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Blasted Allegories: Photography As Experience

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BLASTED ALLEGORIES: PHOTOGRAPHY AS EXPERIENCE
Foreword

Among the Lowe Art Museum’s greatest assets are the exceptionally talented University of Miami faculty and students with whom we maintain a mutually enriching relationship. Nowhere does this fact manifest itself more clearly than in the remarkable ArtLab @ The Lowe. For the past seven years, this program has provided faculty and students with an invaluable opportunity to “mine” the Lowe’s world-class collections in a quest for objects that elucidate focused themes. From cultural politics to Islamic art, from Panamanian molas to Spanish Colonialism, ArtLab has embraced a vast array of topics. What has remained consistent is the outstanding caliber of ArtLab participants’ work: in each instance, the lead faculty member and participating students have crafted an exhibition that is as intellectually engaging as it is aesthetically compelling. In doing so they have not only provided our visitors with an opportunity to interact more fully with our collections but also helped the Museum to deepen its already extensive knowledge of the nearly 19,000 objects it stewards. Along the way, ArtLab students have gained practical skills in the creation and curation of an art exhibition, as it is they who are responsible for everything from selecting the works on view to creating the show’s companion catalogue. Enhancing these students’ opportunity for deep learning is the program’s immersive travel component, which takes participants to some of our nation’s premier art institutions as well as to foreign countries, enabling them to gain critical new insights into art, art history, and museology. The net result is a positive learning experience for all parties concerned and an affirmation of the extraordinary symbiotic relationship that, when carefully nurtured (as it is at the University of Miami), can flourish between faculty, students, and the academic art museums that are designed to support them. This year is no exception, and I would like to thank each and every one of the participating students for their indispensable contributions to this edition of ArtLab @ The Lowe. I would also like to extend my deep thanks to Dr. Heather Diack for leading this course and for her commitment to a fruitful semester for her students as well as a successful outcome for the Lowe. Thanks are also due to Dr. Leonidas Bachas, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, for his committed support of this project, as well as to Richard B. Bermont, who generously underwrote this year’s travel component. I am also grateful to UM alumna Stella M. Holmes for past support of this wonderful program.

Jill Deupi JD, PhD
Beaux Arts Director and Chief Curator
Acknowledgements

ArtLab@The Lowe is the culmination of many layers of cooperation, contribution, and commitment. Conceived and curated by six undergraduate students enrolled in ARH511 during the Spring 2016 semester, we took the notion of the “laboratory” seriously as a space of inquiry and experimentation. Sincere thanks go to the generosity of the Lowe Art Museum as well as its impressive holdings. The Lowe Art Museum’s gracious director, Dr. Jill Deupi, has been an incredible source of stewardship and insight. Museum staff provided invaluable assistance and patience to the project, in particular, Martin Casuso, Mary Kramer, Alessia Lewitt, and Julie Berlin. Susanne Haase kindly guided us through the publication process and we are grateful to the design expertise of Chris Rogers.

The success of this exhibition is indebted to Dr. Leonidas Bachas, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, as well as to Richard B. Bermont, without whom ArtLab’s brilliant week-long visit to Los Angeles over Spring Break would not have been possible. While in Los Angeles, the class was fortunate to meet with and learn from leading experts, including Rebecca Morse, Associate Curator at the Wallis Annenberg Photography Department, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Jamillah James, Assistant Curator at the Hammer Museum, and Arpad Kovacs, Assistant Curator in the Department of Photographs, J. Paul Getty Museum. These curators inspired our students and cultivated their sense of discernment by altruistically sharing their varied experiences in the field of museum studies.

Additional appreciation goes to the Department of Art and Art History, especially my colleagues Dr. Perri Lee Roberts, Dr. Nathan Timpano, and Dr. Karen Mathews, whose counsel, acumen, and collegiality are beyond compare. And finally, the curatorial team deserves a round of applause. Thank you Emma Fu, Katy Huang, Marina Lahowin, Joseph Pettinelli, Claire Pohl, and Lisa Walker for your creativity, sense of humor, and determination.

