

Radial Survey

Destiny of a Place

—— Vol.1

Silver Eye Center
for Photography

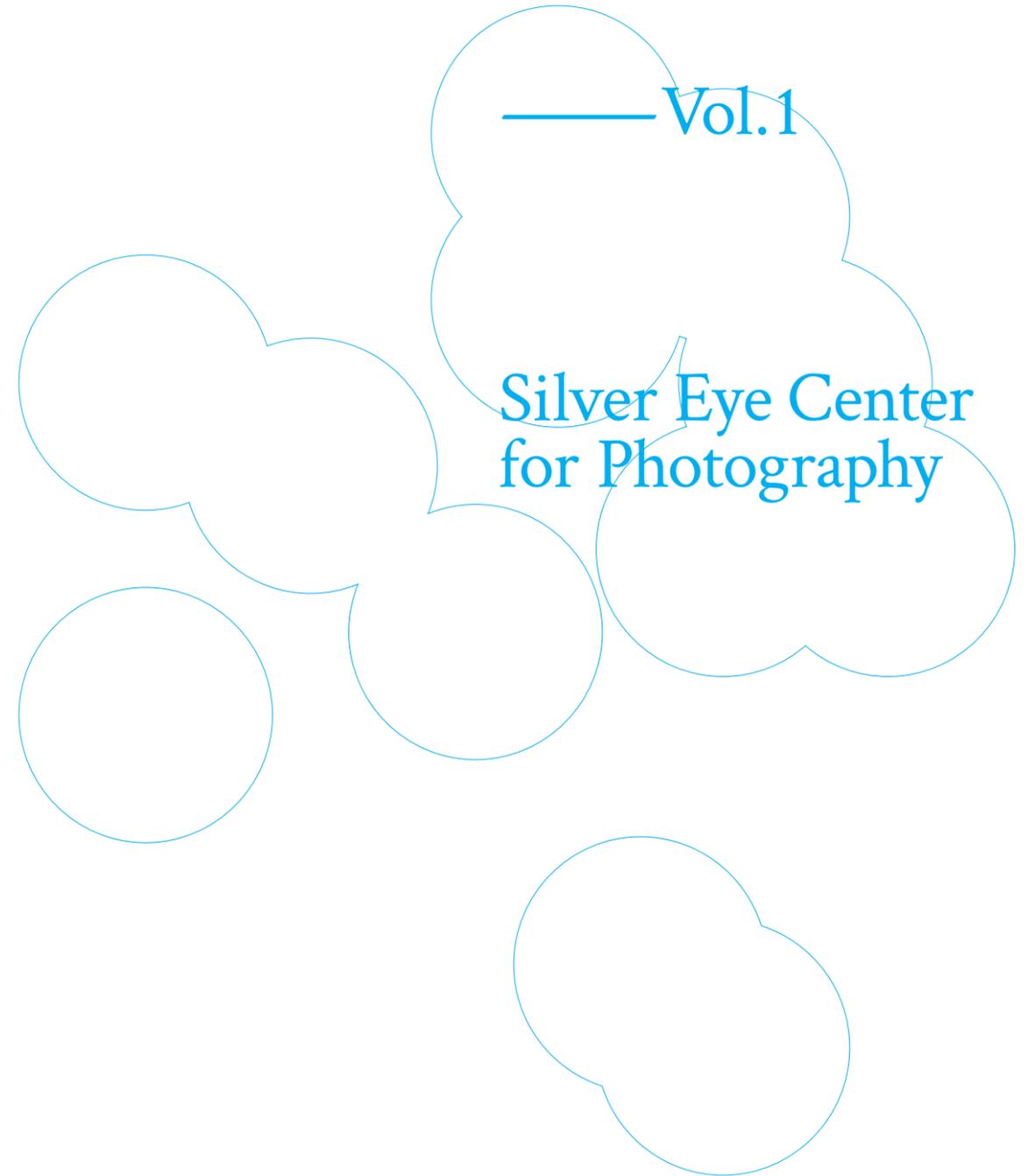


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Five years ago, after more than a decade in Chicago I moved back home to my hometown of Pittsburgh. I immediately fell back in love with this city and the creative community here. The artists I met embodied Pittsburgh to me; they were passionate, hard working, unpretentious, and beyond talented. They were also all in Pittsburgh because they were serious about creating a life that allowed them time, space and energy to create. ¶ I still saw plenty of my old friends from Chicago because they would stop and stay for the night on their way to New York, as Pittsburgh is nearly the exact halfway point on the pilgrimage from one art meca to the other. I loved hosting these visitors and sharing Pittsburgh with new and old friends. Everyone who came through was blown away by the small-and-mighty arts scene here ¶ As I learned more about the regions surrounding Pittsburgh

I came to realize this attitude and work ethic stretched beyond South Western Pennsylvania, radiating throughout the Rust Belt, Appalachia, the Mid-Atlantic, and beyond. I learned this was a special place for artists but I also realized that this was a challenging place for artists; it simply did not have the concentration of jobs, collectors, galleries, critics, and breadth of opportunity that the giant art capitals did. This region was too often overlooked from a national perspective, and I desperately wanted the world to see the artists working here. ¶ It was this impulse, to help people discover and celebrate what is happening in photography around our region, that led us to develop *Radial Survey*. Our curatorial team decided to make it a biennial event so that it would be an ongoing conversation, and we drew the biggest circle we could around our little gallery (right up to the edge of those giant art capitals.)

This circle represents a funny, arbitrary, and real community. This show seeks to capture this moment in photography, in this part of the world. The artists selected for this inaugural survey live and work across this giant circle and beyond this geography they all possess an extraordinary vision for making images from this region. I am tremendously proud of this exhibition, and awed by the talent and creativity of these artists, and everyone involved in bringing *Radial Survey* to life. I hope this catalog continues the conversation that began with this exhibition, a conversation about what it means to be an artist working in a funny circle.

<p>The Destiny of a Place Leo Hsu</p>			
<p>Within 300 miles of Pittsburgh: a large section of the Mid-Atlantic seaboard and upstate New York; the near Midwest; much of Appalachia; land along three of the Great Lakes. This region is firmly part of a larger social and political ecology. Here are cities and towns that grew with burgeoning American industry between the mid 19th and mid 20th centuries, that</p>		<p>Lydia Panas, Ahndraya Parlato, Jared Thorne, Corine Vermeulen, and Susan Worsham.</p> <p>Throughout the work of these artists there is a persistent engagement with the relationship between history and possibility. Each artist's works grapples with the distance between what was and what could be, who we could be, and how we could be. These artists examine the overlaps of memory, mythology, and power. They look at place as it is experienced by inhabitants, both as it is lived and as it is desired, and explore the ways in which these tensions create the conditions for possibility and agency.</p>	
