I began to use photographs as collage elements. Sometime later, when I worked at a magazine, I had access to left-over silver prints and a high-end color copier. It was a huge turning point, and I've never looked back." Amazing as it may seem, Picasso's early cubist approach was no different. Widely exhibited, she is currently extending her vision to a new project that we will have to wait to see.

We are daily saturated with visual stimuli; why not repurpose these artifacts, either by photographing or acquiring the images, to convey different meanings in different contexts. The various collage methods using photography, enhancing the image surface before or after printing, achieve a photographic artist's vision. The objective, whether it is conscious or unconscious, emerges for a viewer's enjoyment. Finally, we must take account of the fact that photographs do not reveal the true reality of our surroundings. We only see the resulting image of a photographer's selective vision.

**Future exhibit at Metropolitan Museum of Art: Playing with Pictures: The Art of Victorian Photocollage, February 2-May 9, 2010.*

# FILM VS DIGITAL

**An examination by members of PWP**

**Hosted by Patricia Gilman**

**On behalf of film: Cali Gorevic, Mary Newman, Lucille Tortora, Paula Berg**
**On behalf of digital: Maddi Ring, Miriam Berkley, Elizabeth Arcuri**

*The year 2002 was a turning point in my photography career. First, I became really serious about photography, and second I got my first digital camera. It was new technology and the prices were becoming reasonable enough for the "everyday citizen."*

*Preparing for a trip to Spain, my plan was to use film for most of the trip but I also brought my digital to play with. I packed 20 rolls of film and had to buy 20 more. That was the last time I used my digital sparingly. I hated running out of film, and became hooked on what the digital camera could do right before my eyes. I am not alone. Some photographers have embraced this change; others have not. With the advent of digital photography, many film manufacturers have cut back or discontinued their film production. But this has not dampened the spirit of many photographers. This article explores why some have switched to digital and what they like or dislike about it, and why others have continued to use black and white film and to find their artistic satisfaction in the darkroom.*

Cali Gorevic

## BLACK AND WHITE FILM

### Cali Gorevic

In the beginning there was only color for me. Black and white didn't appeal to me at all. I printed my own color, and spent most of my darkroom time adjusting the color, rather than being creative with the image. Gradually, over a period of several years, I found that I wanted the opportunities that black and white could give me in terms of creative freedom. Seeing other people's black and white images awoke my understanding and appreciation of silver printing.

At the same time, I learned to appreciate the huge appeal of the silver print. I have not yet seen a digital print that can match a gelatin silver print for luminosity.

I have more control with film and chemicals. There are so many subtle ways to enhance a print. That may be partly to do with the way people use Photoshop, but images generally seem too...everything.

In the darkroom I can sculpt the light coming out of the enlarger, thereby determining how much, what shape, and for how long it will touch the paper. It feels more instinctive, more visceral, less intellectual than the computer approach. Since I am also a sculptor, this is very appealing to me.

### Mary Newman

The traditional darkroom is where I started, years ago, with the quest to create, using the proper mix of chemicals and agitation, a hand-made gelatin silver print that conveyed a unique message. Black and white film suits me because I favor simplicity both in equipment and subject matter and film lets me focus on details, light and shadow, texture, shapes and patterns – all that is left after removing the color.

I still love seeing the first image appear in the developing tray. I can spend many hours forgetting the outside world, reprinting one image, sometimes with disappointing results, but frequently with satisfying ones. The time and effort are worth it once I see under gallery lights a luminous gelatin silver print with crisp whites and rich blacks and an elusive quality that attracts viewers. Only traditional chemicals, not ink, can produce such a print.

My purpose as a photographer is to depict a subject as honestly as possible, at the same time capturing a sense of wonder that goes beyond the subject and that connects the viewer to my world. To my mind, nothing gives a mood to an image, attracts the viewer, and

then lets the viewer see something not noticed before better than the gelatin-silver print.

**Lucille Tortora**

The first time I looked through a lens I realized I had been seeing the world through a camera all my life. Then the first time I put a piece of photo paper into chemicals, and watched an image emerge I could not believe the magic. Since that moment I have been creating photographs by turning them into shades of black, white and grey.