Heather Diack
Assistant Professor, Modern and Contemporary Art Department of Art and Art History
Photographs often function as signs that anchor our understanding of the world. We imagine them as fixed moments in time that act as windows into the lives of others as well as mirror reflections of ourselves. However, photographs are always partial and fragmentary visions whose meanings invariably shift over time.

“Blasted Allegories” considers the way photography resists decisive conclusions. Random details, unexpected gestures, and strange parallels occur across the photographs featured. Spanning the history of the medium, works by Garry Winogrand, Gregory Crewdson, Walker Evans, Eadweard Muybridge, Nan Goldin, Weegee, and others come together as suggestive examples of how photography shapes human experience.

Figuratively challenging the notion of the static image, this exhibition investigates the dynamism of photography. Through varying images, sometimes somber, humorous, and even uncanny, this exhibition questions what photographs are and what they do. These fleeting frames examine the unexpected ways photography engages everyday life, and informs the way we see the world and our complex relationships to others.

Heather Diack
Assistant Professor, Modern and Contemporary Art
Department of Art and Art History

On the Cover:
FRANK PAULIN
United States, b. 1926
Movie Ticketseller, Times Square, 1957 (printed later)
Gelatin silver print
13 ¾ x 19 ½ in. (33.3 x 49.5 cm)
Gift of Bruce Silverstein, 2009.24.7
© Frank Paulin Archive, Courtesy Bruce Silverstein Gallery
BERENICE ABBOTT
United States, 1898-1991
Gunsmith and Police Department, 1937
(printed 1979)
Gelatin silver print
15 ½ x 19 ½ in. (39.4 x 49.5 cm)
Gift of Milton E. Feldman
81.0511.06

As a member of the avant-garde from the early 1920s, Abbott spent her career exploring the limits and nature of documentary photography and photographic realism. Through the angles of her camera lens, she composes a shot with the gunsmith sign pointing at the police station. This photograph was part of Abbott’s project, Changing New York (1935-39), which documented buildings throughout Manhattan. It was a sociological study intended to enhance people’s awareness of their environment as both a by-product of their societal activities and as an agent shaping their daily lives.
— Lisa Walker
Brassaï
France (born Hungary), 1899-1984
*Bal musette*, 1932 (printed ca. 1970)
Gelatin silver print, 11 ¾ x 9 ¼ in. (29.8 x 23.2 cm)
Museum purchase through funds from an Anonymous Donor
2009.10

While the term “Bal-musette” (a style of French dance and music) implies a depiction of a lively nightclub, Brassaï’s vision is distinctly surreal. Behind a seated trio a giant mirror expands the scope of the photograph to include the acquaintances seated across from them. One man seems distant, the other laughing and involved. The woman in the mirror reflects almost the same position and expression as the one facing her, and the eerily in-synch positioning of each man’s draped arm gives the scene an uncanny feel. The mirror’s inclusion of the truncated heads of the depicted persons imbues the photo with a metaphysical and self-referential tone. Described as a “living eye,” Brassaï invites the viewers to experience this fortuitous feat of framing.
— Claire Pohl
MANUEL ÁLVAREZ BRAVO
Mexico, 1902-2002
Parábola óptica (Optic Parable), 1931 (printed 1974)
Gelatin silver print, 9 ¾ x 7 ¾ in. (23.8 x 18.1 cm)
Gift of The American Foundation for the Arts
84.0190.01

Manuel Álvarez Bravo’s work cannot be encapsulated into a single theme or thread. Rather, his work can be political and didactic, but also simply aesthetic. Parábola óptica offers a more surreal aspect to the oeuvre of the preeminent 20th-century Mexican photographer. The symbolic eye of the optician’s shop, as well as its reflections from the glass, can be seen as a metaphor for photography and its deceiving factor. By flipping the negative, Álvarez Bravo forces the viewer to see the photograph the way the camera technologically captured the image—much through the same process that our eyes receive the world inverted physically, and revert the image thanks to the optical nerve.
— Joseph Pettinelli
HENRI CARTIER-BRESSON
France, 1908-2004
*Behind the Gare Saint-Lazare, Paris*, 1932 (printed ca. 1960)
Gelatin silver print, 12 ¼ x 8 ¾ in. (32.4 x 22.5 cm)
Museum purchase through the 2009 Director’s Circle, the Linnie E. Dalbeck Memorial Endowment Fund and the Lowe Art Museum Acquisitions Fund
2009.1