<p>have been forced to reckon with globalization since the 1970s. The gravity of New York City, especially as a cultural nexus, is felt here, as are the effects of national events and conversations that shape both the region and the course of the country as a whole. But the region is also a place unto itself; within the area of this 300 mile radius we feel, each day, that our own destinies are becoming further entwined with the destiny of this place.</p>		<p>To unpack this: Our ability to invent ourselves is always in relation to the histories—personal, political, social—that we have inherited. Departing from the narratives we have received requires an act of imagination powerful enough to break molds and to turn away from set paths. The artists in the Radial Survey invoke the magical, the mystical, and the surreal; they draw attention to the circumstance and materiality of what is; they recognize the limits and illusions of rationality and modern order; they inhabit the sincere belief that we can make our worlds on our own terms—or at least that we must recognize the difference between what we are given and what we want and need.</p>	
<p>While Silver Eye's <i>Radial Survey</i> brings together outstanding emerging and mid-career photo-based artists living and working within a 300-mile radius of Pittsburgh, the artists were not selected on the basis of a designated theme. The twelve artists in the inaugural <i>Radial Survey</i> live across this broad area and operate on their own trajectories with their own motivations, practices, and concerns. <i>Radial Survey</i> is conceived not as an effort to identify a regional style or movement, but as a proposition: that working in this region encourages artists to engage with logics, flows, histories, and mythologies that differ from those defining the faster-moving densities of very large cities, and to ask how this (admittedly large) area can be addressed as a place in and of itself.</p>		<p>Claiming possibility requires effort. For better and for worse, the past determines our values in the present, both the ones we want and the ones we don't. In order to hold the past and claim the present, we must live within mythologies even as we attempt to remake them.</p>	
<p>And yet, despite the absence of a theme, shared sensibilities and concerns do emerge, when considering the work of Nando Alvarez-Perez, Morgan Ashcom, Nydia Blas, Melissa Catanese, Brendan George Ko, Jacob Koestler, Eva O'Leary,</p>		<p>* * *</p>	
		<p>Several artists in the <i>Radial Survey</i> engage with possibility by exploring the relationship between visualization, identity, and the</p>	

<p>recognition of power. As a political act, representation can make visible what the artist or subject believes to be possible, or allow for a subject to be seen on their own terms. It can also be raised as criticism, drawing attention to power relations that have become so embedded and normalized as to be difficult to perceive.</p>			<p>in which mediated representations are inherently distortive. The keystone image in the piece is a photograph of an oil pastel drawing on an inkjet print of an iPhone photo of a magic lantern slide of a Roman replica of a lost Greek sculpture of wrestlers. Through these transformations Buffalo-based Alvarez-Perez notes with humor and wit that historical narratives are passed on as iterative constructions, and not according to any essential form.</p>
