

BUILDING A BODY OF WORK IN THE REAL WORLD

with Sasha Wolf and Special Guests

Session 3: Sept 30, 2023 - Resources

BALDWIN LEE

In 1983, Baldwin Lee (b. 1951) left his home in Knoxville, Tennessee, with his 4 × 5 view camera and set out on the first of a series of road trips to photograph the American South. The subject of his pictures was Black Americans: at home, at work, and at play, in the street, and among nature. This project would consume Lee—a first-generation Chinese American—for the remainder of that decade, and it would forever transform his perception of his country, its people, and himself. The resulting archive from this seven-year period contains nearly ten thousand black-and-white negatives.

Additional Resources:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nnT7jrjGvmM>

<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2023/mar/11/it-stunned-me-that-people-had-to-live-like-this-baldwin-lee-rediscovered-images-deep-south-southern-portrait>

<https://www.1854.photography/2022/09/baldwin-lee-1980s-american-south-photobook/>

<https://aperture.org/editorial/how-the-photographer-baldwin-lee-made-stars-of-his-black-subjects/>

DAWOUD BEY

Since the mid-1970s, Dawoud Bey (b. 1953) has worked to expand upon what photography can and should be. Insisting that it is an ethical practice requiring collaboration with his subjects, he creates poignant meditations on visibility, power, and race. Bey chronicles communities and histories that have been largely

underrepresented or even unseen, and his work lends renewed urgency to an enduring conversation about what it means to represent America with a camera.

–From <https://whitney.org/exhibitions/dawoud-bey>

Harlem, USA (1975-1979)

Bey, a Queen's native, was interested in his family's roots in Harlem, so he photographed the residents of Harlem, capturing their daily lives and presenting a nuanced portrayal of the neighborhood.

"All of the photographs I was looking at began to shape what I wanted my own subject matter to be. In 1975, I began photographing in Harlem. Certainly, Harlem occupied a large place in black sociocultural production, going back to Langston Hughes, the Harlem Renaissance, Marcus Garvey, James Baldwin, Roy DeCarava, and of course the Harlem on My Mind exhibition. Also, though I'm from Queens, my mother and father had lived in Harlem for a number of years. Harlem was both a place in my imagination and also a very real place in my family history. I wanted to make photographs that contributed to the long conversation about Harlem in visual culture."

Dawoud Bey on Photographing People and Communities (Aperture 2019)

Additional Resources:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u12VRrnjCo>

<https://aperture.org/books/new-releases/dawoud-bey-on-photographing-people-and-communities/>

Street Photographers Mentioned:

Gary Winogrand - <https://fraenkelgallery.com/artists/garry-winogrand>

Lee Friedlander - <https://www.moma.org/artists/2002>

Joel Meyerowitz - <https://www.joelmeyerowitz.com/>

GREGORY HALPERN

Gregory Halpern is known for his intuitively rich colour photography that draws attention to harsh social realities as well as the unerring strangeness of everyday life. His work is rooted in both the real and the sublime and this approach has led him to photograph life in post-industrial towns of the American Rust Belt, the people and places of Los Angeles and the uniquely unifying experience of a total solar eclipse. "What's interesting to me about the world is its chaos and contradictions, the way opposites can be so beautiful in relation to each other," says Halpern of his practice.

- From <https://www.magnumphotos.com/photographer/gregory-halpern/>

Omaha Sketchbook (2019)

Omaha sketchbook, published as a book in 2019 by MACK, collects work Halpern made in Omaha, Nebraska, after photographing the city for fifteen years. He was interested in the geographic heartland of America—Omaha seemed rich in symbolism as an archetypically "American" place, ripe with history pioneerism and frontier settlement. Halpern's project is exhaustive, and the project traces Halpern's interest in all facets of life in Omaha, from marching bands and sports game, to slaughterhouses and prisons.

Let the Sun Beheaded Be (2020)

This work was made in less than three months as part of the Immersion commission, where Halpern was asked to propose a project based in France. He chose Guadeloupe after struggling to think about a project in mainland France; he chose instead to think about France through the experience of a former French colony. It's a work that Halpern still has a lot of discomfort with—his positionality of a white man photographing a predominantly Black, former French colony

Additional Resources:

<https://www.1854.photography/2019/09/omaha-sketchbook-15-years-of-midwestern-masculinity/>

<https://americansuburbx.com/2013/05/asx-interview-gregory-halpern-on-documentary-ethics-2013.html>

<https://luca-fiore.com/2020/09/09/gregory-halpern-an-interview/>

<https://www.magnumphotos.com/shop/collections/books/let-the-sun-beheaded-be/?sku=BOOK-HAG-03-U>

ALESSANDRA SANGUINETTI

Alessandra Sanguinetti was born in New York in 1968, and brought up in Argentina where she lived from 1970 until 2003. Her interest in photography began aged 9 when she poured over her mother's collection of books by Michael Lesy, Dorothea Lange and others. She studied Anthropology at the University of Buenos Aires and General Studies at the International Center of Photography.

In 1996 she began working on a series eventually titled, *On the Sixth Day*, which explored the complex relationship between man and domesticated animals in the countryside in Argentina. Three years into this project, she turned her attention to two nine-year-old cousins, Belinda and Guille, whose grandmother's farm had been the subject of *Sixth Day*. Sanguinetti followed the two girls' for five years, taking pictures embarked on a life long project, collaboratively photographing the two girls as they grew up and presently as adult women. The first five years culminated in a much-acclaimed monograph, *The Adventures of Belinda and Guille and the Meaning of their Enigmatic Dreams* (2010).