Behind a Parisian train station, a man and his shadow are captured by the camera as he hurriedly leaps from a ladder rung across a pool of water. The stillness of the puddle contrasts with the spontaneity of his moving figure. This symmetrically composed scene exemplifies what Cartier-Bresson called the “decisive moment,” a fraction of a second that enables instantaneous recognition. The fence posts and railway advertisements in the background are also reflected onto the water’s surface. This image embodies photography’s deep connection to doubling and replication.

— Katy Huang
ALBERT COYA
United States (born Cuba), 1920-1993
Blind Children at Lincoln Memorial, not dated
Gelatin silver print, 11 ¾ x 9 ¼ in. (28.9 x 23.5 cm)
Gift of The Coya Family and The Miami Herald
94.0007.17

A group of blind children visit the Lincoln Memorial and reach up to caress the President’s face. An icon of the battle for equality in this country, it reminds us of the space between the world these children live in and the visual realm. This rare physical interaction between a restricted piece of art and the small tips of their fingers marks a desire to learn and understand, and to “see” through touch. Albert Coya’s photo-journalistic abilities are highlighted in this image, as the camera centers on Lincoln’s bold and sympathetic aspect, creating a dramatic composition that draws the viewer in, perhaps even soliciting our touch as well.
— Marina Lahowin
JOHN ANTHONY BALDESSARI
United States, b. 1931
Black and white photographs, color photographs, and pencil on board
30 ¼ x 39 ½ in. (76.8 x 100.3 cm)
Museum purchase through funds from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Artist-as-Photographer Acquisition Fund
81.0556

Baldessari introduced photography into the realm of conceptual art by appropriating television images, assigning each a monochromatic color, and ascribing to each frame an adjective or idea such as: stern, stoic, streak, you, observe, guard. Some of the resulting images seem to correspond with their related text while others are confounding, and even nonsensical. The reference to “blasted allegories” stems from the words of Nathaniel Hawthorne in his frustration to understand the complex allegorical worlds he created in his literature—similar to how Baldessari calls on us to consistently question our notions and associations about photography and images more broadly.

— Claire Pohl
GREGORY CREWDSON
United States, b. 1962
Untitled (Robin with Ring of Eggs), 1993
Chromogenic color print
27 ¾ x 35 ¾ in. (70.5 x 90.5 cm)
Museum purchase through the 2008 Director’s Circle, the Linnie E. Dalbeck Memorial Endowment Fund, Richard and Shelly Bermont, and the Lowe Art Museum Acquisitions Fund 2008.17

Self-described as an American Realist photographer with an interest in the uncanny, Crewdson creates a mysterious scene of birds gathered around eggs in a circle formation, suburban houses lurking in the background, with trees, a stationed ladder, a water tower, and mountains. In tension with the American landscape, the ring of eggs occur as some kind of paranormal event, a paradox between domesticity and nature. Crewdson aims to use symbols of psychological anxiety, fear, or desire, using staged photographs to interrogate the constructed surrealism of ordinary life.
— Lisa Walker
ELLIOtt ERWITT
United States (born France), b. 1928
Mt. Fuji & Sign, Mt. Fuji, Japan, 1977
Gelatin silver print, 11 7/8 × 7 7/8 in. (30.2 × 20 cm)
Gift of Michael J. Charles
81.0449.01

