

RISD MUSEUM

Photography and Place: Contemporary Works from the Museum's Collection,
January 23, 2004-April 4, 2004

Since the earliest use of the camera, photography has proved to be an ideal medium through which to convey the unique characteristics of a particular site. The idea of place remains a rich subject for contemporary photographers, who sometimes use unconventional approaches to explore it. The theme of the Museum's exhibition is that of the annual meeting of the Society for Photographic Education, a professional organization for photographers, teachers, professors, critics, and curators held this year in Rhode Island. Featured are recent gifts and purchases, as well as work by artists associated with RISD and working in Rhode Island.

We are grateful to Hope Saska, graduate student in the Department of History of Art and Architecture, Brown University, who assisted with the organization of the exhibition through an internship at The RISD Museum supported in part by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Jesse H. Metcalf Fund, and the Lisle Museum Fund.

CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

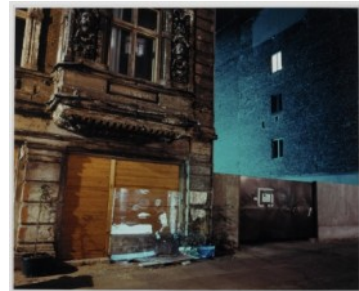
Shimon Attie, American, b. 1957

Almstadtstrasse 5 (formerly Gendaienstrasse 24): Former Jewish residence and hat shop, ca. 1930, from the series *The Writing on the Wall, Berlin, Germany*, 1993

Color chromogenic print

Mary B. Jackson Fund 2001.5

Attie created a series of outdoor art installations by projecting pre-World War II photos of particular places in Berlin's former Jewish quarter, the Scheunenviertel, onto the same or nearby addresses. He also photographed these projected images and their sites. In this work, a photograph of a Jewish man sitting in front of a hat shop is projected onto the façade of the building that formerly housed the shop. As Attie re-envisions this now destroyed eastern Berlin community, he invokes memory and memorials, theater, and political history.



RISD MUSEUM

Carrie Mae Weems, American, b. 1953
A Place for Him, A Place for Her, Africa Series, 1993
Gelatin silver print
Mary B. Jackson Fund 1997.40A

The photographs in this piece were taken during Weems's first trip to Africa and depict the architecture of Djenné, Mali, one of the most beautiful and oldest cities in western Africa.

"I concentrated on the look and feel of the place. What was deep was the gender specificity of the architecture, particularly in Djenné, Mali. The idea that space is 'gendered'—you know, male and female space—knocked me out. It was so clearly presented in the structure of the buildings—beautiful." (Weems, in interview published in a brochure from the Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1995).

Seeing these structures inspired Weems's musings on the creation of the first man and woman. In the creation myth accompanying the piece, Weems invokes not only the original exile from Eden, but also the uprooting of African people from their communities and their dispersal as slaves. The work, as well as her trip to Africa, became part of her process of "searching out a home place."



Joe Deal, American, 1947-2010, (RISD Provost 1999-2005; RISD Faculty 2005-2009)
Sunset Beach, California, Beach Cities, 1978
Gelatin silver print
Museum Purchase: Gift of James D. and Diane Davies Burke 2002.6.2



RISD MUSEUM

Talbot Neal Rantoul, American, b. 1946

White Sands, New Mexico, 1979

Gelatin silver print

Museum purchase with funds from the National Endowment for the Arts 79.065



Steven B. Smith, American, b. 1963, (RISD Faculty 1996-present)

Landfill, Malibu, California, 1996

Carbon ink-jet print

Museum Purchase: Gift of the Artists' Development Fund of the Rhode Island Foundation 2001.64



David T. Hanson, American, b. 1948, (RISD MFA 1983)

Coal Strip Mine, Power Plant and Waste Ponds, from the series Colstrip, Montana, 1984

Color chromogenic print

Museum Purchase: Gift of the Artist's Development Fund of the Rhode Island Foundation 1988.015



Emmet Gowin, American, b. 1941, (RISD MFA 1967)

Conair Pass, Dingle Peninsula, County Kerry, Ireland, 1978

Toned gelatin silver print

Gift of Emmett Gowin 85.150



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Linda Connor, American, b. 1944, (RISD BFA 1967)
Entwined Buddha, Ayuthaya, Thailand, 1988
Gelatin silver print
Gift of Aaron Siskind 1990.108.2



Sally Gall, American, b. 1956, (RISD BFA 1978, Photography)
Thirst, 1999
Gelatin silver print
Georgianna Sayles Aldrich Fund 2004.5

Gall seeks drama beneath the earth's surface. Her photographs of caves, such as this one in Valladolid, Yucatan, Mexico, evidence her fascination with transitional spaces between ground level and the hidden layers below. Often, these locales are as challenging to shoot as they are to find. To convey the strangeness and beauty of underground landscapes, Gall uses the only atmospheric "twilight" that occurs naturally inside the places where she makes her images.