- From <https://sashawolf.com/artist/alessandra-sanguinetti/#>

Some Say Ice (2022)

Since 2014, Alessandra Sanguinetti has been returning to the small town of Black River Falls in Wisconsin, creating the photographs that would come to form the stark and elliptical series *Some Say Ice*. The same town is the subject of *Wisconsin Death Trip*, a book of photographs taken by Charles Van Schaick in the late 1800s documenting the bleak hardships of the lives and deaths of its inhabitants. Sanguinetti first came across this book as a child, and the experience is engraved into her memory as her first reckoning with mortality. This encounter eventually led her to explore the strange relationship of photography and death, and ultimately to make her own visits to Black River Falls.

Additional resources:

<https://www.magnumphotos.com/theory-and-practice/alessandra-sanguinetti-some-say-ice/>

<https://www.1854.photography/2022/10/alessandra-sanguinettis-melancholic-bittersweet-documentation-of-life-in-black-river-falls/>

Wisconsin Death Trip

<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/01/books/50-years-on-wisconsin-death-trip-still-haunts-and-inspires.html>

DANA LIXENBERG

Dana Lixenberg is known for her stripped-down portraits that revel in the elemental characteristics of her subjects. She uses a large-format field camera – a cumbersome tool, which necessitates what the artist refers to as a ‘slow dance’ between her and her subjects. The resulting portraits contain an enormous amount of detail and texture, and are as revelatory as a personal encounter. The power of the work arises from its intimacy, compositional rigor and, importantly, the absence of social stereotyping. Lixenberg has been predominantly active in the United States, and her thorough understanding of the country and its society seeps through palpably in her work.

- From <https://grimgallery.com/artists/42-dana-lixenberg/>

Imperial Courts (1993-2015)

Lixenberg began photographing the LA housing estate, Imperial Courts, shortly after the Rodney King riots of 1992, following the acquittal of four white police officers who were filmed beating Rodney King. At the time, the mass media had portrayed the area as violent and heavily policed—emphasizing a visual language of criminality and unrest. Lixenberg, however, wanted to approach Imperial Courts differently, and to tell the stories of the people who actually lived there, countering the stereotypical images that were pervading the American consciousness.

Additional Resources:

<https://www.deutscheboersephotographyfoundation.org/en/collect/artists/dana-lixenberg.php>

<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2017/may/17/dana-lixenberg-imperial-courts-la-project-deutsche-borse>

<https://aperture.org/editorial/outside-looking-in/>

<https://www.vice.com/en/article/av475a/mossless-in-america-dana-lixenberg>

CAROLYN DRAKE

Carolyn Drake works on long term photo-based projects seeking to interrogate dominant historical narratives and creatively reimagine them. Her practice embraces collaboration and has in recent years melded photography with sewing, collage, and sculpture. She is interested in collapsing the traditional divide between author and subject, the real and the imaginary, and challenging entrenched binaries. Drake was born in California and studied Media/Culture and History in the early 1990s at Brown University. Following her graduation from Brown, in 1994, Drake moved to New York and worked as an interactive designer for many years before departing to engage with the physical world through photography.

Knit Club (2012-2020)

Knit Club is a body of work made between 2012–2020. The work itself takes inspiration from Southern Gothic literature, and charts Drake’s collaboration with an enigmatic group of women loosely calling themselves “Knit Club.” The nature of the club is ambiguous. It is a cross between a gang, a cult of mysteries, and a group of friends bound by secrets only they share. A community that manages to exist outside the gaze or control of men. Women, children, and mothers, shrouded in masks and mystery to live a life on their own terms. The work was published as a book by TBW books in 2020.

Additional Resources:

<https://photowork.foundation/2023/04/27/carolyn-drake/>

William Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying* - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/As_I_Lay_Dying

<https://www.e-flux.com/criticism/456553/carolyn-drake-s-knit-club>

Special Guest: DOUG DUBOIS

Doug DuBois' photographs are in the collection of the Museum of Modern Art in NY, SFMOMA in San Francisco, J. Paul Getty Museum and LACMA in Los Angeles, The Museum of Fine Art in Houston, the Library of Congress in Washington DC and the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. He has received fellowships from the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation, the MacDowell Colony, Yaddo, The National Endowment for the Arts, SITE Santa Fe, Light Works and The John Gutmann Foundation. Doug DuBois has exhibited at The J Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles; The Aperture Foundation, The Museum of Modern Art and Higher Pictures in New York; SITE, Santa Fe; New Langton Arts in San Francisco; PARCO Gallery, Tokyo, Japan, Museo D'arte Contemporanea in Rome, Italy and The Irish Museum of Modern Art, The Crawford Art Gallery and the Gallery of Photography in Ireland.

He has published two monographs with the Aperture Foundation, *My last day at Seventeen* (2015), *All the Days and Nights* (2009); exhibition catalogues including *Where We Live: Photographs from the Berman Collection* (2007) with the J. Paul Getty Museum, *The Pleasures and Terrors of Domestic Comfort* (1991) with the Museum of Modern Art; as well as features in *Double Take*, *The Picture Project*, *The Friends of Photography*, and in magazines including *The New York Times*, *Time*, *Details*, *GQ*, *The Telegraph* and *Financial Times* of London, *Monopol* in Berlin and *Outlook Magazine* in Beijing.

Additional Resources:

<http://dougdubois.com/atdan/>

<http://dougdubois.com/mldas/>

Carrie Mae Weems - <http://carriemaeweems.net/>

Photographs Not Taken, Daylight, 2012 - <https://daylightbooks.org/products/photographs-not-taken-a-collection-of-photographers-essays>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RaPNYQ_qdII&t=20s

<https://aperture.org/editorial/lives-others/>

<https://americansuburbx.com/2015/11/the-impossibilities-to-shoot-as-a-white-photographer-on-the-african-continent.html>

<https://aperture.org/editorial/outside-looking-in/>