Elliott Erwitt depicts the world with a signature sense of wry humor, situated within the oddity of everyday life. Here, a sign features an arrow pointing upwards in the foreground, mimicking the vertical ascent of the towering Mount Fuji in the background. Below we see a panorama of Tokyo, locating the photographer’s vantage point, and by extension, the viewer’s. This picture reveals one of the central conundrums of the experience of photography: namely the way the photograph functions as a sign of the original. Erwitt cleverly collapses the distance between these two perspectives.
— Katy Huang
This series consists of eleven pictures of the Brooklyn Bridge, photographed by Evans from different angles, exemplifying his modernist aesthetic. Each aspect of the bridge is presented in this fragmented panorama, as the camera moves from one side to the other. The bridge serves as a vanishing point in this photographic game with perspective. Buildings appear and recede, as ship sails enter and exit the frames, and the smoke gradually gets thicker. Three of the photographs were published as illustrations to Hart Crane’s epic poem, *The Bridge* (1930).

— Emma Fu
Walker Evans was a critical figure in the development of American documentary photography, well-known for his work with the Farm Security Administration during the Great Depression. These peculiar images show a balancing act of bed sheets, socks, and shirts drying outdoors under the sunlight, blown by the wind. This family-oriented, residential setting shows the banality of everyday working class life, and observes the domestic display of the intimate and personal objects in a public setting. The varying transparency of these fabrics imitate human shadows. They are ghostly silhouettes of bodies, and enigmatic traces of the lives lived within them.

— Katy Huang
A focused female resort photographer takes a picture of a posed, camera-ready woman. The subject is surrounded by two cranes, an alligator, and the façade of a boat, with a few palm trees and the ocean in the background. It is difficult to decipher which elements are real and which are props. The scene’s objective and emotionless features make it appear timeless, though it is indeed 1941, with the tensions of WWII looming just outside of the frame. Florida sunshine is pictured as an escape to be commemorated. A sense of savage absurdity subtly permeates the ordinariness and simplicity of this artificial moment.

— Emma Fu
BRUCE DAVIDSON
United States, b. 1933
Untitled (Bride and Groom), 1965
(printed 1982)
Gelatin silver print
7 7/8 x 11 3/4 in. (20 x 29.8 cm)
Gift of Jennifer and Isaac S. Goldman
2014.6

A bride and groom stand in a field of unruly grass, on the precipice of their martial vows. The special moment pictured is peculiar, with the view of an industrial factory intruding from the background. The rough landscape contrasts with the delicate atmosphere expected of a wedding. Taken during a visit to Wales, Davidson’s image is characterized by restless alienation. From an outsider to an insider, with compassion and tenderness, Davidson’s presence coexists with the subjects that he photographs.

— Emma Fu
NAN GOLDIN
United States, b. 1953
Cibachrome color print
13 × 19 ¼ in. (33 × 48.9 cm)
Museum purchase
2007.36

Sex, addiction, and raw moments between lovers have been recurring themes within Goldin’s works. Taken during the height of the AIDS/HIV epidemic, this image’s display of tension is as unsettling as the rich and cold colors. Suzanne’s direct stare at the camera is almost a gesture of challenge and invitation. Philippe leans on her body, eyes closed. Goldin takes photo as “a way of touching someone, a form of tenderness,” and here, intimacy and alienation blend with one another in an at once emotional and detached way.
— Emma Fu
ANDRÉ KÉRTE SZ
United States (born Hungary) 1894-1985
Mondrian's Glasses and Pipe, Paris, 1926
Gelatin silver print, 7 ¾ x 9 ⅜ in. (19.7 x 24 cm)
© Estate of André Kértesz, Courtesy by Throckmorton Fine Art
IL2009.9.4 (Not on view)