Salvatore Mancini, American, b.1947
Slaterville Mill, Rhode Island, from the series Nature to Profit: The Transformation of the Blackstone River Valley, 1994
Gelatin silver print
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Joseph A. Chazan 2001.39.36



RISD MUSEUM

Carrie Mae Weems, American, b. 1953
A Place for Him, A Place for Her, Africa Series, 1993
Screenprint text
Mary B. Jackson Fund 1997.40B



Denny Moers, American, b. 1953
Factory Structures I, Poland, 1999
Gelatin silver print, selectively fogged and toned
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Joseph A. Chazan 2001.82.5



Carrie Mae Weems, American, b. 1953
A Place for Him, A Place for Her, Africa Series, 1993
Screenprint text
Mary B. Jackson Fund 1997.40D



Sigmar Polke, German, 1941-2010
Cologne Beggars II (Kölner Bettler II), 1972
Photo-offset lithograph on paper
Helen M. Danforth Acquisition Fund 2002.7.2.2

Polke's photograph of beggars in Cologne highlights the effects of World War II on a German city. Unlike Attie's image, which is tinged with nostalgia for a pre-war era, Polke presents the viewer with the destitution of those struggling with the aftermath of war. Attie's



RISD MUSEUM

Berlin may be temporarily transformed by his projections, but there is no such possibility for rehabilitation of place in Polke's Kölner Bettler.

Nan Goldin, American, b. 1953
Vivienne at home, NYC, 1980
Color chromogenic print
Walter H. Kimball Fund 2003.8



Francesca Woodman, American, 1958-1981
Untitled (figure and door), 1977
Gelatin silver print
Museum Purchase with funds from The Judith Rothschild Foundation
2002.71

Made during Woodman's sophomore year at RISD, the photographs reflect spaces that inspired her work. Woodman surreptitiously moved to an off-campus studio at Pilgrim Mills on North Main Street in Providence, where she lived and worked, as seen in *Untitled (figure with door)*. She used her studio both as a backdrop against which her images were staged and as a prop that she deliberately manipulated, in this case by maneuvering the door. *Untitled (sequence)* shows Woodman and her close friend Sloan Rankin (who often modeled for Woodman and pressed the shutter when Woodman posed) in motion against the interior of Rankin's apartment. The room becomes a container for their bodies, which were directed through the space by Woodman.



RISD MUSEUM

Francesca Woodman, American, 1958-1981

Untitled (sequence), 1977

Gelatin silver print

Museum Purchase: Georgianna Sayles Aldrich Fund 2002.72.2



Stephen Shore, American, b. 1947

Yankee Spring Training, 1978

Color chromogenic print

Museum purchase with the aid of funds from the National
Endowment for the Arts 78.101



RISD MUSEUM

Carrie Mae Weems, American, b. 1953
A Place for Him, A Place for Her, Africa Series 1993
Gelatin silver prints with screenprinted texts
Mary B. Jackson Fund 1997.40



Annu Palakunnathu Matthew, American, b. 1964
Noble Savage/Savage Noble, from the portfolio *An Indian from India (vol. 1)*, 2001
Inkjet print
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Joseph A. Chazan, by exchange 2009.58.1



Annu Palakunnathu Matthew, American, b. 1964
Bella, from the portfolio *An Indian from India (vol. 1)*, 2001
Inkjet print
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Joseph A. Chazan, by exchange 2009.58.2



Annu Palakunnathu Matthew, American, b. 1964
Daughter/Step Daughter, from the portfolio *An Indian from India (vol. 1)*, 2001
Inkjet print
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Joseph A. Chazan, by exchange 2009.58.3



RISD MUSEUM

Carrie Mae Weems, American, b. 1953
A Place for Him, A Place for Her, Africa Series, 1993
Gelatin silver print
Mary B. Jackson Fund 1997.40C



Uta Barth, German, b. 1958
Field #14, 1996
Color chromogenic print
Museum purchase: gift of The Buddy Taub Foundation, Jill and Dennis Roach, Directors 2002.73

By focusing her camera's lens on the foreground without a focal point and allowing the background elements of the landscape to blur, Barth disrupts the expected view represented in traditional landscapes. Instead, her image floats suggestively beneath the photograph's surface in an atmospheric haze. The specific location—the field—is unresolved, so that the viewer must use memory of landscape to read this particular landscape.



Describing this process, Barth notes: "I want my work to function on two levels: to elicit the sense of familiarity of looking at an image that has the structures and conventions of a history of picture-making embedded in it, to make you aware of that, and at the same time to shift your attention to the very act of looking (at something), to your own visual perception in that particular moment, in the particular place that you are viewing the picture in." (*Uta Barth: In Between Places*. Seattle: 2000, p. 19.)