

People Watching: Contemporary Photography since 1965
June 24–November 5, 2023
Bowdoin College Museum of Art | Brunswick, Maine
Exhibition Labels

People Watching: Contemporary Photography since 1965

This exhibition brings together contemporary photographs from the United States and abroad that reveal how more than fifty leading artists have represented individuals on the street, at home and at work, in the studio, and encountered during documentary or journalistic assignments. In particular, it explores the phenomenon of “people watching” and its recent history as a recreational activity, an act of surveillance, a type of harassment, a marker of admiration, a sign of empathy, and a documentary form of expression.

Since the advent of photography in the nineteenth century, artists have used the camera to look at—and to look with—the human subjects in their midst. Portraits, figure studies, and other photographic practices centered on individuals quickly became one of the medium’s leading genres, and they remain so today. The interest in people in public and private space has only increased in recent decades with the development of new camera technologies and distribution systems.

Both the COVID-19 pandemic—when social distancing and shelter-in-place orders became the rule—and recent social and racial justice movements—when calls to be seen, heard, and respected were once again uttered—have transformed our understanding of public space and our relationship to others. The artworks in this exhibition are about noticing difference, but also about attempts to find common ground, an idea that is especially resonant at this moment.

This exhibition was curated by Frank Goodyear, BCMA co-director, with assistance from Silas Brown ’24 and Charlotte Youkilis ’20. Major support has been provided by the Elizabeth B. G. Hamlin Fund, Steven Marrow ’83 and Dianne Pappas P’21, and Eric Silverman ’85, P’19.

On the Street

Street photography is as old as the medium itself. Not long after the introduction of photography in 1839, practitioners began to take cameras into public spaces in order to capture the lives of groups and individuals. In the last sixty years, the use of photography has grown exponentially, especially following the popular introduction of new digital technologies in the 1990s. Why are people with cameras drawn to photographing others on the street? Is it to remember specific moments? Is it to publicize those whose work they admire or scorn? Is it to understand more fully how they relate to others or how the figure looks in different contexts? Contemporary artists are more aware than ever about the power and ubiquity of photographic images. Their work on the street scrutinizes a moment in time, problematizes it, and seeks new ways to live in it.

LEE FRIEDLANDER

American, born 1934

New York City, 1966

gelatin silver print

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Museum Purchase

1998.11

Photography is a way of capturing the vibrancy of the world around us, but it can also function as a form of harassment. Lee Friedlander highlights this notion of intimidation in this image taken on the street in

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New York City. He pictures the shadow of his own head on the back of a woman whose back is turned to the camera. Secretly photographing an unsuspecting woman, he reminds the viewer of the potentially invasive nature of photography. One of his generation's most influential street photographers, Friedlander has worked for more than sixty years capturing America's social landscape. About his work, he once remarked: "I'm not a premeditative photographer. I see a picture and I make it ... You don't have to go looking for pictures. The material is generous. You go out and the pictures are staring at you."

GARRY WINOGRAND

American, 1928–1984

top row, left to right:

New York City, 1967

New York City, 1972

bottom row, left to right:

New York City, 1968

New York City, 1968

gelatin silver prints

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Gift of Michael G. Frieze, Class of 1960

1983.29.2.4, 1983.29.2.11, 1983.29.2.2, and 1983.29.2.6

"I photograph to find out what something will look like photographed," Garry Winogrand famously declared. While photographers have pictured people in public since the medium's advent in the nineteenth century, Winogrand reinvented the genre of street photography beginning in the 1950s. His improvisational and rapid-fire technique of picturing strangers on New York City sidewalks made him more than a quiet bystander, but rather an active participant in the world in which he was photographing. Many tried to imitate his process, though few with great success. By shooting such a large quantity of film, he only learned whether any notable images resulted after he had developed his rolls of film. At his death in 1984, nearly a quarter of his lifetime's work remained unprocessed.

PETER HUJAR

American, 1934–1987

Christopher Street Pier #2 (Crossed Legs), 1976

gelatin silver print

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Museum Purchase, Lloyd O. and Marjorie Strong Coulter Fund

2016.8

Peter Hujar pictures a sunbather beside the Hudson River in an area of New York City that attracted gay men in the years after the 1969 Stonewall Riots. The piers had at the time lost their economic viability and now offered open spaces to roaming artists and attracted gay cruising activity. Hujar's sensitivity to his subjects' individuality and vulnerability distinguished him as a photographer of portraits, cityscapes, and animals and made him a central figure among a network of progressive artists in 1970s New York. In this and other photographs he expressed with clarity and economy what is now considered a valuable legacy of this period: namely, that identity frames perception and that art provides a tool for the expression of diversity.

BRUCE DAVIDSON

American, born 1933

Untitled, 1966

gelatin silver print

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Museum Purchase

1985.47

In 1966, Bruce Davidson began a two-year project photographing one block in East Harlem. This photograph derives from his “East 100th Street” series. At the time one of the most economically disadvantaged neighborhoods in New York City, East Harlem had long been plagued by racism and neglect. Working with a large format camera on a tripod with a desire “to meet people eye to eye ... without intruding,” Davidson traveled from elsewhere in the city almost every day to photograph there, often returning with prints to give to his subjects. In the process he came to be accepted by many, though not all. During a period when NASA was sending rockets to the moon, Davidson “wanted to see into the inner space of the city and to focus sharply on people here on earth.”

VALERIA “MIKKI” FERRILL

American, born 1937

Cole Shine King, ca. 1970

gelatin silver print

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Museum Purchase, Gridley W. Tarbell II Fund

2022.16

Valeria “Mikki” Ferrill once explained that photography was “the medium that could give me all the aspects I wanted in an art form: the ability to record the situation as it truly appeared yet with a personal interpretation.” Influenced by the Black Arts Movement, Ferrill has focused throughout her career on portraying the people and places that constitute Chicago’s South Side. On the street and at locally owned businesses, as well as at homes and schools, she has sought to capture the personal expression of Black identity. In *Cole Shine King*, she figures the interior of James Cole’s shoeshine shop in Chicago. Still working today, Cole is widely known for giving neighborhood youth their first job. In this photograph many who are shining shoes are younger than their customers.

LEONARD FREED

American, 1929–2006

Gay Activist Alliance Yearly Protest March on Christopher Street, 1972

gelatin silver print

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Gift of Hilary Leff and Elliot Groffman

2015.59.7

This photograph is part of a larger series by Leonard Freed that documented activists in the years immediately after the Stonewall Riots in New York City in 1969, a turning point in the gay liberation movement and the twentieth-century fight for LGBT rights in the United States. Born in Brooklyn to working class Jewish parents of Eastern European descent, Freed was a pioneering photojournalist whose interest in disenfranchised communities led to assignments throughout the United States and around the globe. During the 1960s, he devoted much time to documenting the civil rights movement

and traveled extensively with Martin Luther King, Jr. Freed's commitment to equal rights extended widely, and he used his photography to make visible those groups and organizations that struggled for greater recognition in America.

RASHID JOHNSON

American, born 1977

Larry, 1999

Van Dyke Brown photo-emulsion print

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Museum Purchase, The Philip Conway Beam Endowment Fund
2022.22

Larry is part of a series of photographic portraits of homeless men in Chicago titled "Seeing in the Dark" that artist Rashid Johnson developed over three years beginning in 1997. Whereas the unhoused have often been understood as a social problem, Johnson crafted images in which his subjects were seen, treated, and depicted with respect. He titled these works after the names of the men he photographed, rather than portraying them as anonymous figures, and utilized an antique photographic process that produces rich dark browns in order to bath his subjects in a warm and dignified light. For Johnson, art often serves as a vehicle for testing and sometimes bridging the social divides that exist in lives and communities. As historian Shelley Rice has written, the photographs in "Seeing in the Dark" are "arenas of action, places where people come together, and cultures comingle."