<p>In <i>The Girls Who Spun Gold</i> Nydia Blas (p. 50) creates portraits of young Black women who she came to know through her role as director of the Southside Community Center in Ithaca. These portraits describe a “physical and allegorical space presented through a Black feminine lens” where her collaborators express their strength and vulnerability on their own terms as they support one another. In Blas' photographs we witness frozen moments in narratives that we do not know. Gold dust and honey suggest an elemental connection between the subjects and their world.</p>			<p>Melissa Catanese's <i>Apsis</i> (p. 96) also brings together imagery both found and created by the artist. <i>Apsis</i>, named for the two extreme points of an elliptical orbit—that is, the points at which a satellite is closest and farthest from the body around which it orbits—was made in response to the work of filmmaker David Lynch, whose work uses multiple complementary and overlapping narratives to question the notion of a single privileged reality. In her collage, Catanese, who is based in Pittsburgh, brings together images and symbols—a closed eye, a fingerprint, a gold curtain—that in the context of new combinations destabilize easy readings and suggest previously unknown mysteries.</p>
<p>Similarly, Lydia Panas' (p. 42) work draws attention to the subjectivity of the young women who she photographs in Kutztown, PA. In <i>Sleeping Beauty</i> women lie in the grass, each looking directly back at the viewer, self-possessed. The subjects in <i>Promise Land</i> are photographed in studio to speak to the contradictory expectations and double standards imposed on women. The girls insist on being seen as themselves, even as they wear paper crowns or have lipstick smeared across their faces.</p>			<p>In <i>Who Was Changed and Who Was Dead</i>, Ahndraya Parlato (p. 72), who lives in Rochester, NY, attempts to reconcile and recover her own narrative. Her mother's suicide and grandmother's murder, followed by her own entry into motherhood, led to Parlato's awareness of her own mortality. Parlato's project deals with her love for her young daughter in the face of grief. The fear of erasure informs this work: Parlato's “Hidden Mother” portrait follows a Victorian child portraiture convention in which a mother would hold her child while shrouded in cloth, rendering herself invisible; in Parlato's photograph, there is only a shrouded mother and no child. Parlato renders her own mother visible in the colorful photograms made by exposing photographic paper on which she placed her mother's ashes.</p>
<p>Eva O'Leary's (p. 22) work also explores how social roles, especially gender roles, are shaped by social expectations. Her series <i>Happy Valley</i> deals with growing up and living in State College, PA, home of Penn State University, and describes an oppressive, sunlit delirium. Women reveal the masks that they wear, while men revel in their masculinity and power. With the gloss of advertising photography, O'Leary suggests that this social structure is both deeply embedded and focused on the superficial, and that what seems normal in Happy Valley quickly reveals a quiet, sustained psychological violence that touches everyone.</p>			<p>Susan Worsham's (p. 62) <i>Bittersweet on Bostwick Lane</i> also reconciles grief by actively engaging with it. Worsham links past and present through the figure of Margaret Daniel, Worsham's oldest neighbor from</p>