This still life, taken in the cultural milieu of Paris during the 1920's, is a canonical image by the Hungarian-born André Kértesz. Inside the studio of Piet Mondrian, Kértesz captured a careful construction of two sets of eyeglasses and a pipe belonging to the Dutch painter. Through the very act of photographing such banal personal items, Kértesz elevates these objects and their mystery. Furthermore, he photographs them using a geometric minimalist composition, a method that mirrors and homages the work of the De Stijl painter, famous for his distinct lozenge paintings completed during the inter-war period.
— Joseph Pettinelli
ABELARDO MORELL  
United States (born Cuba), b. 1948  
Camera Obscura Image of Boston’s Old Custom House in Hotel Room, 1999  
Gelatin silver print  
31 ¼ x 39 ½ in. (80 x 100.3 cm)  
Gift of Francien Ruwitch  
2003.58.17

The camera obscura consists of two essential elements: total darkness and an aperture through which light enters. Within this “dark room,” a reverse image of the outside world becomes projected onto the interior wall. This optical phenomenon transforms Morell’s darkened hotel room into a magical scene, in which Boston’s cityscape unfolds. Roads, buildings, and windows migrate surreally from the public to the private realm. On the wall, two clocks line up vertically, evoking the passing of multiple temporalities in synch. Oddly however, one seems to be missing its hands, suggesting that in fact no time has passed at all.  
— Katy Huang
Sol LeWitt
United States, 1928–2007
Windows, 1980
Color photographic composition, 31 ⅛ x 27 ⅜ in. (79.1 x 70.5 cm)
Gift of Ruth and Richard Shack
81.0134

Sol Lewitt was one of the most influential artists involved with Conceptual art and Minimalism throughout the 1960s and 1970s. His works are often characterized by geometric structures and the repetition of forms that investigate the notion of connection and disconnection between vision and the mind. Windows is composed of seventy-two chromogenic photographic prints mounted onto a board, arranged in a grid format lining up row after row. The systematic reiteration of window panes suggests varying processes and modular elements that build different versions of the same reality, or perhaps a world viewed from the same perspective but through different experiences.
— Katy Huang
EADWEARD MUYBRIDGE
England, 1830-1904
Plate 9 (Male Walking), 1887
Collotype, 7 ⅞ x 14 ⅛ in. (18.1 x 36.2 cm)
Museum purchase
2007.15.1

Muybridge became the first photographer to capture precise sequences of movement. His studies of movements imperceptible to the human eye reveal the marvels of photography as a medium—revelations that seemed like magic in the 19th century. Although the study has the appearance of a scientific investigation, Muybridge considered himself an artist and edited each of his frames to achieve the final sequenced result. Male Walking directs us to visualize human locomotion, even when the images themselves are static, demonstrating photography’s potential to exploit the viewer’s innate human nature to create a narrative out of the shadowy semblance of a thing itself.
— Claire Pohl
FRANK PAULIN
United States, b. 1926
Family in Front of Waterfall, 1981
Gelatin silver print
9 ¼ x 13 ¾ in. (23.2 x 34.9 cm)
Gift of Bruce Silverstein
2009.24.13

Frank Paulin began studying photography at the age of sixteen before enlisting in the army in 1944. While in Europe, Paulin’s signature documentary style emerged as he photographed war-torn towns in Germany. When Paulin returned to America, he was captivated by quiet and passing human moments in juxtaposition with powerful scenery. In Family in Front of Waterfall an average family stares out over the balcony to the roaring waterfall and river below. Paulin immortalizes the moment on film, and, in doing so, comically contrasts the charming ordinariness of this group with the breathtaking landscape.

— Marina Lahowin
FRANK PAULIN
United States, b. 1926
Movie Ticketseller, Times Square, 1957 (printed later)
Gelatin silver print
13 1/8 x 19 1/8 in. (33.3 x 49.5 cm)
Gift of Bruce Silverstein
2009.24.7

During the 1950s, Frank Paulin would roam the streets of New York City, in and around Times Square. This flaneur lifestyle helped Paulin develop a unique documentary approach, and his photos seem to exceed ordinary vision. Many of them are preoccupied with the optical illusions of mirrors and reflections found in urban space, and contain irony, humor, and the uncanny. His clear compositions are a by-product of repeated practice and his day job as a fashion illustrator. Paulin additionally had an extensive art education, studying at the Art Institute of Chicago and the New School in New York.
—Joseph Pettinelli
FRANK PAULIN
United States, b. 1926
Fifth Avenue Reflection, New York, 1958 (printed later)
Gelatin silver print
18 ¾ x 14 ¾ in. (47.3 x 37.8 cm)
Gift of Bruce Silverstein
2009.24.9