YASUHIRO ISHIMOTO

Japanese American, 1921–2012

Untitled (Chicago), ca. 1960

gelatin silver print

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Gift, Joe Baio Photography Collection
2017.61.83

In this photograph, three children look out from the rear of a moving station wagon while photographer Yasuhiro Ishimoto snaps their picture. What is going through each person's mind in this exchange of gazes? This question is not insignificant, especially to Ishimoto, who was imprisoned for two years at a Japanese-American internment camp in Colorado as a young man during World War II. Following his release, he returned to Chicago, where he pursued his newfound interest in photography at the Chicago Institute of Design. Studying with Laszlo Moholy-Nagy and Harry Callahan at the so-called "New Bauhaus," Ishimoto emerged as one of the leading street photographers of his era. In 1961 he left Chicago to take a teaching position in Japan, though he returned often to the country of his birth.

DANNY LYON

American, born 1942

Crossing the Ohio, Louisville, 1966

gelatin silver print

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Gift of Michael G. Frieze, Class of 1960
1982.28.10

For more than fifty years, Danny Lyon has been a leading figure in the field of American documentary photography. He is especially known for involving himself in the worlds that his subjects occupy. In

1962, while still in college at the University of Chicago, he became the first staff photographer for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and spent time over the next several years traveling in the Midwest and the South photographing civil rights demonstrations and other activist programs. During this same period, he also joined the Chicago Outlaws motorcycle club. For five years he rode with its members, while also creating a memorable series of photographs. *Crossing the Ohio, Louisville* is one example from this series. In 1968 he published a selection of these works in his first book *The Bikeriders*.

DAIDO MORIYAMA

Japanese, born 1938

Three Boys, 1968

gelatin silver print

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Gift, Joe Baio Photography Collection

2020.51.31

Rejecting the straight realism favored by many contemporary fine art photographers and photojournalists in the West, Daido Moriyama embraced a photographic style beginning in the 1960s characterized by blurred movement, sharply tilted angles, and harsh contrast. Carrying a hand-held camera, he made the cultural upheaval of postwar Japan his primary subject. In photographs such as *Three Boys*, he recorded the people he encountered on the street, indifferent to portraying them in a favorable light. In 1968, Moriyama helped to establish *Provoke*, a short-lived but deeply influential avant-garde photography magazine. For the past sixty years, he has used his practice to question preconceived notions of photographic truth and vision.

PHILIP-LORCA DICORCIA

American, born 1951

Los Angeles, 1997

chromogenic print

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Gift of Nancy Rutter Clark

2022.8.13

In his “Streetwork” series (1993–97), Philip-Lorca diCorcia created photographs of real people in real places. Yet, each view was carefully planned and staged in advance. For diCorcia, the street was understood as a theatrical stage on which unidentified passers-by might play a part. About this series, of which *Los Angeles* was a part, diCorcia has explained: “The world is too elusive to pin down in a photograph. The image has to create its own world, hopefully self-contained, an analog of reality, not a mirror of it. Issues raised in the images are part of their content. That there should be more questions than answers should surprise no one ... I focus excessively and dramatically on that which was never really hidden, but rarely is noticed.”

KEVIN BUBRISKI, CLASS OF 1975

American, born 1954

Woman in Straw Hat with Paper Respirator Mask, 2001

Man Wearing a Champion USA T-shirt with his Family, 2001

gelatin silver prints

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Gift of the artist

2002.22.2 and 2002.22.1

Not long after the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, Kevin Bubriski traveled on repeat occasions from his home in Shaftsbury, Vermont, to New York City. In particular, he wanted to photograph people in the area around the World Trade Center, the twin buildings that collapsed as a result of the attack. Bubriski wrote about this moment: “I felt the need to witness and understand the impact of the tragedy through my camera ... I found people experiencing a remarkable sense of community, but also the deepest kind of personal reflection on loss and mortality.” During each of his five trips to New York that fall, Bubriski turned his camera away from the destruction of the fallen towers to document visitors’ silent moments of heartfelt reflection.

ELINOR CARUCCI

Israeli American, born 1971

Monday Morning, Mother of Two, 2010

chromogenic print

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Gift, Joe Baio Collection of Photography

2017.61.27

In her series “Mother,” Elinor Carucci captures the intimate highs and lows of a decade of motherhood, beginning with the birth of her twins. She has written about this project: “I started taking pictures out of anger...all I could remember was the Madonna and child images ... where everything is perfect. I want to photograph it the way I feel it.” This photograph was taken during the rush of the early morning and captures Carucci running while carrying her daughter, with the shadow of her son close behind. Carucci noted that she began photographing her children outside because, while she desired to capture “intimacy and very deep moments ... those happen outside with kids as well. When we go out the door, nothing really changes.”

MITCH EPSTEIN

American, born 1952

Untitled (New York), 1998

chromogenic print

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Gift of the Alex Katz Foundation

2010.46

This portrait captures the quiet exhaustion of a woman in the back of a car. It derives from a series titled “The City,” in which the artist Mitch Epstein explored the curious blend of private and public life that is so prevalent in New York City. In this photograph we are asked to question whether this is a private or public moment. Is the woman in the back of a taxi or a personal car? Is the viewer a stranger or a friend? Based in New York, Epstein was one of the earliest American photographers to explore the creative possibilities of color photography, a medium that makes more immediate a photographer’s subject.

On Assignment

Picturing people in other communities—whether regionally, nationally, or internationally—has long engaged the imagination of photographers. Sweeping changes in transportation systems, digital communications, and global markets during the last sixty years have permitted greater access to

formerly remote places and resulted in the increased circulation of photographic images. Documentary photographers and photojournalists today face new opportunities for studying other cultures and bearing witness to world events. At the same time, they also confront a host of age-old, yet deeply relevant questions about their ethical obligations as picture-makers. In particular, how does one responsibly photograph people beyond the specific worlds in which they live? Given the inequities and prejudices that exist in the world, being “on assignment” compels photographers to think critically about their practice and their role in larger societal dialogues.

CHAN CHAO

American, born 1966

Mya Khaing, 1997

c-print Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Museum Purchase, Lloyd O. and Marjorie Strong Coulter Fund

2023.2.1

Born in Kalemyo, Burma, in 1966, Chan Chao moved to the United States at age twelve. Over the last three decades, Chao has built a reputation as an accomplished portrait photographer. This photograph comes from his book, *Burma: Something Went Wrong* (2000), a four-year project to create a series of portraits of the young men and women who were opposing the repressive government then in command of the country of his birth. When authorities in Burma—renamed Myanmar in 1989—denied him entry to the country, Chao chose instead to go to neighboring Thailand. He crossed the border illegally into Myanmar on several occasions to photograph those who were rebelling, many of whom had participated in student uprisings when the military junta first came to power. The series is both a document of this conflict, as well as a type of self-portrait.

JULES T. ALLEN

American, born 1947

Untitled, 1983

Untitled, 1984

gelatin silver prints

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Gift in honor of Bowdoin Photography and the Class of 1976

2021.61.2 and 2021.61.6

Jules Allen grew up with boxing. Throughout his childhood in San Francisco, his father’s friends would come over on Friday nights to watch boxing matches. After visiting Gleason’s Gym in New York City as an adult, Allen decided he wanted to capture with a camera what he called the “rhythm and sophistication” of boxing culture. These two photographs come from a series titled “Double Up” that he took at Gleason’s between 1983 and 1986. Allen believed that he couldn’t capture the essence of the sport by just “walking in with a camera,” but rather he had to become “part of a community.” To do so, Allen worked out with legendary trainer Bobby McQuillen and later went three rounds with one of Gleason’s regulars.

ACCRA SHEPP

American, born 1962

top row, left to right:

Ashley Love, Occupying Wall Street, January 24, 2012

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Laura, Occupying Wall Street, April 20, 2012

bottom row, left to right:

Dan Protesting the War and the Economy, Occupying Wall Street, October 28, 2011

Charlie, Occupying Wall Street, November 3, 2011

gelatin silver prints

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Museum Purchase, Lloyd O. and Marjorie Strong Coulter Fund and Gift of the Artist

2015.35.1, 2015.18.17, 2015.35.3, and 2015.18.4

When Accra Shepp first visited New York’s Zuccotti Park, the primary site of the Occupy Wall Street protests, he was struck by the number of photojournalists already documenting the event. It wasn’t until he started talking to these other photographers that he realized he saw the crowds of protesters in an entirely different way. He was drawn to the power of individuals within the crowd and not by the sheer number of people within the park. While journalists and television crews turned their cameras towards the most animated leaders of the movement, Shepp felt a responsibility to focus his large-format camera on the great diversity of individuals who were in attendance. He returned to the site almost daily for more than a year to create this series.