<p>Nando Alvarez-Perez's (p. 86) <i>Memorex Narcissus and the Angel of History</i>, is a dizzying, symbol-rich mashup of found and constructed imagery that draws attention to the ways</p>			

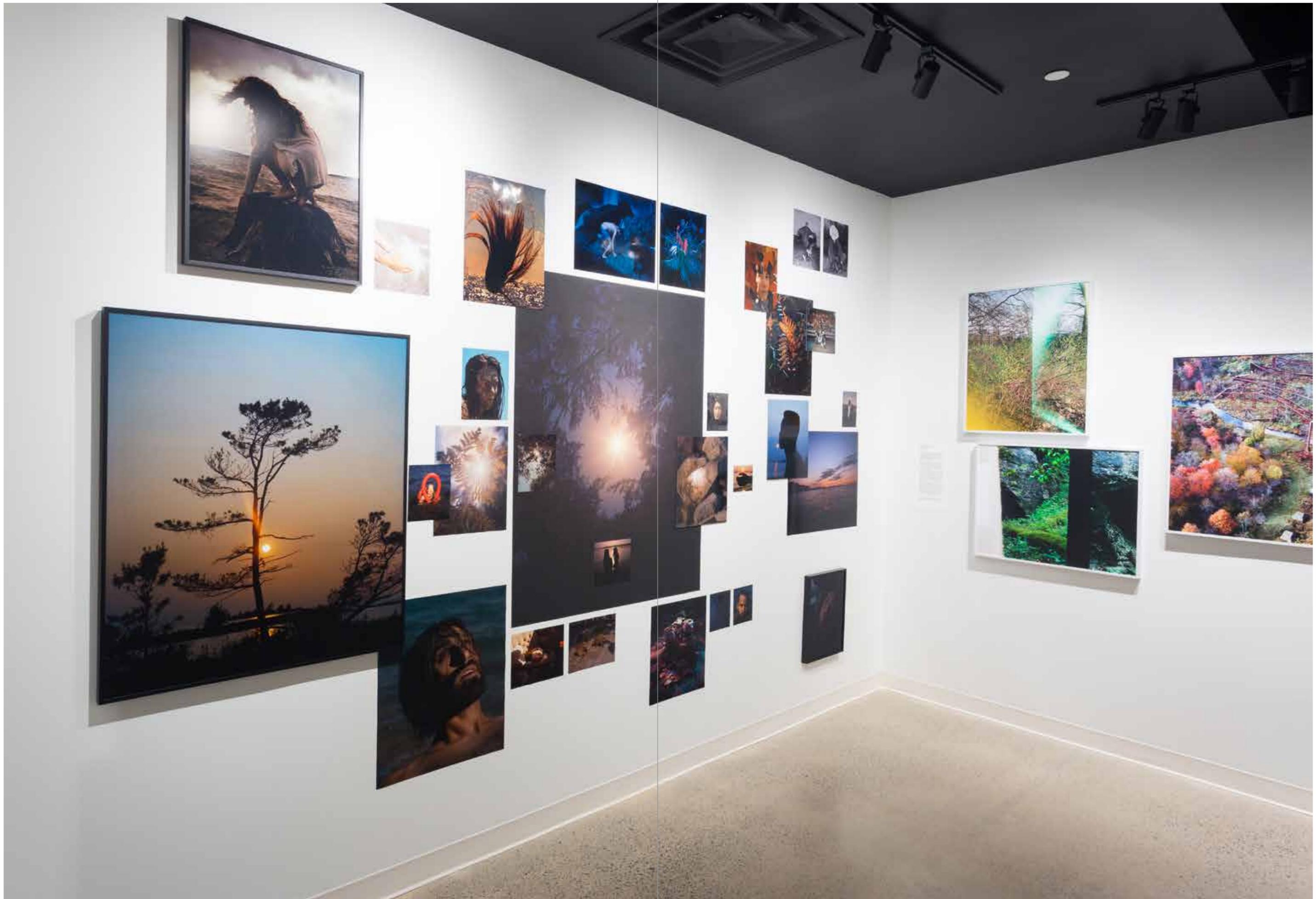
<p>her childhood in Richmond, VA, and the last person to see her brother Russell alive before he committed suicide. “My memories become intertwined with hers as I rediscover my past through her stories,” writes Worsham. Margaret is both the photographer’s subject and her guide. Through conversations with Margaret, Worsham learns about her own family history which she materializes through symbol-rich photography in bittersweet form. Wortham’s other primary subject is her muse Lynn, whose son Max could be read as representing the artist’s brother. The series is full of references to biology and botanicals; a found box of specimen slides speaks to beauty and preservation.</p>	<p>Like Lee Friedlander’s <i>American Monuments</i>, Jared Thorne’s (p. 128) series <i>26 Planned Parenthoods</i> highlights the relationship between politics, history, and social landscapes. Thorne draws attention to the ordinariness of the forgettable landscapes surrounding each of Ohio’s Planned Parenthood Health Centers: industrial areas, residential streets, and strip malls, with their parking lots, rusting utility poles, and skeins of power lines. The clinics are not always obvious; some cannot be discerned in the photographs at all. Thorne’s series connects the political contests around Planned Parenthood with their everyday role in their communities as health service providers. “Planned Parenthood,” writes Thorne, “is at the forefront of providing Women’s healthcare services to the underprivileged and the disadvantaged, who in Ohio are disproportionately African-American and Latino.”</p>
<p>In <i>What the Living Carry</i>, Morgan Ashcom (p. 106) similarly conjures a place with which he is intimately familiar, though in this case the town of Hoy’s Fork is fictional, created by Ashcom through photographs and artifacts, a distillation of his memories of growing up in Free Union, VA. Hoy’s Fork is the center of its own world; Ashcom describes a community with a strong attachment to the land, with a suggestion of violence, and a sense</p>	<p>Where Vermeulen’s and Thorne’s projects draw attention to how life is lived, Jacob Koestler (p. 120) materializes history as seen in the transformation of post-industrial terrain as it is returned to nature. Based in Cleveland, Koestler focuses not on the corruption of what had been built and is now in decay, but rather on the aesthetic experience of the transformation Koestler invites us to experience the beauty of these places as he sees them: whether photographing a fence or a massive fallen railroad bridge, he visualizes a relationship between human constructions and the relentless, inevitable overgrowth that reclaims these spaces—not as a competition but as a new synthesis.</p>
