



Palo Alto ARTCenter

1313 Newell Road, Palo Alto, CA 94303

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Caroline Ocampo, Media Relations
Signe Mayfield, Curator
Karen Kienzle, Director

650-269-0141
650-329-2179
650-329-2605

caroline.ocampo@cityofpaloalto.org
signe.mayfield@cityofpaloalto.org
karen.kienzle@cityofpaloalto.org



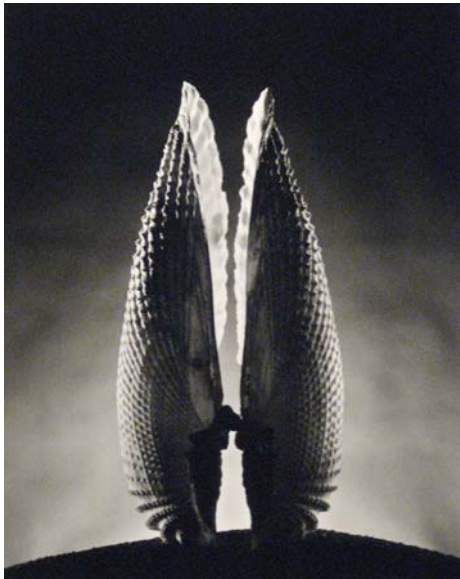
ABELARDO MORELL
*Camera Obscura image of
Boston's Old Customs House in
Hotel Room, 1999*
Gelatin silver print
20 x 24 in.
Collection of Jane Levy Reed

**PALO ALTO, CA – July
14, 2010 – The Palo Alto
Art Center presents three
compelling exhibitions
from September 25
through December 12,
2010. *In Focus: Collecting***

Photography showcases the unique character of, and stories behind, four diverse photography collections formed by art professionals who live in the Bay Area. ***Light from the Underground*** is a photographic essay by Colette Campbell-Jones based on communal memories collected from miners and families in South Wales. ***Paintings from Haiti*** presents selections from the collection of Dr. Ralph S. Greco. Many of the paintings make palpable the invisible powers of belief that have sustained a culture through centuries of adversity.

A **reception** for the public is slated for **Saturday, September 25 from 3-5 pm.**

An associated program, **“A conversation with Linda Connor and Jane Levy Reed”** will take place on **December 7, 2010 from 7:30-9 pm.** (*Advanced registration is advised. Event is free for Members of the Palo Alto Art Center Foundation and Photo Alliance; \$5 for Non-members.*) The exhibition *In Focus: Collecting Photography* features selections from the collections of Linda Connor, an internationally recognized artist, and Jane Levy Reed, an Independent Curator and Documentary Filmmaker.



Ruth Bernhard, 1905-2006, *Angel Wings*,
1943
Gelatin silver print, 13 1/2 x 10 3/8 in.,
Collection of Stefan Kirkeby

IN FOCUS: COLLECTING PHOTOGRAPHY

In Focus: Collecting Photography is installed in groupings organized by individual collections to highlight the intriguing focus of four collectors. While the photographs are generally silver prints—the fast disappearing genre of black-and-white film photography—the exhibition's collected artists are diverse, ranging from the anonymous to internationally recognized modern masters. The individual character of each collection reflects a disciplined passion in acquiring works in a medium—photography—that is ubiquitous in our world.

Photographs owned by independent curator and

documentary filmmaker Jane Levy Reed convey cultural memory, a sense of exile, displacement, disintegration, or a formal geometry. A rare image of a lone girl in a spare building, bearing the trauma of a concentration camp number during the Holocaust, was photographed by an unknown individual whose role as moral witness is uncertain. The photograph's muted, subtle tones suggest the vagaries of memory itself—a quality repeated in haunting architectural images with cross forms by Josef Sudek, Clarence John Laughton and John Gutmann. In contrast to the low-level light depicted in these works, light is incandescent as it glows behind the *Clocks*, *Shop Window*, 1986, by David Byrne, emanates as a cruciform in *Church of Light*, *Tada Ando*, 1997, by Hiroshi Sugimoto, and trails across a decaying, historic *Map in Sink*, 1996, by Abelardo Morell. For Morell's innovative *Camera Obscura image of Boston's Old Customhouse in Hotel Room*, 1999, the artist physically transformed an entire room into a box camera with a pinhole. Due to refracted light, the exterior view was projected upside-down on the wall. Morrell captured this surreal juxtaposition above the profile of the room's furnishings through an 8-hour time exposure. The exhibition is extended with the inclusion of two films by Jane Levy Reed—*Pirkle Jones: Seven Decades Photographed from Pictorial California to the Politics of the Black Panther Party* and *My Eyes Were Fresh, The Life and Photographs of John Gutmann*—along with examples of their photography. Gutmann's photograph *The Open Window, Philadelphia*, 1939, has at its center an



Linda Connor, *Hagia Sophia, Istanbul, Turkey*, 1992
 Gold toned printing out paper, 11 1/2 x 10 in.
 Collection of Jane Levy Reed

asymmetrical mast. Reed collects work with crosses for their unusual linear structure and ancient, sacred geometry.