ALEC SOTH

American, born 1969

Facebook, Menlo Park, California, 2013

archival pigment print

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Museum Purchase, Lloyd O. and Marjorie Strong Coulter Fund

2015.27

This photograph was created in 2013 during a two-week car trip that Minnesota artist Alec Soth and the writer Brad Zellar took to California. Playing the role of small-town newspaper reporters, they attended dozens of meetings, festivals, and other gatherings. In an era of widespread virtual networking, Soth and Zellar visited places seeking to explore through photography and print the tension between individualism and community and the human search for social connections. This goal led them to travel to the corporate headquarters of Google and Facebook, where this photograph was taken. About visiting Facebook, Zellar wrote: “I suppose California has always been a place where the dreams and disappointments of the past have kept close quarters with the wildest and most futuristic fantasies of progress.”

DANNY LYON

American, born 1942

top row, left to right:

Shakedown, Ramsey Unit, Texas, 1967

Heat Exhaustion, Ellis Unit, Texas, 1967

bottom row, left to right:

The Line, Ferguson Unit, Texas, 1969

Cotton Pickers, Ferguson Unit, Texas, 1969

gelatin silver prints

Bowdoin College Museum of Art: Gift of Michael G. Frieze, Class of 1960

1982.28.1, 1982.28.19, 1982.28.11, and 1982.28.12

Between 1967 and 1969, Danny Lyon documented the lives of incarcerated convicts at six prisons in Texas. His visits were extended stays, and in several instances, he became friends with specific inmates. With the cooperation of the Texas Department of Corrections, he published a selection of these photographs in 1971 in his second book *Conversations with the Dead*. Wanting the voice of his subjects to be heard, he also included letters, drawings, and other documents created by or about the people he encountered. Regarding his approach to photographing inmates, he recalled, “I tried with whatever power I had to make a picture of imprisonment as distressing as I knew it to be in reality. The few times I doubted the wisdom of my attitude, I had only to visit someone in his cell to straighten out my mind.”

ALFREDO JAAR

Chilean, born 1956

Angel, 2007

c-print on mounted plexiglas

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Archival Collection of Marion Boulton Stroud and Acadia Summer Arts Program, Mt. Desert Island, Maine. Gift from the Marion Boulton “Kippy” Stroud Foundation 2018.10.178

Alfredo Jaar, a Chilean-born artist and political activist, first met the boy in this photograph while shooting his 2005 film *Muxima* in Luanda, Angola. While they discussed some of the nation’s ongoing challenges, the boy spoke of the future and expressed his belief that the Angolan people would be protected by angels. The work’s tripartite format evokes a triptych, a traditional format for Christian altarpieces. The religious connotation is reinforced by the boy’s gesture of blessing and hope, which relates him to—or even transforms him into—the “angel” of the photograph’s title. Luanda is pictured in the background, a rapidly growing city whose booming oil economy has benefited a few though failed to impact positively Angola’s wider population.

SEBASTIÃO SALGADO

Brazilian, born 1944

Serra Pelada, Brazil (Cast of Thousands), 1986 (printed 2004)

gelatin silver print

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Museum Purchase, Collectors’ Collaborative and the Lloyd O. and Marjorie Strong Coulter Fund 2007.7

The Serra Pelada, Brazil’s largest and most dangerous gold mine, sits in the northern state of Pará. Though the mine now lies beneath the surface of an artificial lake, Sebastião Salgado documented the horrors of the site in its final year of operation. Many workers flocked to Serra Pelada with hope for a better future, despite making, on average, sixty cents for each trip up and down these treacherous cliffs, carrying heavy sacks of rocks and earth. Many of those who took this risk were Afro-Brazilians who lacked opportunity due to institutional discrimination, violence, and intergenerational poverty stemming from Brazil’s early history as a slave-holding nation. An internationally celebrated documentary photographer, Salgado has been using his camera to investigate the exploitation of laborers around the globe since the 1970s.

JONAS BENDIKSEN

Norwegian, born 1977

Girl Walking on Water Pipes, Dharavi, 2006

chromogenic print

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Gift, Joe Baio Collection of Photography

2017.61.11

In 2005, Jonas Bendiksen began a project to explore global poverty. For three years he traveled in Africa, Asia, and South America photographing different people and places and recording interviews with residents of the communities he was documenting. This photograph pictures a young girl walking along an industrial water pipe in Dharavi, a locality in the Indian city of Mumbai. With a population of more than 700,000 people in a district smaller than one square mile, Dharavi is one of the most densely populated areas in the world. The water pipe serves as a thoroughfare for many, though the water it carries is headed to more affluent areas of this rapidly developing city. Since 1997, plans have been discussed to redevelop Dharavi, though to date little progress has been achieved.

FARAH AL QASIMI

Emirati, born 1991

Woman in Leopard Print, 2019

archival inkjet print

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Museum Purchase, Collectors' Collaborative and the James Phinney Baxter Fund

2020.26.1

For her series “Back and Forth Disco,” Farah Al Qasimi turned her lens to the richly textured and idiosyncratic life of New York City. After moving there in 2018, Al Qasimi found herself drawn to the “visual excesses” of her new home. Born in Abu Dhabi, she discovered and photographed those vibrant manifestations of multiculturalism wherever she encountered them, but especially adorning the businesses and bodies of fellow immigrants. In *Woman in a Leopard Print*, she celebrates the self-fashioning of the global citizen. Selections from this series were exhibited in 2020 on 100 bus shelters across the five boroughs of New York City.

LARRY BURROWS

British, 1926–1971

Wounded Marine Gunnery Sgt. Jeremiah Purdie Reaches towards a Stricken Comrade after a Fierce Firefight South of the DMZ, Vietnam, 1966

dye transfer print

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Gift of Robert A. Fresón Family

2021.41

This photograph—commonly known as *Reaching Out*—pictures a group of U.S. Marines during the Vietnam War on a mud-caked hillside just south of the Demilitarized Zone. British photojournalist Larry Burrows, a staff photographer at *LIFE* magazine, created the image. Having covered conflicts previously in the Middle East and Africa, Burrows tried to experience Vietnam as a soldier might, living in military camps and traveling to the front lines. The combination of tenderness and terror, and desolation and

fellowship, transforms this image into something larger than simply a journalistic record. Burrows lost his life when a helicopter carrying him and three fellow photojournalists was shot down in Laos in 1971.

ZIG JACKSON

Mandan, Arikara, and Hidatsa/American, born 1957

Crow Fair, Montana, 1991

Camera in Face, Taos, New Mexico, 1992

gelatin silver prints

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Museum Purchase, Gridley W. Tarbell II Fund

2019.52.5 and 2019.52.6

These two photographs by Zig Jackson are from his series, “Indian Photographing Tourist Photographing Indian.” Raised on the Fort Berthold Reservation in North Dakota, and of Arikara, Hidatsa, and Mandan descent, Jackson seeks in his photographs to debunk misconceptions about Native Americans and to make visible long-standing attitudes towards Indigenous peoples held by non-Natives. About this work, he wrote: “In contrast to the seductive and glamorized (or alternately, demonized) caricatures that thrive in Hollywood and the collective American imagination, my images reveal a far different reality—one of a people in transition, a traditional indigenous culture desperately struggling to survive in the midst of a rapidly changing technological society.”

