

## BUILDING A BODY OF WORK IN THE REAL WORLD

with Sasha Wolf and Special Guests

Session 1: Sept 23, 2023 - Resources

### ROBERT ADAMS

Robert Adams has photographed the landscape of the American West for more than forty years, particularly in California, Colorado and Oregon. His vision is inspired by his joy in nature's inherent beauty, yet tempered by his dismay at its exploitation and degradation. Adams uses photography to express his love for the landscape and to understand how urban and industrial growth have changed it, all the while insisting that beauty in the world has not been entirely eclipsed.

Adams was born in New Jersey in 1937 and raised in the suburbs of Denver, Colorado. He moved to Southern California in 1956 to attend the University of Redlands. He chose to major in English literature and went on to earn a Ph.D. in that subject at the University of Southern California in 1965. When Adams returned to Colorado to begin what he anticipated would be a career in teaching, he was dismayed by the changes he saw in the landscape. He bought a 35-mm camera, taught himself the fundamentals of photography, and began making pictures infused with a love for the geography of his home state.

– From <https://www.getty.edu/art/collection/person/103KQP>

“Art asserts that nothing is banal, which is to say that serious landscape picture is metaphor. If a view of geography does not imply something more enduring than a specific piece of terrain, then the picture will hold us only briefly; we will probably prefer the place itself, which we can smell and feel and hear as well as see—though we are also likely to come away from the actual scene hoping somewhere to find it in art. This is because geography by itself is difficult to value accurately—what we hope for from the artist is help in discovering the significance of a place.”

– From [\*Robert Adams: Beauty in Photography, Aperture, 2005.\*](#)

### The New West (1974)

Seminal work by Adams that focused on the new housing projects of Colorado Springs and the broader Denver Area, *The New West*, which was published originally

in 1974, marked a shift in Adam's thinking about the landscape and his approach to shooting it.

### **From the Missouri West (1975-179)**

In the mid 1970's after the success of *The New West*, Adams shifted his focus from that of the suburban landscapes of Denver and the surrounding areas, returning his gaze to the grandeur of the Western rural landscape. He was deeply concerned with to degradation of the natural world, and wanted to see for himself whether the "majesty" of the classic idea of the American west still existed.

Additional Resources:

[\*American Silence: The Photographs of Robert Adams, Aperture, 2005\*](#)

["The New Topographics: Photographs of Man-altered Landscape"](#)

## **RICHARD MISRACH**

For over 50 years, Misrach has photographed the dynamic landscape of the American West through an environmentally aware and politically astute lens. His visually seductive, large-scale color vistas powerfully document the devastating ecological effects of human intervention, industrial development, nuclear testing and petrochemical pollution on the natural world.

From <https://www.pacegallery.com/artists/richard-misrach/>

### **Desert Cantos (1979—ongoing)**

Begun in 1979, this ongoing project explores the southwest American desert landscape, and the impact of our human presence. As the artist explains, "You look at landscape, but it's not really landscape, it's a symbol for our country, it's a metaphor for our country."

### **Petrochemical America (1998)**

In 1998, Misrach accepted a commission from the High Museum to photograph the American South. Through a friend he heard about "Cancer Alley" a 120-mile stretch of stretch of the Mississippi River between Baton Rouge and New Orleans that had

over a hundred petrochemical refineries. This eventually culminated in the book project for which he collaborated with Kate Orff on. The book integrates these photographs into a series of visual narratives created by Kate Orff and her office, SCAPE, and unpacks the complex cultural, physical, and economic issues of the region. *A Glossary of Terms and Solutions for a Post- Petrochemical Culture* brings together case studies, tools, and practices that offer models for change.

Additional Resources:

[Richard Misrach on Landscape and Meaning, Aperture, 2021.](#)

## JOHN GOSSAGE

John Gossage (1946- ) born in Staten Island, New York is an artist who has, more than most contemporary photographers, become noted for his intellectually engaging, subversive and well-crafted artist books and other publications. In them the artist utilizes under-recognized elements of the urban environment: unused and abandoned patches of land; refuse and detritus; barbed wire; graffiti and the like, to explore themes as disparate as surveillance, memory and the relationship between architecture and power.

– from <http://stephendaitergallery.com/artists/john-gossage/>

### The Pond (1985)

Considered a groundbreaking book when first published in 1985, John Gossage's "The Pond" remains one of the most important photobooks of the medium. As Gerry Badger, coauthor of "The Photobook: A History," Volumes I and II, asserts, "Adams, Shore, Baltz--all the New Topographics photographers made great books, but none are better than "The Pond." Consisting of photographs taken around and away from a pond situated in an unkempt wooded area at the edge of a city, the volume presents a considered foil to Henry Thoreau's stay at Walden. The photographs in "The Pond" do not aspire to the "beauty" of classical landscapes in the tradition of Ansel Adams. Instead, they reveal a subtle vision of reality on the border between man and nature.

## KRISTINE POTTER

Kristine Potter (1977) is an artist based in Nashville, Tennessee, whose work explores masculine archetypes, the American landscape, and cultural tendencies toward mythologizing the past. Her first monograph *Manifest* was published by TBW Books in 2018. Her second monograph *Dark Waters* is being published by Aperture in the summer of 2023. Potter was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship in 2018 and was awarded the Grand Prix Image Vevey for 2019-2020. Potter's work is in numerous public and private collections including that of The High Museum of Art, The Georgia Museum of Art, the Swiss Camera Museum, and Foundation Vevey. Potter is currently an Assistant Professor of Photography at Middle Tennessee State University.