<p>of a past weighing heavily on the present, even as time has stopped. The figures in the images could be characters in a folktale told repeatedly, fixed in slow, inevitable, recycling narratives.</p> <p>Where Parlato, Worsham, and Ashcom’s works are driven by the artists’ individual histories, Corine Vermeulen and Jared Thorne visualize place in a way that is defined by shared experiences and that informs future possibilities.</p>	<p>In contrast to Koestler’s embrace of post-industrial terrain, but also with a resonant attention to the implacable power of nature, Brendan George Ko (p. 30) looks to Lake Ontario to find a connection with the land and its presence. His relationship to the land stems from his youth in New Mexico and his time in Hawai’i, where he lives when not in Toronto. Ko’s work allows him to be where he is in order to be where he is not. His photographs on Toronto Island in Lake Ontario are part of his larger ongoing <i>Scrapbook</i> project in which he photographs people and</p>
<p>In <i>Your Town Tomorrow</i>, Corine Vermeulen (p. 140) presents Detroit as a place that continues to unroll its own history. A genre of imagery popularly known as “ruin porn” that romanticizes the decay of once-grand buildings has emerged around post-industrial cities in general and Detroit in particular. In contrast, Vermeulen presents communities of people living their lives. Her photographs revel in the specific, and, sometimes, the surreal. Her subjects, like the subjects of Panas and Blas’s photographs, look back at the viewer to assert their being, acknowledging each one’s unique circumstances.</p>	<p>In <i>Your Town Tomorrow</i>, Corine Vermeulen (p. 140) presents Detroit as a place that continues to unroll its own history. A genre of imagery popularly known as “ruin porn” that romanticizes the decay of once-grand buildings has emerged around post-industrial cities in general and Detroit in particular. In contrast, Vermeulen presents communities of people living their lives. Her photographs revel in the specific, and, sometimes, the surreal. Her subjects, like the subjects of Panas and Blas’s photographs, look back at the viewer to assert their being, acknowledging each one’s unique circumstances.</p>
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<p>places significant to him, and through which he honors the beauty that he finds in his relationship with nature, and the pleasure of experiencing the vastness of landscapes and seascapes, sunlight and night.</p> <p>This respect for a natural state mirrors the desire to be, simply, ourselves: who we are, where we are. Whether it is because of this respect, or in spite of it, all of the</p>	<p>artists, convened in Pittsburgh to explore how working within the <i>Radial Survey</i> region informs artists’ work and lives. Certain topics floated to the top: the need to grapple with the place that you call home, whether you chose it or it was chosen for you; the link between memory and place; the desire to convey a love of landscape and a connection to the land through photographs; the aspiration, as Jared Thorne stated, “to make work about where I am and where I work and the people that are in my community.”</p> <p>And yet we never live only where we are. Being somewhere is defined as much by our connections to other places and other moments as it is by the embodied sense of being here and now. We carry with us the places that made us. When we participate</p>