At Home

Photographing families and friends—one’s own and others—is more popular than any other photographic subject. As common as such images are, given the personal ties that bind relationships with those whom one calls family, they also permit some of the most introspective work in the medium. Home—both as a physical space and an embodiment of intimacy and interiority—provides a particular context for seeing an individual or a group of people. The sense of privacy in those surroundings has long attracted photographers. In this section, artists focus attention on their own homes and venture into the dwellings of others to understand better and connect with those around them. In doing so, they pose important questions about what constitutes a home and a family.

DIANE ARBUS

American, 1923–1971

A Woman with Her Baby Monkey, New Jersey, 1971

gelatin silver print

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Museum Purchase, Gridley W. Tarbell II Fund

2001.19

In the photographs of Diane Arbus, individuals who deviated from societal norms were a recurrent subject. At times, the subjects possessed a physical or intellectual disability, though their “difference” was often the result of a personal decision or other circumstances. In this photograph Arbus figures Gladys Ulrich and “her baby monkey” named Sam seated on a couch at Ulrich’s New Jersey home, depicted in the manner of a traditional mother and child. Why do people form such intimate attachments with non-humans? Throughout her career, Arbus created photographs that prompted questions about the nature of family and the role of women in society.

OLIVE PIERCE

American, 1925–2016

top row, left to right:

Harvey Family Skiff, 1990

Becky, Madelene, and Jocko, 1988

bottom row, left to right:

Amanda, 1987

Thanksgiving Dinner, 1991

gelatin silver prints

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Gift of the photographer Olive Pierce

2015.20.8, 2015.20.19, 2015.20.3, and 2015.20.14

In 1986, Olive Pierce began a ten-year project photographing two families—the Carters and the Harveys—in a hardscrabble village on Maine’s Muscongus Bay long associated with the commercial fishing industry. These photographs take center stage in her book, *Up River: The Story of a Maine Fishing Community* (1996). A student of photographer Berenice Abbott, Pierce long served as a high school photography teacher in Cambridge, Massachusetts. She devoted her career to educating a new generation of practitioners and to using photography to make visible underprivileged communities. Pierce explained that photographs in this project were not meant as a commentary on poverty but were records of hard-working individuals, whose lives were often hidden from wider sight.

MATTHEW PILLSBURY

American, born 1973

Calum and Erica, Solitaire and Grey’s Anatomy, Friday, September 22nd, 2006, 9:48–10:58 pm, 2006

archival pigment ink print

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Gift of Bryson B. Brodie, Class of 2000, in honor of John McKee

2015.44

This three-part panoramic photograph by Matthew Pillsbury pictures two individuals at home on a Friday evening occupied by amusements on their digital devices. Made only with available light, this work is part of his series “Screen Lives,” in which the artist photographed family members and friends watching television or working on their computers. Because of the movement of his subjects’ bodies during this hour-long exposure, the two figures become ghost-like silhouettes mesmerized by the light emitting from their screens. Growing up in France, Pillsbury was not allowed to watch television, though later became fascinated by the medium during college and graduate school. His “Screen Lives” photographs are especially concerned with our simultaneous connectedness to the wider world and the sense of physical isolation that these technologies can produce.

LAURA PRYDE MCPHEE

American, born 1958

Jenny and Pryde, Ringoes, New Jersey, 1986

Pryde, Martha, Tony, Merle, and Sarah, 1986

gelatin silver prints

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Museum Purchase, Lloyd O. and Marjorie Strong Coulter Fund

1988.24 and 1988.25

In two early photographs, Laura McPhee pictures three generations of her family gathered at their home in Ringoes, New Jersey. Her mother Pryde Brown, a photographer herself, appears in both images. McPhee's family photographs depart from the conventions of traditional group portraiture. Her unorthodox cropping decisions, together with the manner that her subjects pose and their arrangement in front of the camera, bring forward the distinct individual personalities and wider family dynamics. More recently, McPhee's photography has been focused on rural landscapes, especially in the American West, and the people who live and work on these lands. McPhee is currently a professor of photography at the Massachusetts College of Art and Design.

MELISSA ANN PINNEY

American, born 1953

Emma at the Mirror, 2006

chromogenic print

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Gift, Joe Baio Photography Collection

2017.61.123

Melissa Ann Pinney is best known for her photographic studies of American women and girls. In her series "Regarding Emma," Pinney captures the rites of passage of American womanhood, highlighting the changes that take place in one's life. Pinney hopes to show through her artistic practice the persistence of what she describes as "the child-in-the-woman and the early cultivation of the woman-in-the-child." This moment became increasingly clear to the artist as she observed the growth of her own daughter Emma. In this photograph, Emma gazes at herself in a mirror, while surrounded by various female portraits on the wall. Pinney captures her daughter in a moment of self-contemplation that seems to bridge the gap between childhood and womanhood.

GRACIELA ITURBIDE

Mexican, born 1942

Magnolia con espejo, 1986

gelatin silver print

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Museum Purchase, Lloyd O. and Marjorie Strong Coulter Fund

2021.14.3

Graciela Iturbide created this photograph during time spent with the Zapotec, a matriarchal Indigenous society in which women have traditionally taken a lead role in many aspects of society. It figures a non-binary person dressed in a dress and peering into a mirror. Iturbide created the portrait in 1986 in the small town of Juchitán, located in the southern Mexico state of Oaxaca. There, she has befriended many in the community, whom she described as "big, strong, politicized, emancipated wonderful women ... I made it my business to spend time with them, and they gave me access to their daily world and to their traditions." Iturbide credits her ability to record depictions of daily life to the trust she builds with her subjects: "I want to be clear that I do not work in the indigenous world if there is not complicity and respect."

LARRY CLARK

American, born 1943

top row, left to right:

Untitled [Portrait of Man in Hallway], 1963–1971

People Watching: Contemporary Photography since 1965

June 24–November 5, 2023

Bowdoin College Museum of Art | Brunswick, Maine

Exhibition Labels

Untitled [David Roper], 1963–1971

bottom row, left to right:

Untitled [Man Seated in Chair Aiming a Gun], 1963–71

Dead 1970, Tulsa, 1968

gelatin silver prints

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Gift of Charles and Joan Gross and their daughter Emily, Class of 1992

1991.99.34, 1991.99.1, 1991.99.32, and 1991.99.28

In the introduction to his book *Tulsa*, Larry Clark wrote: “Once the needle goes in it never comes out.” Clark’s intimate and informally framed photographs document teenage drug and gun culture in his Oklahoma hometown during the 1960s. These photographs center on his friends David Roper and Billy Mann and document their downward spiral from typical teenagers to paranoid gun-wielding meth addicts. A Vietnam War veteran, Clark himself participated in this illegal and precarious drug culture and shot up with his friends every day for three years. Upon *Tulsa*’s publication, the photographs proved highly controversial, as many believed that they romanticized teenage addiction. Yet, others found the work original and compelling, given his extended close-up study of this community.

DAWOUD BEY

American, born 1953

Five Children, Syracuse, New York, 1985

gelatin silver print

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Archival Collection of Marion Boulton Stroud and Acadia Summer Arts Program, Mt. Desert Island, Maine. Gift from the Marion Boulton “Kippy” Stroud Foundation 2018.10.24

Dawoud Bey created this photograph during a residency fellowship at the Light Works photography workshop in Syracuse, New York. Picturing five Black children seated together, it exemplifies the artist’s interest in figuring groups of people in public space. The complex relationship of each figure to the four others in the frame and to those not seen beyond the frame animate this photograph. Dedicated to making “the African American subject a visible and resonant presence through my photographs,” Bey later explained about the work from this period: “It was as much about making a certain kind of photograph, and operating within a certain tradition, as it was a deliberate choice to foreground the black subject in those photographs, giving them a place not only in my pictures, and inside that tradition, but on the wall of galleries and museums when that work was exhibited.”

MORRIE CAMHI

American, 1928–1999

Undocumented Family: Two Girls with Two TV’s, 1982

gelatin silver print

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Gift, Joe Baio Collection of Photography 2020.51.13

Two young girls stand together in the corner of a room, next to a table that holds two television sets and various Catholic sacramental objects. The photograph suggests the importance of the sacred and the secular in this household. Throughout his career, California documentary photographer Morrie Camhi

was interested in the role of religion in the lives of families from diverse, often marginalized communities. Building upon an earlier critically acclaimed series “Espejo,” which recorded the lives of Mexican-American laborers, Camhi makes visible in this and other related photographs the children of undocumented farm workers in California.