### **Dark Waters (2023)**

Potter's *Dark Waters* reflects on the Southern Gothic landscape as evoked in the popular imagination of "murder ballads" from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Her images channel the setting and characters of these songs, capturing the landscape of the American South, and creating a series of evocative portraits that stand in for the oft-unnamed women at the center of their stories. Through a combination of staged photographs, landscape, and studio portraiture, Potter creates a palpable atmosphere of threat and potential violence.

## DAVID BENJAMIN SHERRY

David Benjamin Sherry (Santa Fe, NM) is an artist whose work is both challenging and reinvigorating the American Western landscape tradition. His work revolves around interests in environmentalism, queer identity and alternative analog film processes. He's best known for his colorful landscape work, brought upon by the desire to explore the last remaining wilderness in America. Through numerous projects, Sherry's work expresses deep concern for the rapidly changing environment, while continuing to sustain a queer sensibility in the hetero-male dominated canon of landscape photography. Sherry has referred to himself as a "nostalgic futurist" and currently uses a large format 8x10 film camera in order to reflect and understand our connection within the contemporary American landscape.

– from <https://davidbenjaminsherry.com/Information-1>

## **Astral Desert (2012)**

Sherry's psychedelic, hyper-saturated landscapes of the American west subvert known traditions of American landscape photography—the powerful addition of monochromatic colors (and Sherry's rigor in the darkroom to push these colors to their visual extremes) is able to reflect a more emotionally charged, personally expressive point of view.

## **American Monuments (2019)**

American Monuments is a photographic series examining our relationship to landscape, climate change, color, queer identity, and historical photography, using monochrome depictions of the American national monuments being targeted by the Trump administration for immediate development in the interest of oil, coal and uranium exploration... Interconnectedness between queer identity and the Earth has infused this series, which I consider a call for liberation from the patriarchal power structure that has controlled and abused our public lands, as well as our queer bodies, for generations. I rely on my art practice to help me better understand our physical and spiritual connection with our planet. The saturated image demands a second look, which may in turn help the viewer to re-visualize these familiar, even iconic terrains, and make more apparent our natural and sacred connections to them. Color can also indicate the presence of something unsettling below the surface. The pictures themselves become records of places that may soon be destroyed, as well as a means of grappling with the loss of the last remaining wilderness in our country.

Additional Resources:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MnJReMzqsG0>

<https://aperture.org/editorial/david-benjamin-sherry-conjures-the-hypnotic-power-of-extreme-color/>

Carleton Watkins: <https://www.carletonwatkins.org/>

## **JUSTINE KURLAND**

Born in Warsaw, New York, in 1969, Justine Kurland holds a BFA from the School of Visual Arts and an MFA in photography from Yale University. She is best known for photographing subjects in American wilderness landscapes, and her strongly

narrative work is influenced by nineteenth-century English picturesque landscapes and the utopian ideal as well as genre paintings, the photographs of Julia Margaret Cameron and Mathew Brady, and illustrations from fairy tales. Kurland has used staged tableaux to explore the social landscape of girlhood, life on communes, and life in the wilderness. She collaborates with her subjects, who are real people rather than models, in selecting locations and then talks to them about the scenes and scenarios she would like them to respond to and interpret for the camera.

– from <https://www.icp.org/browse/archive/constituents/justine-kurland?all/all/all/all/0>

### **Girl Pictures (1997-2002)**

Girl Pictures reimagines the landscapes of contemporary America, which often romanticized with a particularly masculine tilt, into spaces in which teenage girls are free and fearless. She stages images with these different girls within familiar landscapes, both rural and urban. They fight, play, and wander through field and forest, but also under overpasses and in abandoned parking lots. The sense of freedom portrayed by Kurland's tableaux speaks to an idea of utopia in which patriarchy is non-existent and young girls are afforded the freedom to explore and exist in the landscape that is traditionally sequestered from them.

### **Highway Kind (2004-2016)**

Highway Kind is work that Kurland made along different cross-country road trips with her son, Casper. From 2004, during the period she made this work, she lived on the road in a van, travelling and photographing Casper, the landscape, and the people they encountered along the way.

### **Special Guest: BARBARA BOSWORTH**

Barbara Bosworth is a photographer whose large-format images explore both overt and subtle relationships between humans and the rest of the natural world. Whether chronicling the efforts of hunters or bird banders or evoking the seasonal changes that transform mountains and meadows, Bosworth's caring attention to the world around her results in images that similarly inspire viewers to look closely. Bosworth grew up in Novelty, Ohio. She currently lives in Massachusetts, where she is a professor of photography at the Massachusetts College of Art and Design in Boston. Over her long career, Bosworth has photographed in both black and white and color.

Her single images display a generous attention to small facts, while her large-scale triptychs reveal a panoramic awareness, one that lets viewers glimpse relationships between frames across a wide field. While all of Bosworth's projects remind viewers not only that we shape the rest of nature but that it also shapes us.

Bosworth's work has been widely exhibited, notably in recent retrospectives at the Denver Art Museum in Colorado, Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Massachusetts, the Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington, D.C., and the Phoenix Art Museum in Arizona.

Her publications include, *The Sea* (Radius Books, 2022), *The Heavens* (Radius Books, 2018), *The Meadow* (Radius Books, 2015), *Natural Histories* (Radius Books, 2013), *Trees: National Champions* (MIT Press; Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona, 2005) and *Chasing the Light* (Nightwood Press, 2002).

- from <https://www.barbarabosworth.com/>

Additional Resources:

[Clock-Drive \(Astrophotography\): https://petapixel.com/best-star-tracker/](https://petapixel.com/best-star-tracker/)