Photography is about capturing light and shadow. By removing color, I abstract the world to emphasize the composition and the negative and positive space as it relates to form.

Photo by Mary Newman

Cubism has been a major inspiration in my work, be it landscape, architecture or still life. When I began my adventure in this expressive art form, I found this quote by the photographer, Julia Margaret Cameron, "I longed to arrest all the beauty that came before me". Images are all around me. Capturing and linking fragments of these images and then reconstructing them into something new are the means I use to communicate my vision.

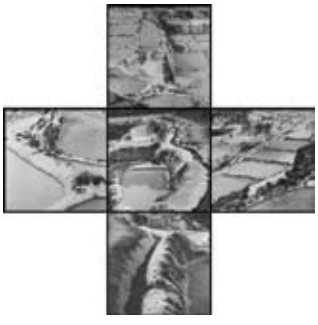

Photo by Lucille Tortora

**Paula Berg**

First and foremost, I love my manual, rangefinder cameras—a Leica M6 and a Mamiya 7. To me, automatic cameras—film and digital—feel like machines. My cameras feel like a part of me. I also love shooting and developing film. I probably could produce better photographs if I could instantly see the image and make on-the-spot adjustments. However, this kind of critical thinking is a barrier to losing myself in photography, and I love the revelation of newly developed film. I love the tradition of black and white photography. It is this art form that I am most moved by, and this tradition that I want to be part of.

I have made concessions to the digital age. I have given up darkroom printing and now scan and digitally print using black and white inks. (This transition was not heart-wrenching as I never formed an attachment to the enlarger or to inhaling chemicals.)

Shooting film in the digital age is anxiety producing. I worry that film and developer will disappear from the market. I sometimes feel a little excluded when other photographers excitedly discuss digital photography.

I try to remember that, as with all things in life, it is best to savor the present; because the way that I photograph with film now is more fun than ever and one of the great joys of my life.

## DIGITAL

**Maddi Ring**

The reasons to switch to digital are as personal and varied as the choice of camera. For some it is a matter of working at the cutting edge of technology at all times, for others convenience and others...well the list is long.

When the digital format first appeared I had been a dedicated film photographer for 35 years. Specifically, I was a color film

Photo by Paula Berg

photographer who worked exclusively with transparencies. I found individual slides easy to work with. My ultimate products were prints as large as 16x20, sometimes of a cropped part of the image, and group slide presentations. Resolution and archival quality were of primary importance.

Traveling recently with a friend who had "gone digital" I was first struck by two things. First, the stops to change film were gone and, second, the images are there to review and edit on the spot. Much of the work I needed to do after the 40+ rolls of film were processed in NY, she had finished by the time we landed at JFK. WOW!

Once the costs of really high quality digital equipment came down to a reasonable price, I bought a DSLR, went off to Antarctica and South America for the three-week maiden voyage of my new equipment, shot images like crazy and have never looked back.

**Miriam Berkeley**

I bought my first digital camera, a small 5.1 megapixel point-and-shoot, in the summer of 2004, and when I warily turned it on and looked through its LCD screen for the first time I felt uncomfortable and thought I would never adjust to it. Twenty-four hours later I was hooked on the instant gratification the camera provided and gradually, over the next few years, as I moved up to cameras with more megapixels and more controls, the ratio of my film to digital shooting reversed; I have not actually shot any film professionally for more than a year now.

Digital shooting is a fine way to improve one's photography because changes one makes in settings are immediately apparent on the LCD screen. I think my technique has certainly improved and the digital feedback in recent years has accelerated the learning process.

A switch to digital does not necessarily make life easier, as instead of large quantities of film, I now have to pack card reader and hard drive, batteries and battery chargers, and a variety of connecting cables, and sometimes a computer as well.

There is, of course, nostalgia for the way most of us learned photography, and the thrill that comes as an image emerges in the developing tray. But digital photography has its own artistic satisfactions. Imagination is an essential ingredient in all art, and it is not limited to a single medium.