JESSICA TODD HARPER

American, born 1975

Judith and Her Children, 2006

chromogenic print

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Gift, Joe Baio Photography Collection

2017.61.79

A young infant looks out towards the photographer, while in the background the child’s mother Judith and an older child appear reflected in a mirror. Light falls primarily on the infant, whose intense gaze suggests curiosity about the unseen photographer and her camera. What thoughts are going through the child’s mind at this moment? And what about the thoughts of the photographer, who had recently given birth for the first time? Such intimate exchanges in domestic settings are characteristic of the work of Jessica Todd Harper, whose book *Interior Exposure* (2008) investigated, as Harper explained, “familiar relationships and the unspoken things that make up the inner stories of our lives.”

DONNA FERRATO

American, born 1949

top row, left to right:

Elisabeth + Bengt, The Night Of, Saddle River, NJ, 1982

Elisabeth + Bengt, The Night Of, Saddle River, NJ, 1982

Elisabeth + Bengt, The Night Of, Saddle River, NJ, 1982

bottom row, left to right:

Elisabeth + Bengt, Saddle River, NJ, 1981

Plato’s Retreat, Elisabeth + Bengt, NYC, 1981

Elisabeth, Bengt + Charlie, Saddle River, NJ, 1982

archival pigment prints

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Gift of Carol Koobatian Ouzounian ’87

2017.13.4, 2017.13.5, 2017.13.6, 2017.13.1, 2017.13.2, and 2017.13.3

In 1982 Donna Ferrato was hired by *Playboy* magazine to photograph Elisabeth and Bengt, a couple living in New Jersey who seemed to epitomize the glamorous lifestyles of wealthy Americans. One night when Ferrato was at their home, she heard Elisabeth screaming from one of the bathrooms. Ferrato rushed into the room to capture the first photographs of what would become the “Living with the Enemy” series. This series documented domestic assault and was instrumental in raising awareness for women’s rights at a time when abuse was often trivialized by legislation and law enforcement. While she initially tried to intervene during the beatings, over the course of nine years, Ferrato came to the chilling realization that “when a man is determined to beat his wife, he will do it in front of the children, or the neighbors, or even the police.” Elisabeth eventually divorced Bengt.

KATY GRANNAN

American, born 1969

Untitled (from the Poughkeepsie Journal), 1998

chromogenic print

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Gift of Michael Edward Tobin

2021.56

In 1998, Katy Grannan embarked on a series of photographic portraits of female strangers with whom she connected through classified advertisements in regional newspapers in the Northeast. Grannan asked her subjects to pose in their own homes, often nude or clad in only their underwear. Like other works in the series, this direct frontal portrait conveys at once the vulnerability and strength of her subject. Figured amidst an ordinary domestic scene, this unidentified woman with long auburn hair adopts a classical contrapposto pose reminiscent of the central female figure in Sandro Botticelli's iconic Italian Renaissance painting *The Birth of Venus*. The product of an active collaboration between artist and subject, the photograph makes visible women's oft-hidden sexuality and secret desires.

MICHAEL KOLSTER

American, born 1963

top row, left to right:

Calvin and Christy, 29 January 2022

Calvin, 22 December 2021

Calvin, 6 August 2022

Christy and Calvin, 24 May 2020

Calvin, 27 July 2020

Calvin, 11 January 2022

bottom row, left to right:

Calvin, 23 January 2022

Calvin, 18 July 2020

Christy and Calvin, 15 November 2020

Calvin, November 2021

Calvin, 06 August 2022

Calvin and me, 30 January 2022

toned gelatin silver prints

Collection of the artist

This series by Mike Kolster centers the artist's son Calvin, who has had epilepsy since the age of two. Kolster has been photographing his son since he was a baby. Here, the pictures suggest Calvin's curiosity with objects and his relationship with the people around him. The images also serve indirectly as a portrait of Calvin's parents. His mother Christy Shake appears often. Whether walking with him in the backyard or holding him indoors, her love and attention is evident. In this selection, all created since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, Kolster's presence reveals itself as well. He has served as a professor in the department of visual arts at Bowdoin since 2000.

SALLY MANN

American, born 1951

Naptime, 1989

gelatin silver print

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Museum Purchase, Lloyd O. and Marjorie Strong Coulter Fund
1993.35

Sally Mann's *Naptime* features three young children resting in bed. The main figure—who looks towards the camera—is Mann's four-year-old daughter Virginia. This photograph, and the larger series "Immediate Family" to which it belongs, chronicle the adolescent lives of her three children on their family farm in Lexington, Virginia. First begun in 1984, the series is an intimate portrait of their everyday lives replete with innocent play and reverie. Yet, recurrent in the photographs are darker themes such as loneliness, injury, and anger. Given the works' often heavier undertones and the fact that the children were at times depicted in various stages of undress—consistent with their summertime habits—the publication of "Immediate Family" in 1992 prompted controversy and discussion about the ethics of picturing children.

PAUL D'AMATO

American, born 1956

Blue Boy, Portland, Maine, 1989

chromogenic print

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Gift, Joe Baio Collection of Photography
2020.51.19

Paul D'Amato is known for his intimate portraits of urban life. In this photograph, he captures a young boy with arms crossed seemingly ignoring the action unfolding behind him. While the boys in the background are blurry with movement, the primary subject—the boy in a light blue shirt—is in sharp focus. His contemplative tranquility appears to transcend the chaos that surrounds him. This photograph was created in Portland during a period when D'Amato taught at the Maine College of Art. Today he resides in Chicago, where he has used his camera to explore different communities in that city.

In the Studio

Photographers since the advent of the medium have made portraiture and the study of the human figure two of their leading subjects. Often their studios were the locus of this work. Removed from the challenges associated with working in public, photographers tend to have greater freedom and control in such settings. Over the last half century, many have sought to update, or in many instances overturn altogether, past conventions regarding portraiture and figuration. The desire to question underlying artistic and societal assumptions and to throw off the old in favor of the new has prompted this turn. Recent advances in photographic technology and the growth of a wider marketplace for photography have aided this development. Artists remain transfixed by the people around them, yet their representation of these individuals and of the human body continues to evolve.

IRVING PENN

American, 1917–2009

The Hand of Miles Davis, New York, 1986

gelatin silver print

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Gift of Robert Fresón Family
2021.40.12

In his New York studio, Irving Penn built a reputation for his innovative approach to portraying people. He experimented frequently with lighting, set design, and photographic processes, often posing subjects in unconventional positions. Commissioned to create a new portrait of Miles Davis in 1986, Penn photographed the famed trumpeter in a variety of poses before turning his attention exclusively to his hands. In this work, he pictures Davis's left hand replicating the action of playing his instrument. Shot against a monochromatic gray backdrop, this dramatically-lit hand in motion represents well its subject. In addition to his work in portraiture, Penn also played a major role in revolutionizing the creative potential of fashion photography as a long-time contributor to *Vogue* magazine.

RICHARD AVEDON

American, 1923–2004

Members of the Young Lords Party, 1971

gelatin silver print

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Museum Purchase, Gridley W. Tarbell II Fund

2018.3

This photograph figures four leaders of the Young Lords Party, a Puerto Rican civil rights organization founded in Chicago in 1960. From left to right are Pablo Guzmán, Minister of Information; Gloria Gonzalez, Field Marshal; Juan González, Minister of Defense; and Denise Oliver, Minister of Economic Development. Taken at Richard Avedon's New York studio, it was created at a time when he and writer Doon Arbus were working on *Hard Times*, a book of portraits meant to explore "people who were putting themselves on the line." Avedon used an 8 x 10 inch view camera, a new format for the artist that allowed him to look and interact with his subjects face to face rather than through a viewfinder. Employing a white backdrop—another new and studio-specific innovation—he created likenesses that were known for their stillness and frontality. This new minimalism unmoored Avedon's subjects from a larger context and permitted a heightened immediacy and intimacy achievable only in his studio.

