

POINT AND SHOOT II EXHIBITION

September 18—
 October 22, 1993
 Opening Reception
 Saturday, September 18, 9PM

C

urators Robert Hirsch and David Harrod continue their examination of

how artists are making use of point and shoot cameras in the creation of their work. Last year's exhibition surveyed the field with representation from nineteen imagemakers. This year the number of participants was reduced to nine so each artist could be seen in greater depth. Through directed queries, conversations, and observations, the curators let the artists characterize the prevailing point and shoot aesthetic.

The point and shoot phenomenon has broad interest within the photographic community, as we received responses from our open call for work from commercial photographers, fine artists, and amateurs. We perceive that the "Point and Shooters" are often taking a sabbatical from having to contemplate the mechanics of photography. By reducing their need to concentrate on the technical aspects of the medium, the point and shooters center on a visceral approach that strives to eliminate some of the barriers between themselves and their subjects.

These photographers continue the artistic snapshot tradition that tends to celebrate and critically examine the vernacular. The imagemakers possess no special license, eschewing overt political statements for a more private investigation of ideas including: the photographer/subject relationship; how our culture interacts with animals; the commonality of travel pictures; family relationships; and how images simulate and displace actual experience. They are the modern Ulysses' who are exploring and defining the late twentieth century American experience. In an age that has deconstructed the hero myth, these artists honor everyday heroic moments and frequently expose the viewer to the elements of play within daily life.

This group makes use of *hybrid* strategies, incorporating pre-and post-visualization constructs. The work was derived from an array of small disposable, toy, and sophisticated automatic point and shoot cameras. The photographers elaborate and expand the Leica camera tradition of André Kertész, Henri Cartier-Bresson, Robert Frank, William Klein, and Garry Winogrand. They work with intrinsic camera issues of focus, grain, movement, and sharpness in order to investigate how the camera sees. Some of the artists probe the strange and often accidental juxtapositions that occur before the camera's lens and how this can create tension within the frame, while others manufacture them during postcamera procedures. There is a beautiful dreamlike relationship of space and time running through many of these selections. Here are people searching to find their own existential structure that centers around community and its values. As in Walter Benjamin's "A Small History of Photography," these imagemakers use their cameras as a surgical tool to operate on the human condition.¹ By analyzing its fragments they discover the wormholes that enable one to travel more deeply into the secrets of the unconsciousness.

The show focuses on the diversity of these attitudes in terms of approach, subject matter, use of materials, size, and style of presentation. The exhibition features interactive installations, sequential images, sculptural pieces, hand-altered compositions, mural-size prints, and traditional prints

—Robert Hirsch

Robert Hirsch is curator of CEPA Gallery and on the Art Faculty of SUNY/Buffalo. He is the author of Exploring Color Photography and Photographic Possibilities: The Expressive Use of Ideas, Materials, and Processes. David Harrod is an artist and facilities manager of the photography department at Drexel University in Philadelphia.

¹ Walter Benjamin, "A Small History of Photography" (1931), in *One Way Street*, translated by Edmund Jephcott and Kingsley Shorter (London: New Left Books, 1979), pp. 240—257.

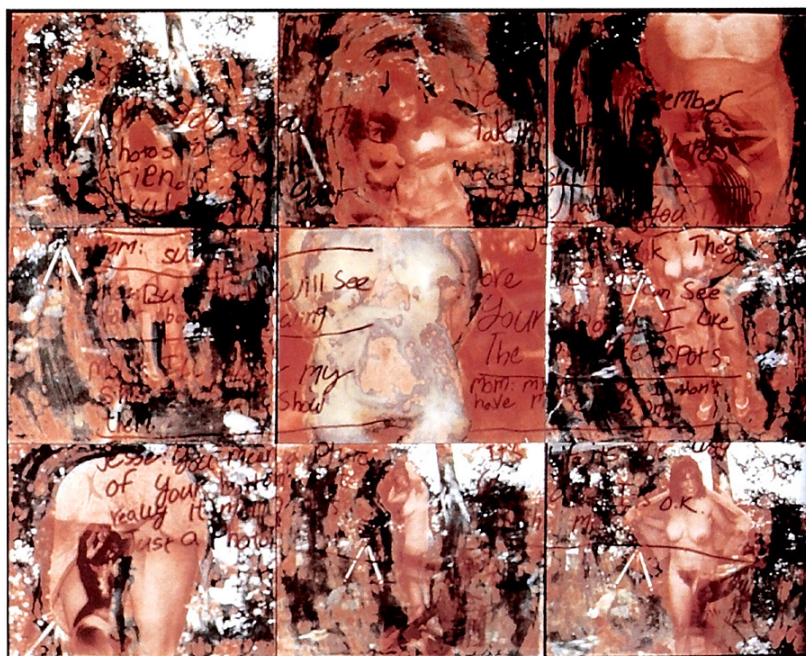
A twenty-four page, illustrated catalogue of the first Point and Shoot Exhibition is available for five dollars including postage.