<p>respect to nature, with respect to history, with respect to our own traumas, and with respect to one another.</p> <p>In 2019, what was once unimaginable has become normalized: from the pleasures and corruptions of a networked world; to a political ecology powered by divisiveness and the advancement of “truths” through the control of information; to unprecedented</p>	<p>in making the places where we are, we bring our histories with us. Some places are so important to us that they never leave us and continue to shape our thinking and feeling after we’ve left and after time has passed.</p> <p>In the future the dynamics that inform our present increasingly will feel fixed and inevitable. This first <i>Radial Survey</i> will be a point in an increasingly large array over</p>
<p>opportunities to assert identities, even as bigotry, hate, and fear take on public faces in ways that we haven’t seen before, and ways that feel too familiar. All of this simmers and combusts in the shadow of the global crisis of the Anthropocene, the acknowledgment of human responsibility for geologic-scale global transformation. This is the context for the work in the <i>Radial Survey</i>; this is the</p>	<p>time, a time capsule of concerns and how we addressed them. We’ll forget that we had choices and that things weren’t ever all ‘just so’, and the decisions that we make today will congeal as history.</p> <p>In this catalog, the reader can explore a representation of the work shown in this first <i>Radial Survey</i>, and also read reflections on the works written by Jessica Beck, Anna Lee, and Ash McNelis, who led panels at the symposium. The works in this volume can inform how we arrive at that future; let them help you navigate your way there.</p>
<p>precarious world that informs the artists’ lives: every individual history connects to the larger human experience and to the specific uncertainties and possibilities of today.</p> <p>The destiny of a place is subject to change. By visualizing who we are, where we are, the artists of the first <i>Radial Survey</i> encourage us to take ownership of these destinies.</p>	<p>— Postscript September 2019</p>
<p>— <i>Radial Survey</i> exhibition essay March 2019</p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p>	
<p>On the last weekend in May, 2019, at the close of the exhibition, forty-odd artists and curators, including several of the participating</p>	









<p>The Identity Trap Jessica Beck</p>			
<p>As I begin to write about a group of artists included in the <i>Radial Survey</i> show, and on the theme of the possibilities and complexities of identity, I stew on how to link their work together. Rather than attempt to create a shared narrative between these disparate artists, I am compelled to describe how each photographer is staging identity in different ways—through trick</p>	<p>of white conformity. It is hard not to see this photograph through the veil of a rise in white nationalism, which has slowly gained public attention since 2016.</p>	<p>In other images, whiteness feels like a force that blinds and repels. In <i>Spring Break</i>, (2018) an unsettling photograph, a young girl is held still while someone pours milk into her eyes. Streams of white fluid leak from her sockets like milky tears. With dramatic lighting haloing her face and a bodiless set of hands holding her still, it looks as if she's being baptized into this white community.</p>	<p>In <i>Hurricane Hair</i>, (2016) a young girl stands in a doorway as a bright light bleaches her pale skin and a threatening wind blows her hair into a fan. She looks ahead into the distance—or perhaps the future—with fear. Is there a hurricane approaching? Or is it the mob of white men from <i>Monument Climb</i> (2016) that is brewing outside her door? In <i>Happy Valley</i>, whiteness momentarily blinds, creates a sense of aggressive conformity, and feels like a circus cliché. O'Leary's lens captures her hometown with the kind of distance that allows her to look back at these bizarre social norms with a productive criticality, and a sardonic grin.</p>