ROBERT MAPPLETHORPE

American, 1946–1989

Ken Moody, 1983

gelatin silver print

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Gift of the Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation, Inc.

1991.70

Robert Mapplethorpe met Ken Moody in a New York City gym in 1982. Over the course of the next three years, the two men collaborated together to create a series of now-famous portraits. Moody was a professional fitness instructor, and his classical physique drew Mapplethorpe's interest. Regarding these studio sessions, Moody recalled: "There was always a plan. Robert was very methodical, very professional and he didn't fool around. He usually had his assistants set up his lighting, set up the backdrop, he had an idea, and sometimes he even had sketches. He would show them to me, and I would play with the idea, he would see something and say 'oh, stop, hold that.'"

ANDY WARHOL

American, 1928–1987

top row

Unidentified Man, 1985

Unidentified Man, 1985

Unidentified Man, 1985

bottom row

Unidentified Woman, 1984

Unidentified Woman, 1984

Unidentified Woman, 1984

polaroid prints

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Gift of the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts

2008.28.71; 2008.28.72; 2008.28.74; 2008.28.8; 2008.28.12; and 2008.28.13;

Andy Warhol's Polaroid portraits depict the faces of those who passed through his Union Square studio and through his life. Although photography had been central to his practice since his earliest years as a painter and a printmaker, he decided in the early 1970s to purchase a Polaroid camera. For the remainder of his life, he was rarely without this camera or later a 35-mm compact Minox camera. "The Polaroid gets rid of everybody's wrinkles, sort of simplifies the face," he declared. "I try to make everyone look great." Warhol's subjects knew his reputation as a celebrity portraitist, and, as evident in these two sequences, they responded within his studio by adopting various poses. The identity of these two people are not known.

ANDY WARHOL

American, 1928–1987

top row: left to right

Carolina Herrera, 1978

Jane Fonda, 1982

Martha Graham, 1979

bottom row: left to right

R.C. Gorman, 1979

Sylvester Stallone, 1980

Pele, 1977

polaroid prints

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Gift of the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts

2008.28.44; 2008.28.18; 2008.28.17; 2008.28.60; 2008.28.61; and 2008.28.59

LUCAS SAMARAS

American, born 1936

Sittings (Patterson Sims), 1980

polaroid

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Archival Collection of Marion Boulton Stroud and Acadia Summer

Arts Program, Mt. Desert Island, Maine. Gift from the Marion Boulton "Kippy" Stroud Foundation

2018.10.289

In 1980, Polaroid lent Lucas Samaras a unique 20 x 24 inch camera—at the time the largest instant camera of its kind. In his studio Samaras set up colored lights, draperies, and a kitchen chair, before exposing a series of sitters and himself to the dispassionate eye of the camera. In this portrait, Patterson Sims, then a curator at the Whitney Museum of American Art, sits naked in the chair while Samaras sticks out his head at left. This and other large-scale Polaroids in the “Sittings” series anticipate the intrusion of communication technology into the most personal aspects of people’s lives.

DAVID SALLE

American, born 1952

Untitled, 1985

gelatin silver print

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Gift of the Alex Katz Foundation

2019.35.2

For several decades, the painter David Salle has cut photographs from magazines or created his own photographs as source material in lieu of more conventional preparatory drawings. This image of a model in lingerie is an example of this work. Salle has explained: “I take pictures of [the model] doing different things—usually in a strong, theatrical light. I never know what’s going to come out of these pictures, if anything. Later I have the photographs and decide if one could be a painting. That’s how it starts.” In his studio, Salle typically combines multiple images to create a painting that invites being read as a narrative. Yet, the juxtapositions tend not to cohere, but instead purposefully lead the viewer in multiple directions.

JONA FRANK

American, born 1966

The Call, 2016 (printed 2022)

archival pigment print

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Museum Purchase, Lloyd O. and Marjorie Strong Coulter Fund

2022.5.2

For *Cherry Hill: A Childhood Reimagined* (2020), an illustrated memoir about her upbringing in suburban New Jersey, Jona Frank departed from her typical practice of photographing teenagers at school or in the places where young people tend to congregate. Instead, she constructed a series of lavishly decorated sets and cast actors to play different members of her family, including herself. Frank later explained: “I wanted to approach the series as if I were shooting a film.” In *The Call*, her mother Rose Frank—performed by Laura Dern—speaks on the kitchen phone. In a dress whose pattern matches the wallpaper, she holds a prop meant to resemble oversized scissors, as theatrical lights illuminate the room. Despite the obvious artifice, photographs in the series activate memories and transport viewers to this scene and to moments in their own pasts.

LAURIE SIMMONS

American, born 1949

Walking House, 1989

cibachrome print

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Museum Purchase, Lloyd O. and Marjorie Strong Coulter Fund

1997.18

People Watching: Contemporary Photography since 1965

June 24–November 5, 2023

Bowdoin College Museum of Art | Brunswick, Maine

Exhibition Labels

In *Walking House*, a model house from a railroad train set sits atop a pair of four-inch doll legs. Created in Laurie Simmons's studio, the photograph is part of a larger series inspired in part by a television commercial featuring a dancing box of cigarettes. Simmons has frequently used toys and dolls to create imaginary dreamscapes that serve to critique traditional gender roles and idealized visions of the American family. About this series, Simmons observed: "The way a person lives is so identified with who that person is. We live in a blazingly consumer-oriented society, where the things around us control us, and I think these images are about the way a person can be subsumed by what's around them."

CINDY SHERMAN

American, born 1954

Untitled, 2002–2004

chromogenic print

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Gift of halley k harrisburg, Class of 1990, and Michael Rosenfeld 2004.7

Cindy Sherman explores how women are observed, portrayed, and judged in society. In her work since the 1970s, Sherman uses her own body to take on different personas, dressing up in costumes and disguises to subvert contemporary stereotypes of women. In this photograph, Sherman transforms herself into a pregnant woman. Dressed in tight-fitting clothing that is perhaps meant for a younger generation, Sherman's invented persona seems to be fighting the loss of youthful freedom in the face of motherhood. Sherman provokes the viewer to pass judgment on the subject, asking us to consider whether the pregnancy was planned, whether the mother is in denial, or whether she will be capable of rising to the responsibilities of mother.

JOCELYN LEE

American, born 1962

Untitled (Margie at Chelsea Hotel), 2009

pigment print

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Museum Purchase, Lloyd O. and Marjorie Strong Coulter Fund 2010.33.1

Based in Portland, Maine, Jocelyn Lee often uses her family members and friends as subjects, though she is also known to recruit models through newspaper advertisements. In this photograph of a middle-aged model named Margie—taken in a temporary studio she set up at the Chelsea Hotel in New York City—the subject peers beyond Lee's camera to something that we cannot see or know. Dressed in a nightgown and seated before a blank wall, she is an individual captured at a particular moment in her life. Neither young girl, nor an elderly woman, she embodies larger truths about the process of aging.

MALICK SIDIBÉ

Malian, 1936–2016

Untitled, ca. 1970

Untitled, ca. 1970

gelatin silver prints

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Museum Purchase by the Collectors Collaborative, in memory of Bruce MacDermid '69, P'98, '00

2014.22.1–2

Malick Sidibé was one of the most celebrated Malian photographers of the last half-century. Having opened his first portrait studio in Bamako in 1962—only two years after Mali gained its independence from France—he became known for creating dynamic portraits of individuals and groups assembled before various fabric and painted backdrops. Sidibé’s photographs made visible a new national spirit in that country. These two double portraits of Malian citizens in different clothing styles reveal much about the modern independent country that was then emerging in this West African nation. “It’s a world, someone’s face,” he once exclaimed. “When I capture it, I see the future of the world.”