**Elizabeth Arcuri**

My transition from film to digital was a gradual one and evolved in the mid-90s.

On the job, my boss would often ask me to take pictures of building projects, many of which were used for presentations, reports and in-house publications. For this purpose she provided me with my first digital camera with 1.5 mp. In my efforts to keep

Photo by Miriam Berkeley

up with technology, I embraced the opportunity I was being given to learn a new form of photography. I became comfortable with the process, working with color images in the digital darkroom and printing from my office computer.

For my personal photography work, I continued to shoot black and white film and rent darkroom space. I viewed this as a more artful form and wasn't ready to let it go. This changed in 2002 when I began to experiment with a more sophisticated and expensive

Photo by Maddi Ring

digital camera that was 7.5 mp and had raw capability. I became consumed with its use and eventually put my film camera and negatives away forever.

While I enjoy the convenience digital photography offers and believe high quality color prints can be produced from a raw image, computer and an inkjet printer, I recognize the difference between "digital" and "film" art. I find myself striving to achieve art through the use of digital equipment. I look behind the color for black-and-white subject matter, shapes, lines, textures, forms and contrast. To achieve different creative effects, I rely more on the camera's built-in features than by manipulating a photograph through the use of image-editing software.

Photo by Elizabeth Arcuri

# Why We Like What We Like

*By Terry Berenson*

My husband Bob and I attended the Venice Biennale in June and I have to say, I laughed more there than I have at any recent comedy movie I've seen. Without naming names or "pieces," much of the art seemed insipid to me. Almost every work was described as a concept where the artist had placed an ordinary object in an unfamiliar setting so the viewer could break out of their norm and see things in a new way. Of course, the descriptions were much more articulate – like this one I liked so much, I took a photo of it: "The artist confronts the anxieties and contradictions of contemporary existence without distinguishing them from the life force that animates man, or from the irony and unpredictability of the everyday. " Excuse me?

Yet, as Bob and I were giggling and shaking our heads, all around us were plenty of people who were gazing in awe at each piece; clearly impressed with the skill and creativity of the artist.

Why do some of us find one particular work of art so difficult to appreciate, while others think it deserving of a multi-million dollar price tag? While researching (a euphemism for Googling) the subject, I came upon the work of Dr. Paul Bloom, the Yale University psychology professor whose book, How Pleasure Works: The Science Behind Why We Like What We Like will be released in June. Dr. Bloom's previous book, Descartes' Baby: How the Science of Child Development Explains What Makes Us Human, includes a chapter on the psychology of art.

I wasn't surprised to read that the reason we like a particular realistic painting or photograph depends almost entirely on what it depicts. Most of us will recoil from an image of grotesque horror, and almost everyone will feel pleasure looking at an image of a beautiful Hawaiian sunset because a realistic picture can serve as a substitute for the real thing. As for some contemporary art, Dr. Bloom writes, "there are certain properties that some art has, aspects of balance and form and color, that simply look good to the eye."

But understanding why we appreciate abstract and performance art is much more complicated. That is why two people might look at the same Jackson Pollack painting, and one is thinking, "Brilliant" while the other is thinking, "A chimpanzee could do that."

The reasons behind these different opinions have more to do with status and intellectual appeal than aesthetics. But these works can elicit pleasure. Dr. Bloom points out that a Donald Judd abstract sculpture sold at Christie's for $4.5 million, and an Ed Ruscha painting of a blue canvas with the word SPACE written on it in yellow letters sold for $3.5 million, so clearly, some people value these things more than houses, cars or yachts.

Often what these buyers value in such a work is the prestige ownership brings merely because it sends a message to the world about how wealthy they must be to spend so much money on what is essentially an accessory. But status is not the only reason we value certain modern works. There is also the intellectual cache that comes with understanding a work of art that most people can't grasp. Surely, anyone who can explain the inner workings of an abstract artist's intention, meaning and purpose must be more sophisticated and intelligent than the average man or woman in the street. Or at least they would like you to think they are.

> ...we all enjoy displays of skill and virtuosity, whether they be physical, intellectual or creative.

