



Exposing Time



Norton Photography Gallery March 6, 2010 - June 27, 2010

Photography is uniquely suited to documenting change that happens over such a long period of time it barely registers in the mind. Many photographers have exploited this photographic quality by returning to the same subject – either a person, an exact view, or a general place – to capture change that has elapsed over months, years, or decades. By juxtaposing their photographs, the elapsed time collapses, and the change that has taken place becomes evident. Exposing Time seeks to offer engaging visual experiences enriched by a variety of approaches photographers have brought to the project of documenting change. Drawn from the collection of the Center for Creative Photography, a private collection, and the artists themselves, the exhibition shows the work of five contemporary American photographers: Frank Gohlke, Nicholas Nixon, Andrew Phelps, Milton Rogovin, and Robert Weingarten.

Frank Gohlke (born 1942) photographs the American landscape, from New England to the Pacific Northwest, with extensive work in the Midwest. Two projects represent his interest in how a camera collapses time, allowing the immediate comparison of disparate moments. Both his Wichita Falls tornado pictures and those made at Mount Saint Helens begin after a catastrophic natural event. From this disordered starting point, his photographs demonstrate regeneration, rebuilding, and restoration – processes too slow to be observed in person. Gohlke is Laureate Professor of Photography at the University of Arizona, in Tucson.

Nicholas Nixon (born 1947) was part of the landmark New Topographics exhibition in 1975 for tightly composed and densely descriptive landscapes of urban Boston, but he has also produced a superlative body of people pictures during his career. The pinnacle of his portraiture is an annual series of the his wife and her three sisters, that began in 1975 and continues to this day. The thirty-six black-and-white portraits captivate attention, as we read changes evident in posture, body language, clothing, expressions, and appearance.

Andrew Phelps (born 1967), a native of Mesa, Arizona, now living in Austria, recently completed a three-year project tracing the development of Higley, his grandparent's farming community east of Phoenix. As open fields gave way to manicured lawns and new homes, the incorporated township of Higley was eliminated. Rather than comparing explicit "before" and "after" shots, the mix of images in this project points to the non-linear process of development.

Milton Rogovin (born 1909) was an optometrist by profession and a photographer by avocation. In the early 1970s he began documenting the residents of Buffalo's Lower West Side, the neighborhood near his optometry office. Situated in their homes or on the city's streets, groups and individuals are portrayed in their environmental context, offering a wealth of sociological detail in self-presentation, domestic spaces, and streetscapes. Over the subsequent three decades, Rogovin returned to these same subjects, creating updated portraits. Presented as two-, three- and four -picture series, the photographs encourage viewers to identify differences, noting the ways the subjects have changed radically over thirty years.

Robert Weingarten (born 1941) was born in New York City and graduated from Baruch College in 1962, where he studied finance. Ending a successful career in business, Weingarten invested himself fully in photography beginning in the 1990s, transforming a longtime passion into his fulltime profession. In 2003 he created a series of photographs, all shot from his bedroom porch in Malibu, towards Los Angeles, at 6:30 a.m. Seeing a group of these large photographic prints, each with dramatically different colors from the next, demonstrates the changes in light and weather. Not only does it erase the intervening hours of each day from view but the pattern created suggests a cycle, refuting a linear perception of time.

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*This exhibition is organized by the Center for Creative Photography and Phoenix Art Museum.
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Milton Rogovin, Lower West Side Triptychs, 1973, 1985 and 1992. 2007.36.2, 2007.36.3, 2007.36.4. Gift of Dr. and Mrs. John Knaus ©1952-2002 The Rogovin Collection/ Courtesy Center for Creative Photography, The University of Arizona

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