SHIRIN NESHAT

Iranian American, born 1957

Ghada, 2013

Sayed, 2013

digital pigment prints

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Gift of the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation

2016.2.2 and 2016.2.1

Taken in the aftermath of the anti-government protests and uprisings in Egypt during the Arab Spring in the early 2010s, these two photographs are part of a larger series by Iranian-born artist Shirin Neshat entitled “Our House Is On Fire.” In each portrait, the artist inscribes a barely visible layer of Persian calligraphy over her subjects’ faces. The texts include works by several poets of the Iranian Revolution. Neshat traveled to Egypt in 2013 to speak with and photograph everyday people. The challenge of picturing loss and grief became her directive: “I feel strongly that you cannot make work about a subject unless you have experienced it yourself. You can’t make work about exile unless you have lived in exile. You cannot make painful art unless you have suffered. You cannot make political work if you haven’t lived a political life.”

DONALD CELENDER

American, 1931–2005

Artball Playing Cards, 1972

off-set printed cards

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Gift of Dorothy and Herb Vogel

2013.21.8.1 to 54

In *Artball Playing Cards*, Donald Celender created a pack of 54 cards, each featuring the face of a famous artist or art world figure cut from found photographs and affixed onto the body of a football player. The cards imagine these individuals as sport stars clothed in pads and a uniform and striking a football pose. Beginning in the 1960s, Celender earned a reputation as a conceptual artist with a special interest in parodying the self-seriousness of the art world. He became well known for mailing tongue-in-cheek surveys and outrageous proposals to artists, museum directors, and security officers. When they replied—and many did—he would exhibit their letters.

JEFFERSON PINDER

American, born 1970

Mule, 2006

8 mm film transferred to digital video

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Museum Purchase, Lloyd O. and Marjorie Strong Coulter Fund and the Collectors' Collaborative

2022.6

In the video *Mule*, which was filmed on the streets of Baltimore, Maryland, Jefferson Pinder depicts himself struggling to drag a three-hundred-pound wooden beam encrusted with pressed tin chained to his body. The video is accompanied by Quasimoto's *Come on Feet*, a musical composition that grapples with the need to keep moving in the face of an overpowering threat. Literally pulling the wreckage of past generations, Pinder has created an artwork that explores this struggle to move forward. "I portray the oppressed body both frenetically and through drudgery to convey relevant cultural experiences," Pinder has explained. "I do so through disparate materials that each evoke multiple histories of oppression." His works confront the enduring legacy of enslavement and the burden of history, especially that confronted by Black men in the United States.

Towards the Self

As in centuries past, one's own self remains a notable subject for photographers. Yet, the tradition of photographic self-portraiture is markedly different today—an era in which personal identity is better understood as fluid and multifaceted, government and corporate surveillance is ever-present, and skepticism abounds regarding authority and sight itself. Minds and bodies are contested terrains. Amid a sea of contending pressures, photographers look back at themselves to mark their place in the wider world, to explore their individual identity, and to imagine new futures.

STEPHANIE SYJUCO

Filipino American, born 1974

Applicant Photos (Migrants) #2, 2016

pigmented inkjet print

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Museum Purchase, The Philip Conway Beam Endowment Fund

2019.25

In *Applicant Photos (Migrants) #2*, Stephanie Syjuco interrogates the system through which immigrants are documented when relocating across national borders. In this block of images that resemble identification photographs, she poses before her own camera, though covers her face in a fabric meant to evoke "colonial" materials, often sold cheaply in first-world countries due to the exploitation of labor in countries with less robust economies. Through this act, Syjuco critiques the pervasive structures of surveillance that act as forms of state authority and control.

MERYL MCMASTER

Plains Cree/Canadian, born 1988

When the Storm Ends I Will Finish My Work, 2021

chromogenic print

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Museum Purchase, Lloyd O. and Marjorie Strong Coulter Fund

2021.17

As Meryl McMaster has explained, this photograph “portrays a fatigued character caught in a dream state. She rests, longingly. A desire for closeness with history and nature motivates her toil; melancholy and loss are ever-present. A hopeful candle continues to burn brightly in this dark moment.” McMaster is a Plains Cree artist based in the city of Ottawa. Her practice is predominantly photography based and incorporates artist-made props, sculptural garments, and performance. She creates works that transport the viewer out of the ordinary and into a space of contemplation and introspection. Recalling the historic use of glass bell jars to preserve natural history specimens, she crafted this photograph in a circular format.

AI WEIWEI

Chinese, born 1957

Deluxe Wanted Poster, 2014

color lithograph

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Museum Purchase, Lloyd O. and Marjorie Strong Coulter Fund
2015.8

In 2014, Ai Weiwei created this “WANTED” poster while under investigation by Chinese authorities. Known for his activism, Ai was arrested for alleged “economic crimes” in 2011 when he became a leading voice in exposing government corruption following an earthquake and the death of nearly 70,000 people in Sichuan, a province in southwestern China. Ai’s poster appropriates the design of a 1963 poster advertising the first retrospective exhibition of artworks by Marcel Duchamp, substituting photographs of himself and altering the text to demand an end to his detention. In 2015, the government finally returned Ai’s passport, allowing him to leave China. Since then he has been living in Germany and England.

JOHN COPLANS

British, 1920–2003

Self-Portrait (Hands Spread on Knees), 1985

gelatin silver print

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Gift of Howard Yezerski
1990.68

Born in London in 1920, John Coplans trained as a painter. At mid-career, however, he decided to give up abstract painting and move to the United States, where he became an influential critic and helped to found *Artforum* magazine in 1962. Two decades later, claiming he had enough of art writing, he decided to pursue photography. From 1984 to his death in 2003, his subject was his own body. Made when Coplans was sixty-five, this self-portrait depicts the photographer nude with his hands grasping his knees. In this and other photographs from the series, Coplans never includes his face. Instead, he pictures parts of his aging body enlarged and in striking detail. These photographs subvert longstanding ideas of self-portraiture and traditional representations of the male body.

JO SPENCE

British, 1934–1992

I Framed My Breast for Posterity, 1982

cibachrome print

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Gift of Jo Spence Memorial Archive
2001.18.10

For over a decade until her death in 1992, Jo Spence documented her experience living with breast cancer and later leukemia. Active in challenging social norms in Britain during the 1960s and 1970s, Spence helped to found the socialist feminist photography collective The Hackney Flashers in 1974. A breast cancer diagnosis in 1982 inspired Spence to take up phototherapy, making photographs to help herself cope with mortality and to search for agency through self-representation. About this series, Spence wrote, “I used my camera as a third eye, almost a separate part of me which was ever watchful: analytical and critical yet remaining attached to the emotional and frightening experiences I was undergoing.”

ANN HAMILTON

American, born 1956

mirror, 2000

iris print

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Gift of the Artist

2000.12

This photograph is one in a series of twelve photographs that depicts the artist Ann Hamilton as seen through multiple layers of wavy glass. The photographs were made at five-minute intervals, and each image is different on account of the shifting light. Hamilton created this series at the time of her installation at the 1999 Biennale in Venice, Italy, where she constructed a long wall of glass outside the United States Pavilion that distorted the entire façade of the building. Hamilton has explained about her practice: “I am interested in the relationship between things in space. And more important than the things themselves is the way they come into relation.” Her installations are often immersive experiences where different sensory elements—sound, smell, sight, and touch—alter one’s perceptions and challenge our understanding of what we think we know.

LAUREL NAKADATE

American, born 1975

August 23, 2010, from the series “365 Days: A Catalogue of Tears,” 2011

chromogenic print

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Gift, Tony Podesta Collection, Washington, D.C.

2020.55.1.23

This photograph comes from Laurel Nakadate’s 2011 series titled “365 Days: A Catalogue of Tears.” A performance in which the artist photographed herself crying each day for a year, the series represented her desire to “deliberately take part in sadness the way people deliberately take part in happiness.” In part, it was a response to Facebook and what she remarked as “all those happy selfies” posted daily. It also reflects the influence of On Kawara, Yoko Ono, and Marina Abramovic, three artists known for their emotionally grueling durational performances.