Of course the appeal of modern art goes beyond these superficial theories. Paul Bloom reminds us that we all enjoy displays of skill and virtuosity, whether they be physical, intellectual or creative. Painters like Ad Reinhardt and photographers like Diane Arbus are admired, even when we don't find a particular work aesthetically pleasing, because we recognize the challenges and difficulties they faced in producing their body of work.

What I find delightful about this subject is that it doesn't really matter why I like Arbus' images of ordinary people over Annie Liebowitz' celebrity portraits. Or why modern sculpture doesn't do much for me. Over the course of my life, I've tried to keep an open mind to all types of creative expression, yet I tend to be drawn to particular genres and turned off by others. What really matters is that I stay true to myself, enjoy what I like and not get swayed by other people's opinions just because they sound smarter or seem more intellectual than me.

*Terry Berenson is a Senior Editor of IMPRINTS and a photographer specializing in portraits of pets and their human families.*

# Hand Colored Photographs

*By David Ruskin*

Since the early days of photography, hand coloring has been a practical way of adding color to monochromatic images. It allows application and correction of color with relative ease. It lends itself to experimentation and individual interpretation of images. Before the availability of color film, hand coloring was widely used in studio portraiture and extended to landscapes, still lifes, and other photographic subjects. I continue to use the medium to create a mood, sometimes surrealistic, which is difficult to portray with color film.

Any black-and-white photograph can be colored, and a variety of films can be used to create the underlying image. I work primarily with Kodak 400TX, Kodak 3200ASA, and Kodak High Speed Infrared films, often using a soft-focus filter to give my images a dreamy and sometimes impressionistic appearance. Printing on RC (resin coated) matte finish photographic paper provides the best results, as it has the best "tooth" to grab the paint. Semi-matte is next best and fiber paper can also be used. Prior to coloring, I sepia tone my images to "warm" them, using Berg Rapid RC toning solution.

Colored pencils, photo oils, and photo retouch colors all can be used to color the images. I use the photo oils almost exclusively. I usually blend colors on a palette, a piece of wax paper, or right on the print, and sometimes use my fingers. I don't use brushes as I don't want brush marks. The paint is rubbed on initially using a gentle circular motion. Excess paint is removed, as needed, with cotton or a Q tip. It's my intent to maintain the detail and integrity of the black and white image by subtly using pale, transparent tones that give the image a painterly quality.

*Readers can find more about the artist on PWP's website in the IMPRINTS section.*

# How to Write an Artist Statement

The best artist statements give the reader a sense of what to expect when they look at the visual work. The statement introduces your general approach, talks about what has interested you in creating the work and puts forth some ideas about what you were trying to elicit from the viewer. And most of all excites the viewer.

Often the hardest part about making images is sitting down afterwards to write your statement. It is hard at times to remove oneself from the work with enough distance to write a cogent statement, so here are some basic guidelines to getting started.

**1. Pretend that it is not your work.**

This is often easier said than done but if you take a step back and try to look at the work with some distance it will help.

**2. Keep it in the first person. Do not talk about your own work as though you were someone else.**

**3. Don't lose the viewer/reader.**

Your job is to interest the viewer in the work before he ever gets a chance to see it so as my father is fond of saying, "don't use a quarter word where a dime word will do". Avoid jargon and terms that the viewer may not be informed about. Remember, the purpose of the statement is to involve the viewer in your process, not offer a critique or lose them in a critical diatribe.

**4. Short and Sweet.**

Keep the statement to one page unless a longer one is specifically requested. The statement is the place for you to cover some key elements in regards to your art: What? (Did you create) Why? (Did you create it) How? (Did you make it) When/Where (If that has some strong influence on what you created then mention the location and/or time-frame).

**5. Be yourself and have some fun.**

The best statements also impart a sense of the artist, so don't try to sound like anyone other than yourself. The viewer/reader wants to have a sense of the work but also of the artist who created it.