The following section contains images and a brief statement from each artist in the exhibition.

PATTI AMBROGI,
Pittsford, New York

"Jesse's Pictures," a wall piece of nine photographs, are Jesse's photographs of me on a trip in the mountains. Jesse took it upon herself to pick up the camera and photograph me bathing. The final installation of photographs detail our conversations about the body and its representations in photographs. The key issue with respect to the point and shoot camera is that it reversed the photographer/subject relationship between my children and me, which places the vision and power of what's being said into the hands of my child.

**Below,
The Shades**
Joann Brennan
1990
Chromogenic
color print
15" x 15"



**Left,
Jesse's Photos
Patti Ambrogli
1992
Chromogenic
color prints
42" x 60"**



JOANN MARIE BRENNAN
Princeton, New Jersey

Zoos and museums give us an opportunity to see how an animal looks, but it is often disturbing to realize that the creatures have been completely removed from their natural environment. These animals are suspended in time, frozen halfway between life and death, in an altered state much like the beings known as the shades in Dante's *Inferno*. This body of work represents my attempt to photograph what I see and how I feel about the surreal existence of these creatures. These square-format, dream-like images result from using a toy point and shoot camera called a Banner.

Burning
Garbage Truck
Steven Heller
1989
Chromogenic
color print
14" x 14"



STEVEN A. HELLER

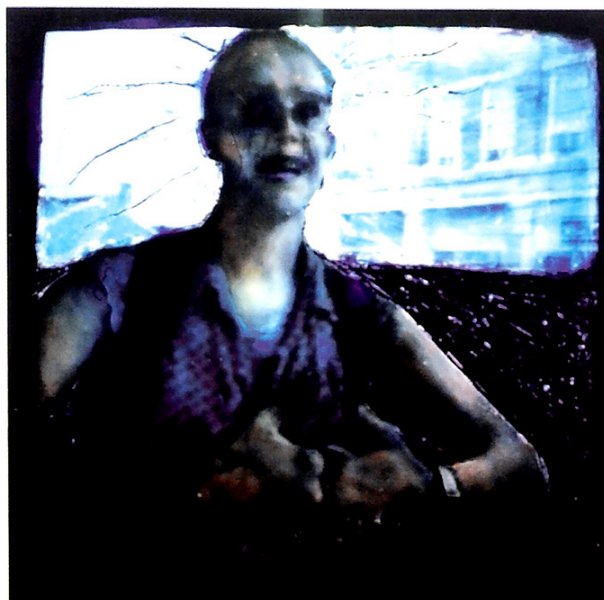
Van Nuys, California

"Drive-By Shootings" is an ongoing project begun in 1988, consisting of candid moments captured with a plastic carnival-type camera. I have visual experiences which rely upon a commonality familiar to all who have travelled this country's highways. These glimpses are considered in a spontaneous fashion and captured with lenses whose focus, color rendition and exposure provide an equally unpretentious resolution. It seems to be a natural completion to the visual cycle of action and reaction.