American, born 1989

Demons, Tlazoteotl ‘Eater of Filth’, 2018

c-print mounted on Sintra, hand-painted artist frame

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Museum Purchase, Greenacres Acquisition Fund
2019.43

When artist Martine Gutierrez found that no magazine would have her on the cover, she created her own publication. Acting as the costume designer, makeup artist, graphic designer, model, and photographer, she created the artbook *Indigenous Woman*. This photograph is featured in that publication. It depicts Gutierrez in reimagined traditional Guatemalan dress, known as a *huipil*, and several elements that allude to Mayan, Yorùbá, and Aztec deities. Gutierrez embraces what she calls an “Amer-indigenous perspective.” As a trans Latinx woman of color, Gutierrez has observed: “Society perpetuates rigid constructs—fabricated dichotomies like ‘male’ vs. ‘female’, ‘gay’ vs. ‘straight’, ‘minority’ vs. ‘white’, ‘reality’ vs. ‘fantasy.’ But our interpretation of these constructs is subjective and not immutable. Reality, like gender, is ambiguous because it exists fluidly.”

Presence/Absence

Since the advent of photography in the nineteenth century, artists have ventured with cameras near and far to create work in places of personal significance. These destinations have often been sites of notable human activity. Although the people associated with those places may be absent or no longer present, these photographers go there to connect with the lives of others. With its unique ability to stop time and mark one’s own presence, photography is well suited to bear witness to human achievement and human tragedy. As the artworks in this final section suggest, people inhabit places even when they are absent.

ABELARDO MORELL, CLASS OF 1971

Cuban American, born 1948

Camera Obscura: Brookline View in Brady’s Room, 1992

gelatin silver print

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Gift of the artist

1993.7

Abelardo Morell created this photograph from inside his young son Brady’s toy-filled room at their home in Brookline, Massachusetts. An upside-down projection of the view out his window illuminates the space. Morell has long been interested in optics, and in the late 1980s began experimenting with the *camera obscura* (Latin for “dark room”). By placing a lens on a window and blocking all other available light, he was able to project an image of the outside into a darkened room. The combination of the projection and details in the room create startling juxtapositions that evoke dream-like fantasies. Although Brady is not present in the scene, Morell’s photograph captures well his world.

EMMET GOWIN

American, born 1941

Bed at Elijah Gowin’s, Andersonville, Virginia, 1969

gelatin silver print

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Gift of David P. Becker, Class of 1970

1991.50

“There are things in your life that only you will see, stories that only you will hear. If you don’t tell them or write them down, if you don’t make the picture, these things will not be seen, these things will not be

heard.” Emmet Gowin wrote these words to describe both his artistic practice and his outlook towards life. A recurring subject in Gowin’s photography over more than fifty years has been his extended family. Desirous of capturing the fleeting intimacies of everyday life, he pictures a neatly-made bed at a relative’s home. Gowin likes to work with a large-format camera so that “both the sitter and the photographer look at each other, and what they both see and feel is part of the picture.”

PAUL CAPONIGRO

American, born 1932

Stonehenge, 1967–72

Stonehenge, 1967–72

gelatin silver prints

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Museum Purchase, Lloyd O. and Marjorie Strong Coulter Fund
1985.36.1 and 1985.36.2

Stonehenge is a prehistoric stone monument in southern England that was constructed beginning more than 5,000 years ago. Mystery and debate surround its original function and significance. Supported by a Guggenheim Fellowship, Paul Caponigro traveled to England and Ireland beginning in 1967 to photograph ancient human sites. These two photographs are from a larger series of Stonehenge views that he created over the next six years. He photographed the site from various perspectives, times of day, and seasons, aspiring to capture the spirit of what remained and to hint at its power to millennia of visitors. About his photographic practice, Caponigro has explained: “One needs to be still enough, observant enough, and aware enough to recognize the life of the materials, to be able to ‘hear through the eyes.’”

JUDY GLICKMAN LAUDER

American, born 1939

Barracks, Birkenau Concentration Camp, Poland, 1988

gelatin silver print

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Museum Purchase, Lloyd O. and Marjorie Strong Coulter Fund
1992.34

Prayer Shawls (Talesim), Auschwitz Concentration Camp, Poland, 1990

gelatin silver print

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Gift of Judy Ellis Glickman
1992.32

Why Did the Heavens Not Darken, 1991

gelatin silver print

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Gift of Barbara M. Goodbody
2020.56.2

In 1988, Maine-based photographer Judy Glickman Lauder first traveled to the former Holocaust concentration camps at Auschwitz and Birkenau in Poland. There, less than fifty years earlier, during World War Two, Nazi authorities transported, confined, and exterminated more than a million Jews. Lauder recalled: “Witnessing the enormous evidence of man’s capacity for evil was earthshaking. I felt at one with the suffering and the loss. I also felt the need to record these experiences photographically and to share my feelings with others. We live in a dangerous world, and our ability to destroy has only grown.” These photographs make visible this history and stand in opposition to those who might want to forget or deny altogether this human tragedy.

DAWOUD BEY

American, born 1953

Sugarcane II, 2019

gelatin silver print

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Gridley W. Tarbell II Fund and the Helen Johnson Chase Fund
2021.69

The historic ghosts of plantation slavery haunt Dawoud Bey's *Sugarcane II*, even while human figures are completely absent. This large-format photograph comes from the series "In This Here Place," which Bey created on plantations across Louisiana that once employed enslaved African Americans. The tall, sharp-edged leaves of sugarcane plants frame a shadowy path, engendering a sense of entrapment for the viewer as though every exit is blocked. In this and other works from this series, Bey evokes the history of enslavement in the United States, seeking to place the viewer in a time and place where cultivating and harvesting sugarcane was someone's daily burden to bear.

ADOU

Chinese, born 1973

Woman in Fog, 2006

Woman. Umbrella, 2006

two gelatin silver prints

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Gift of Nancy Rutter Clark
2022.8.6 and 2022.8.7

These two photographs are by the Chinese contemporary photographer Adou from his series "Samalada," a project which documents the daily lives and culture of the Yi ethnic minority in the artist's home province of Sichuan. In recent decades, artists in China have responded in different ways to the cultural and environmental changes wrought by the country's rapid economic growth. Consciously rejecting modes of hyperrealism and sharp focus characteristic of digital photography, Adou adopts a deliberately analog approach that makes use of expired film and dark room manipulation. A dreamlike timelessness pervades the images and evokes a lost past, rendered with dark tonalities and created out of the remnants of a disappearing landscape and people.

RICHARD MISRACH

American, born 1949

Diving Board (Salton Sea), 1983

ektacolor print

Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Museum Purchase
1985.26

The Salton Sea is a human-made lake in southern California that once supported agriculture and tourism. Its degradation due to drought and pollution has left it much diminished and caused many local inhabitants to abandon the region. In 1979, California-based photographer Richard Misrach began his "Desert Cantos" series, seeking to record the simultaneous beauty and devastation of desert environments in the western United States. In *Diving Board (Salton Sea)*, he pictures an emptied swimming pool perched on the edge of the lake. A pinkish haze pervades the scene, rendering the

background indistinct. In this and other photographs from the series, Misrach makes visible a world eerily lifeless and increasingly uninhabitable.

EDWARD BURTYNSKY

Canadian, born 1955

Marine Aquaculture #2, Luoyuan Bay, Fujian Province, China, 2013

chromogenic print

Frank M. Gren P'13, Annapolis Collection

This panoramic photograph by Edward Burtynsky pictures a sprawling aqua-farming encampment that has been constructed over a portion of Luoyuan Bay in southeast China. A network of structures supports a complex array of nets, cages, and lines that reside below the water's surface. Although no one is visible, the photograph suggests the extent to which human populations have transformed the earth's lands and waters. Over the last two decades, Burtynsky has traveled around the globe recording the impact of international trade and industry. As he has recently written, "These images are meant as metaphors to the dilemma of our modern existence; they search for a dialogue between attraction and repulsion, seduction and fear. We are drawn by desire—a chance at good living, yet we are consciously or unconsciously aware that the world is suffering for our success."