# WHAT IS THE ART IN THE ART OF PHOTOGRAPHY?

## *An Interview with Kate Somers* *By Amy Kosh*

Falling Into Indra's Net, Madelaine Shellaby c/o Soho20 Chelsea Gallery

*Kate Somers is the Curator of the Bernstein Gallery at Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs.*

**Amy Kosh:** This issue of IMPRINTS is about the art of photography, so let me start with the larger question of what is the art in Art?

**Kate Somers:** How do you define beauty? For me, and this sounds so clichéd, there has to be a mystery to it; it has to make me work or think, or even more so feel something. I have to have an emotional response. That's the difference between the collector and the acquirer.

**AK:** What is the mystery in the photograph of water over the fireplace by Madelaine Shellaby?

**KS:** Water is always mysterious. It never stays the same; it's always shifting. Even if it is frozen water it is always moving in some way. In Shellaby's image there is a shadow of a figure and I've often thought would I like it better if the figure weren't there? I like that the figure is androgynous, and I love the void the shadow makes on the water. I find that pretty mysterious. It's the kind of ambiguity that interests me. Now look at this piece of sculpture out here. (We move to look out the window at a large metal, tubular sculpture with a large horn or funnel shape at either end of the curved tube). I think it's very much about receiving information in the world. In other words, they are big ears on the ends of the tubes. But others have said, no, no, no, this thing is projecting out into the world. So there's that sense of ambiguity again depending upon who looks at it. That's the beauty of it.

Hudson River no. 9, Fredericka Foster c/o www.sensri.org

**AK:** What generally draws you to the pieces that you want to live with?

**KS:** First and foremost is the piece itself. The context matters along with the aesthetics. For instance this sculpture by Jane Teller, http://www.michenermuseum.org/bucksartists/artist.php?artist=276 entitled The Grove, satisfies everything I love in a work of art. I find it beautiful and very much involved in nature. It is all hand-carved wood. I knew Jane toward the end of her life and always admired her brilliance and tenacity. She was this tiny, little woman and she made these huge sculptures. So that's a really good example of just falling in love with a piece, but also having known the person behind it, the context. I often find myself running my hands over the lengths of wood. It's evocative on some level. Sometimes it's a very subconscious level, but it is there in some way.

**AK:** I imagine being a tiny person who could weave through the space that the vertical stalks create. It puts me in mind of walking in a forest, through bands of dark and light among the trees in the flickering light.

**AK:** I do notice you don't have any pieces that are roughly crafted. Is there something about the refined level of craft in all this work?

**KS:** There is a certain finished quality to all of it. It bugs me when I go to galleries and see things that don't seem to have a certain level of artistry to them. Craft has a lot to do with the aesthetic qualities of the work and is an important part of the work as a whole.

**AK:** I see that in this painting of water, or is it snow-capped mountains? There is no sense of scale.

**KS:** This one can be read either way. It's the light. This is a Fredericka Foster work of the Hudson River (shown center), http://www.sensri.org/fredericka.html

She spends her life painting different bodies of water. She prefers the ones that have a little bit of pollution. What you're seeing there, those warm tones of color, are actually pollution that discolors the water and gives it a different quality.

**AK:** So in the end what makes something Art with a capital "A"?

**KS:** Ultimately in the work there are some things I can know and some I am left to wonder about. The layers of mystery and meaning brought out by the artist; those things that we discover each time we look, are what continually bring me back to the depth in the work.

# 2009's Great Exhibits
# Looking In: Robert Frank's The Americans

**September 22, 2009 - January 3, 2010 • Metropolitan Museum of Art**

*Review by Julia Clark-Spohn*

A lone cowboy, lighting up on a desolate city street. Passengers on a passing trolley, strictly divided, carefully contained: white up front, black in the back. Two women, separated by a wall of bricks and an American flag, standing at their respective windows, both their faces hidden: one in the shadows of her apartment, the other behind the waving flag. These are just three of the heartbreaking, eye-opening, and occasionally humorous images that are featured in The Americans, Robert Frank's seminal book of photographs of "ordinary Americans in ordinary places."