In contrast, Linda Connor's collection centers on the sphere as sacred geometry. It is an element mirrored in her own photography seen in *Jesus Raising the Dead*, Cora Church, Istanbul, Turkey, 1992. In her collection, Emmet Gowin's *Harvest traffic over agricultural*

pivot near Hermiston, Orgeon, 1991, operates as a sacred sphere seen from above. It is an unexpected form resonating with traces of the cosmos, as are Paul Caponigro's *Galaxy Apple*, New York City, 1964, and Wynn Bullock's *Point Lobos, Tide Pool*, 1957. Among other key figures in the history of photography in the collection are artists who have broken both technical and artistic ground, including the first woman to produce and publish a significant group of photographs, Anna Watkins, and Karl Blossfeldt, who invented a camera to increase magnification with which he meticulously photographed isolated plant forms against stark backgrounds. His legacy is seen in the close scrutiny of *Magnolia Blossom, Tower of Jewels*, 1925, by Imogen Cunningham, the pioneer of Modernism on the West Coast, and in David Liitschwager's photomicrograph of marine creatures. Connor's intent in capturing "soulfulness and humanity" in her own work is also reflected in her collection. E.J. Bellocq's untitled portrait from Storyville— a neighborhood with legalized brothels in New Orleans—1912, Deborah Luster's photographs of prisoners in Louisiana in a tintype-like format 1999-2000, and Harry Callahan's *Eleanor*, 1949, are depicted face forward as noble souls.

The collection of Stefan Kirkeby— a photographer and Director, Smith Andersen North— addresses social history and contributions by San Francisco Art Institute (SFAI) photographers. When Paula Kirkeby, Director, Smith Andersen Editions in Palo Alto, took her son Stefan as a

young middle school student to his photography teacher's exhibition, he purchased his first photograph for \$15. Annual birthday purchases afforded the opportunity to talk about the striking visual qualities and meaning in the photographs. Stefan Kirkeby's focus began with landscape as seen in the poetic Velveteen Dye print *Arboretum*, Stanford, 1962 by Leo Holub and Paul Caponigro's first photograph with its view of trees through a frosted window. Ruth Bernhard's *Angelwing*, 1943, is indicative of iconic works by Modernist masters with a deceptively simple approach that followed. Kirkeby's admiration for of the photographs of steam locomotives by O. Winston Links extends beyond the photographer's striking documentation of a vanishing breed of transportation and its supporting communities. Kirkeby has marveled at the meticulous planning involved in following train schedules and in creating reflections of the trains' surfaces at night. Among other social documentaries in his collection is the poignant *Cotton picking kids in Car* by William Heick, who taught at SFAI. Heick's photograph of fellow professor Imogen Cunningham in a café in front of a glass of milk provides striking contrast to Judy Dater's *Imogen & Twinka at Yosemite*, 1974, which was both homage to Cunningham's role in addressing taboos in nude photography and a feminist reprisal of Thomas Hart Benton's painting of Persephone. In Benton's work, a clothed male farmer peers at a nude woman on blanket, while in Dater's photograph, Twinka, a coy young nude, who was a frequent subject in Cunningham's work, looks up at the elderly Cunningham who appears in full dress with her camera as an agent of scrutiny.

While Jack Fischer Gallery represents “outsider, folk, contemporary, naïve, visionary, self-taught, and intuitive,” artists in diverse media, Fischer has formed a spirited collection of photographs representing moments of human experience, often with an unusual twist. That twist may be situated in the body, which lends an unorthodox appearance to two street children dancing in a 1940 photograph by Helen Levitt or to a young boy in rural Kentucky with an outstretched arm

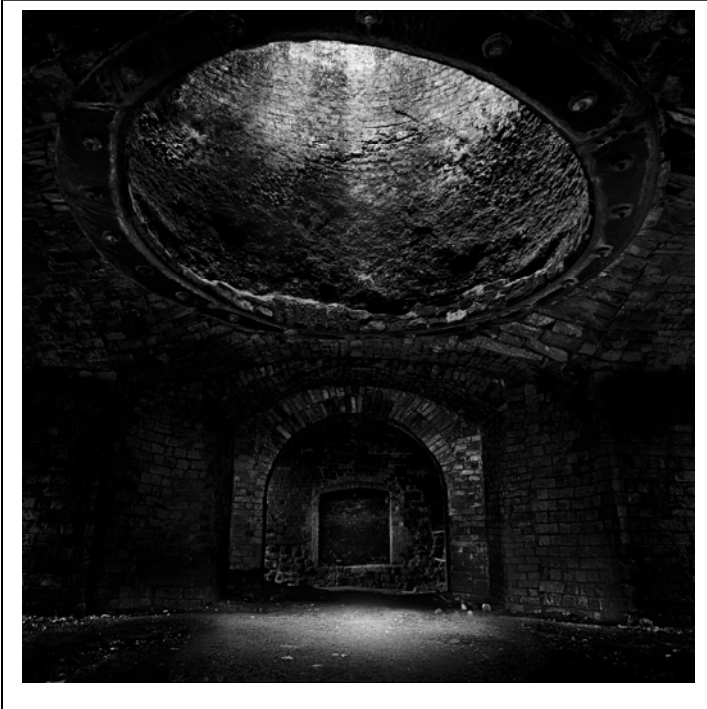
in a photograph by Nicholas Nixon. The twist may be an inserted text on a found photo—“What I am about to say is that I have nothing to say. . .” Unexpected contexts are evident in other works, including Lee Friedlander's photograph of a tree resembling a hand, Peter Stackpole's depiction of extras in Hollywood, or Bernice Abbott's *Blossom Restaurant*, 1935, which shows a man leaving a flophouse, who is aware that he is being photographed.