HEIDI LEE KELLNER

Urbana, Illinois

I use a plastic point and shoot camera with a lot of duct tape. It relieves my anal-retention. It's lighter than a 4 x 5 view camera and a lot easier to carry up and down Main Street. People look at my plastic camera and just laugh. They can't imagine I could possibly be taking their picture with that "toy." (Plus, I've painted orange polka-dots all over my Diana to make it even more "playful.") So when people see that thing they are totally uninhibited. A camera without rules.



Main Street

Medusa

Heidi Kellner

1992

Chromogenic

color print

6" x 6"

ADINA SABGHIR

Medford, Massachusetts

In the "Amtrak Series" I seek to translate the visual experience of seeing out of train windows; large, unending rows of framed moving landscapes on the right and on the left, top and bottom. The rotating frames and the upside down printing of these photos allow the viewer to look at the "left" and "right"/"top" and "bottom" with an open sense of what is caught in the perceived upside down image as well as the right-side-up one. This is an interactive body of work meant to be turned by the passing viewer in his or her own time.



Amtrak Series
Adina Sabghir
Chromogenic
color prints
mounted on
swivel frame
20" x 24"



Above,
Mocking
Judy Sánchez

1992

Gelatin

silver print

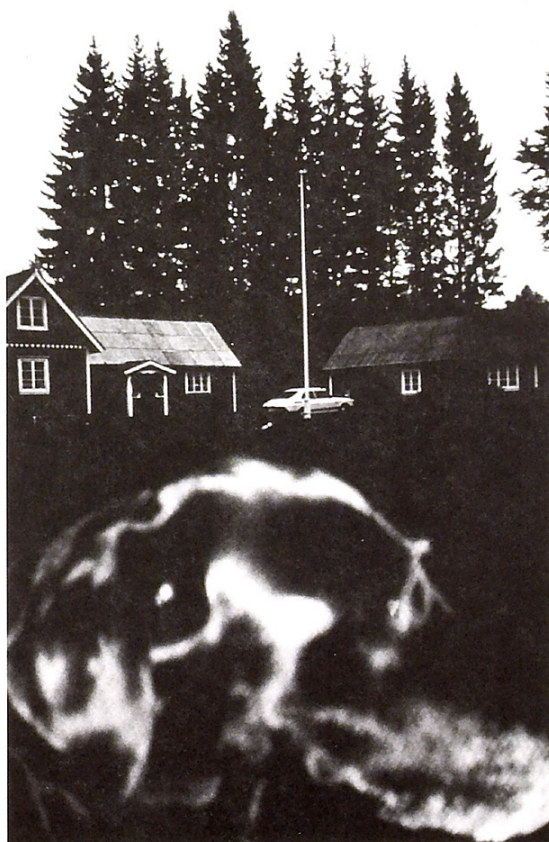
8" x 10"

Right,
Dog & Home
Wallace Wilson

Gelatin

silver print

72" x 48"



JUDY SANCHEZ

Rochester, New York

I have been producing autobiographical work without resorting to turning the camera completely around and pointing it directly at myself. Instead, I have been trying to show what images my life currently encompasses, often incorporating small bits of my body (usually my feet, legs, and hands). With the Samsung AF Slim camera, I can attempt to record the view as I see it, right there, in my lap, for example. In short, I am trying to produce work that depends on the point and shoot camera and its features for realization.

WALLACE WILSON

Gainesville, Florida

As I wander about New York, Montreal, or Paris, I not only carry the Olympus XA, but also a large plastic bag filled with props, glue, markers, tape, and collage materials. This work is a hybrid that embraces the look of the point and shoot with an opportunity to be more critical, subversive, and ironical. I've made photographs and studied them, taught about them and written about them for far too long to approach the visceral technique of the snapshotter, but I can act out the *performance* of direct picture making. I can *ape* the look of snapshots. This artificial posturing seems to perfectly map photography itself: a simulation medium. One reason I enlarge the pictures to an imposing scale (4' x 6'), is so that cats, dogs, kids and everyday trappings loom over the viewer, changing that relationship of possession that seems intrinsic to snapshots.

Additional support for this
exhibition has been
provided by:

OLYMPUS
Superior By Design
35mm Cameras