Two thousand and nine marked the fiftieth anniversary of the publication The Americans, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art celebrated the occasion with Looking In: Robert Frank's the Americans, a traveling exhibit of Frank's photographs and material related to The Americans. Looking In provided viewers with a rare opportunity to see vintage (or near vintage) prints of some of the most important photos of the 20th century, and in so doing invited us to revisit the questions that made The Americans both controversial and influential.

While Frank's interest in capturing "ordinary Americans" may sound innocuous, his photographs are hardly benign. His images of lonely diners, impoverished families, segregated communities, and leering politicians revealed the grim reality of the American Myth—including the false hopes and broken promises of capitalism, the hierarchies of a segregated democracy, and the abuses of faith and religion. Frank made a number of stylistic choices that reflect his concern with capturing the "real" (as opposed to mythic) America. His black and white, occasionally crooked, sometimes out-of-focus shots dramatically contradict the tightly choreographed depictions of American society that were typical of the McCarthy era.

In addition to raising social concerns, Frank's images raise a number of questions about the complex relationships between photographer, viewer, and subject. Frank assumed a number of roles while photographing The Americans: At times, he was an objective observer, documenting the aftermath of a fatal car crash, the victims lying covered in the road, and with the same distanced regard, he photographed a covered parked car. Often, he was a voyeur, peering over the shoulders of his oblivious subjects. Was he a friend, sharing a laugh with his subject; or a predator, interrupting a couple's private moment? Sometimes he was a jokester, mixing words and images, making puns, and sometimes an obsessive collector, compulsively shooting and reshooting jukeboxes, movie stars, games, American flags...

What was Frank's relationship to us, the viewers? Was he an unbiased messenger, showing us the world as it really is? Or was he an editor, constantly making choices about what to shoot, spending months sorting through prints, editing out ones that didn't support his story? Was he in cahoots with us, winking at us as 'we watch him watch his subjects' (to paraphrase the curators)? Or is he critical of us, suggesting that we, the viewers, are vulnerable to the same weaknesses as those he shoots?

The one somewhat frustrating aspect of the experience was that it was extremely crowded—at least on the early winter, Sunday afternoon when this reviewer saw the show. Despite the fact that the photos are mounted across several galleries, the space felt cramped and at times it was difficult to give the photos the time and attention they deserved. However, while congested galleries were frustrating on one hand, it was also exciting to see that so many people were eager to come together to celebrate this important body of work.

If you felt that the crowds prevented you from fully experiencing the art, or if you missed the show altogether, you can purchase the exhibit catalog (Looking In: Robert Frank's The Americans, edited by Sarah Greenough, National Gallery of Art, Washington/Steidl) which includes not only beautiful reproductions of the photos, but also informative essays that contextualize The Americans.