Anonymous, *Untitled*, n.d.,
Photographic postcard,
Collection of Jack Fischer

The exhibition has received support from an anonymous donor.

LIGHT FROM THE UNDERGROUND



Colette Campbell-Jones, *Origin of the Modern World*, 2009
Hybrid process print , 40 x 40 in.
Courtesy of the artist

Light from the Underground features large scale digital photographs by Bay Area-based Colette Campbell-Jones referencing a mining community in South Wales. To the artist, “The mine’s underground imagery is profoundly archetypal and mythical, associated with darkness, the unknown, and the primordial.” From a community in which her husband was raised, this American artist collected oral histories *Stories from Underground* with the intent “to reveal the strange light of a people who have emerged from conditions of

incommensurable darkness, from the Abyss. The stories developed over two and a half centuries after the invention of ‘deep shaft’ technology, which made cheap energy available on a scale that transformed humanity and created the modern world.”

The artist combined documents with manipulated digital imagery to “construct linkages between contemporary stories and their universal counterparts at the level of archetype and myth.” The overall effect of her elegiac panoramas is both cinematic and haunting. They are viewed in a structure that envelops the viewer as if in a mine.

PAINTINGS FROM HAITI



Jacques Enguerrand Gourgue, 1931-1996,
Mystical Symbols, 1981, Oil on canvas,
36 x 24 in. , Collection of
Dr. Ralph S. Greco and Dr. Irene L. Wapnir

Paintings from Haiti is an exhibition selected from the collection of Dr. Ralph S. Greco that makes palpable the invisible powers of belief that have sustained a culture through centuries of adversity. This small and eclectic exhibition is a testimony to the resilient spirit of its people. Dr. Ralph Greco, who acquired the first painting in his collection in Haiti over thirty years ago during a Yale Surgical residency at Hospital Albert Schweitzer, continues to be fascinated with the ability of the paintings to reflect the spirited culture, which is steeped in the symbols and hierarchy of *loas* [term for deities in Haitian Vodou or Vaudou] with their roots in West African belief.” Beginning in the 19th-century,

Haiti became the second independent republic in the Western Hemisphere and their independence allowed the Haitians to maintain their West African cosmology, aesthetics, and traditions with less outside interference than any of the other former slave colonies in the Caribbean. The visual arts, along with an oral tradition, are the primary forms of cultural transmission in much of Haitian society. In this exhibition, the signs and symbols, including the veve, the abstract drawings executed in cornmeal on the floors of Vodou temples are referenced in some of the paintings. Exhibition artists are primarily from a second generation who followed those involved with the formation of Le Centre d’Art in Port-a-Prince in 1944, which was responsible for a flourishing of visual arts in Haiti. They include Jacques Engeuerand Gourge, Gabriel Leveque, Celestin Faustin, Carlo Jean Baptiste, Gerard Valcin, Jasmin Joseph, Roland Blain, and Emilcar Similien.

The exhibition has received special support from Palantir Technologies

ART DIALOGUES: Free adult docent tours Saturdays at 2 pm during Art Center exhibitions, except on holiday weekends. The tours are led by Palo Alto Art Center volunteers, who undertake intensive training about each exhibition and are dedicated to helping everyone understand and come into a conversation about the work on display. They usually last from 30-45 minutes. For information or to arrange a private tour, please call 650.329.2366

Private tours, including 'family' tours that are geared for teens and adults, may be arranged after 2pm, Tuesday-Friday; evenings Tuesday- Thursday; and weekends. Please call 650.329.2366

The Palo Alto Art Center is open to the public without charge. Gallery hours: Tuesday- Saturday, 10-5 p.m.; Thursday, 7-9 p.m.; Sunday, 1-5 p.m.

Visit our website at www.cityofpaloalto.org/artcenter or call 650-329-2366 for more information.

The Palo Alto Art Center (founded 1971) is a nationally acclaimed, regional visual art center whose exhibition program focuses on documenting—and celebrating—the art and artists of the San Francisco Bay Area. The Center's mission is to foster creative process and thought by forging a greater appreciation and understanding of the visual arts through exhibitions, studio experiences and related educational programs. The Palo Alto Art Center, Division of Arts and Sciences, City of Palo Alto is funded in part by grants from the Palo Alto Art Center Foundation, Arts Council Silicon Valley, in partnership with the County of Santa Clara and the California Arts Council, and private donations.