While Paulin is consistently noted for his documentary photographs, this image marks a departure from the artist’s traditional method of capturing scenes of urban life. The photo depicts an elegant woman poised against a sumptuous interior; yet upon further inspection, the image seems almost too perfect. The woman is a mannequin, frozen in plastic immobility. While the mask expertly conceals the mannequin’s inhuman features, her mirrored reflection reveals the nature of artificial humanity, and a precisely staged setting. Such luxury enclosed behind glass and detached from both photographer and viewer, suggests the intangibility, rarity, and inequality of such wealth within a sprawling metropolis.

— Claire Pohl
ADAM RAPHAEL  
United States, b. 1959  
*Charles*, 2007  
Digital inkjet print, 20 ⅛ x 20 in. (51.4 x 50.8 cm)  
Gift of the Artist  
2009.6.1  

Aiming to build sensual tension within the visual setting, Raphael composes his model subjects around lighting and props to evoke visions of youthful energy at work and at play. This photograph is part of his series titled *Barely Working*. The focus is a young man at the wheel, with a contemplative look, as the bright blue sky and clouds reflect off the hood of his car. The artist describes his desire to depict the vulnerable aspects of his models, who are exposed with tenderness and purity.  
— Lisa Walker
ALEXANDER RODCHENKO
Russia, 1891-1956

Aerial View of a Park, 1929
(printed 1980s)
Gelatin silver print
9 ½ x 12 in. (24.1 x 30.5 cm)
Museum purchase through funds from Richard and Shelly Bermont
2008.7

It is difficult to divorce political ideology from the oeuvre of Aleksandr Rodchenko. Constructivism, the artistic movement he helped establish, is intimately linked with the tumult of the October Revolution in 1917. Viewed on its own terms, Rodchenko’s work embodies avant-garde invention, traceable from the linear paintings he created just after the Bolshevik revolution through to his experiments with the medium of photography. Aerial View of a Park is a successful foray by Rodchenko and his Constructionist ideals into photography, and demonstrates the revolutionary possibilities of changing points of view available through the camera’s frame.
— Joseph Pettinelli
Ripped pieces of photographs are being rearranged like a mosaic onto a dark piece of cardstock that reads “The Camera Never Lies.” Photographer Michael Peel however chose to title this work *But…*, raising a question about honesty and photography. Are photographs true depictions of the world or do photographers have just as much power to alter an image as this mysterious hand? Peel shows how easy and tangible it is to rearrange a photo based on the artist’s preference, but leaves the question open to the viewer, as a detective who accounts for the clues presented.
— Marina Lahowin
Weegee, born Arthur Fellig, adopted his pseudonym as a nod to Ouija, the séance-board game, as he claimed to possess the psychic ability to predict where the action was. On November 22, 1943, opening night of the Metropolitan Opera’s fall season, two society ladies, Mrs. George Washington Kavanaugh and Lady Decies, were undercut by the disheveled stare of a less-refined citizen. Weegee captures this brief encounter between high and low society. Weegee was of course as much a fan of fakery as sensationalism: it was revealed later that this photograph was a crafted “documentary shot,” and the “critic” a compliant participant the photographer found drunk in the Bowery.