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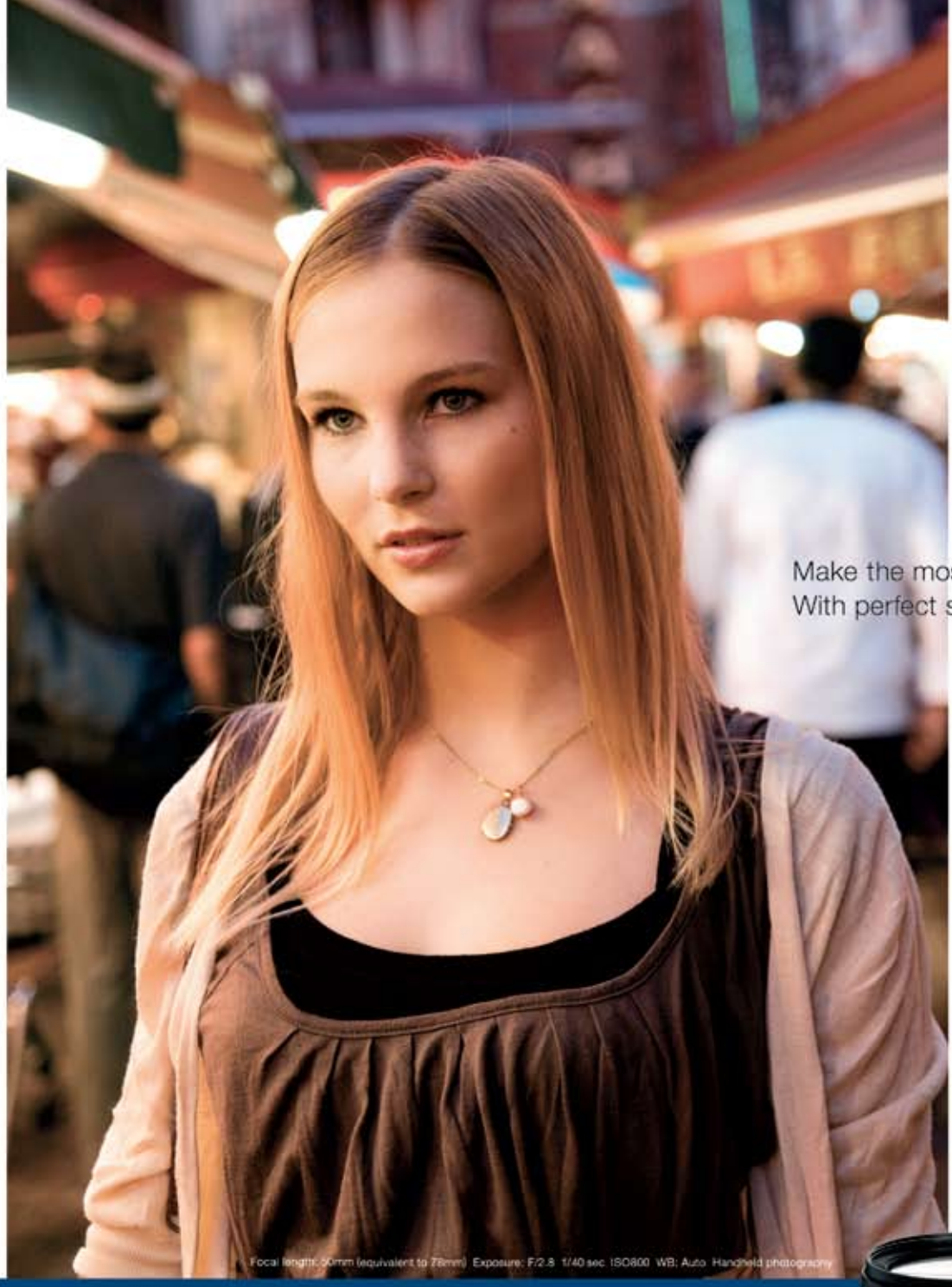


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**Volunteer Reception, November 2, 2009**
The Annual Volunteer Reception was held at Citrus Restaurant. About 45 members attended having volunteered their time during the 2008/2009 fiscal year. Former board members Sindi Schorr, Pamela Greene and Pat Yancovitz were given certificates for their past service and Shoshana Rothaizer was presented with the Volunteer of the Year award.

*Correction: Last issue Shoshana Rothaizer's name was misspelled and her photograph was mislabeled. The caption should be Young Filly Amongst the Grown-ups.*

**PWP Monthly Meetings**
St. Paul the Apostle Church
405 West 59th Street between 9th & 10th Avenues
First Wednesday of Each Month
**March 3, 2010 – Jill Enfield**
**April 7, 2010 – Elinor Carucci**
**May 5, 2010 – Barbara Koppelman**
**June 2, 2010 – Annual Meeting**

Professional Women Photographers

Check out our Facebook page: Professional-Women-Photographers-Inc. Remember, PWP is a not for profit organization and accepts donations via our website or through Facebook, and thank you in advance for your generosity.

**Upcoming Exhibits**
**6th Annual Student Awards Program** • March 21 - April 1, 2010
Ernest Rubenstein Gallery at the The Education Alliance
197 East Broadway, New York, NY
Opening Reception: Sunday, March 21 from 4-7PM
**Americana** • April 17 –May 22, Reception, April 17, 2010 – MH Art and Framing Gallery
**New Members Exhibit** • May 3 -23, 2010, TD Bank Store

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