— Lisa Walker
GARRY WINOGRAND
United States, 1928-1984
Metropolitan Museum of Art Centennial Ball -
New York City, New York, 1969
(printed 1974)
Gelatin silver print
8 ¼ x 12 ¾ in. (22.2 x 32.7 cm)
Gift of The American Foundation for the Arts
83.0143.12

As a respected American street photographer, Winogrand captured candid moments of everyday life in the postwar era. He was attracted to the uncanny, radical, and absurd in public and private social settings. At the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s Centennial Ball in 1969, Winogrand documented such behavior among the rich and powerful. Instead of close-ups and focusing on a single subject, he uses a wide-angle lens to capture as much life as possible. His frequently off-kilter framing highlights moments of social tension and imbalance with a provocative aesthetic.
— Lisa Walker
During the height of the Civil Rights Movement, Winogrand captured this photo, whose subject provocatively courted controversy. Significantly, this un-staged image was captured the same year that Loving v. Virginia, decided unanimously by the Supreme Court, declared state laws banning interracial marriage unconstitutional. Central Park Zoo, New York City importantly confronts the uncomfortable issue of racism in a humorous manner, in the distinct street-photographer style that permeates Winogrand’s oeuvre. His method is the antithesis of the highly manipulated environment of the studio. Rather, Winogrand engaged the ordinary and the eccentric in the midst of everyday America.

— Joseph Pettinelli
GARRY WINOGRAND
United States, 1928-1984
Coney Island - New York City, New York
1952 (printed 1974)
Gelatin silver print
8 3/8 x 12 3/8 in. (21.9 x 32.7 cm)
Gift of The American Foundation for the Arts
83.0143.01

Working as a street photographer in New York, Winogrand commented on controversial topics of his time. His openness to random and unscripted moments allowed for vexing and often haphazard subjects. Coney Island is no exception, with the uneventful gathering under the boardwalk made alluring by the oddity of a central, headless figure. Traditionally a photograph like this would have been considered an accident or a result of bad composition. In this case, the viewer is drawn into this unusual scene by an encounter with an obscured face, ironically the only person seemingly aware of the camera’s presence.
— Marina Lahowin
The desolate landscape of the American West—bushes, sand, and mountains—is accompanied by a partial view of a suburban home numbered 1208. A child totters out of a darkened garage. A tiny tricycle lays askew on the driveway. Deep lyricism is built into this particular image: the specific time and weather remain unknown, the vitality of children contrasts with the bleakness of the desert, and, above the mountains, the clouds pass by. As the photographer once stated, “no moment is most important,” whereas “any moment can be something.” Winogrand turns a moment of ordinariness into an epic.

— Emma Fu
Three glamorous women strut down Hollywood and Vine, enshrined by castings of light that give them a mythological and distinctly ethereal air. A family waits at the bus stop while their child stares at a man slumping dejectedly in a wheelchair. The women look on with indifference. Winogrand’s camera is an unbiased collector of experiences, documenting reactions and relationships between people. The photograph takes on an ironic edge as the disparities seen on the “boulevard of dreams” show that the postwar good life is still out of reach for many. Even the slight angle at which the photograph is taken gives the entire scene an imbalance that could suggest the fragility of the social structure that connects us all.

— Claire Pohl
Dubbed the “mirror with a memory,” the daguerreotype revolutionized the photography industry. Louis-Jacques-Mande Daguerre used a light-sensitive mirror, exposed it within a camera to light, and, when the image was complete, removed the light-sensitive chemicals. The final striking image seemed to float ghost-like on top of the mirror plate creating a depth and strange realness to the sitter. Additionally, when the viewers look closely at a daguerreotype, they find themselves reflected in the mirror, adding new life to a lost moment across the chasm of time. Daguerreotype portraits were extremely popular in the 1940s, but due to the inability to duplicate images, they became an obsolete practice.

— Marina Lahowin
Meeting with Árpád Kovács, Assistant Curator in the Department of Photographs, J. Paul Getty Museum.


Meeting with Rebecca Morse, Associate Curator at the Wallis Annenberg Photography Department, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, discussing Roe Ethridge’s *Nancy with Polaroid* (2003).

View of the Getty Museum.

Working at the Lowe Art Museum.

Meeting with Jamillah James, Assistant Curator at the Hammer Museum.

Curatorial team: Heather Diack, Marina Lahowin, Joseph Pettinelli, Claire Pohl, Emma Fu, Katy Huang, Lisa Walker.
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