<p>lighting, parameters of stillness, props and emulsions on the body, or cropping and shadowing. Each approach produces different results—some optimistic, others threatening. Identity in these images is staged and distorted, at times to an extreme; in some cases, whiteness is presented as fearful, femininity quietly violent, friendship supernatural, and blackness rich with possibility for change. In some moments within this group of work, identity feels like a trap—and yet, in others, artists present opportunities to break through the cage of societal pressures and present the body anew.</p>	<p>her sockets like milky tears. With dramatic lighting haloing her face and a bodiless set of hands holding her still, it looks as if she's being baptized into this white community.</p>	<p>In <i>Hurricane Hair</i>, (2016) a young girl stands in a doorway as a bright light bleaches her pale skin and a threatening wind blows her hair into a fan. She looks ahead into the distance—or perhaps the future—with fear. Is there a hurricane approaching? Or is it the mob of white men from <i>Monument Climb</i> (2016) that is brewing outside her door? In <i>Happy Valley</i>, whiteness momentarily blinds, creates a sense of aggressive conformity, and feels like a circus cliché. O'Leary's lens captures her hometown with the kind of distance that allows her to look back at these bizarre social norms with a productive criticality, and a sardonic grin.</p>	<p>or perhaps the future—with fear. Is there a hurricane approaching? Or is it the mob of white men from <i>Monument Climb</i> (2016) that is brewing outside her door? In <i>Happy Valley</i>, whiteness momentarily blinds, creates a sense of aggressive conformity, and feels like a circus cliché. O'Leary's lens captures her hometown with the kind of distance that allows her to look back at these bizarre social norms with a productive criticality, and a sardonic grin.</p>
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<p>Eva O'Leary's series, <i>Happy Valley</i>, is a portrait of the artist's hometown, which she says "was once an icon of white, middle class Americana." It is a surreal world, with unnatural, blinding light, circus-like figures staged under a harsh lens, and mobs that speak to the growing threat of America's homegrown terrorism: white nationalism. At first glance, the crowd in <i>Monument Climb</i>, (2016) looks like a single</p>	<p>of white conformity. It is hard not to see this photograph through the veil of a rise in white nationalism, which has slowly gained public attention since 2016.</p>	<p>of white conformity. It is hard not to see this photograph through the veil of a rise in white nationalism, which has slowly gained public attention since 2016.</p>	<p>of white conformity. It is hard not to see this photograph through the veil of a rise in white nationalism, which has slowly gained public attention since 2016.</p>
<p>mass of white, bare-chested men, arms raised in unison, mouths forming little gaping holes as they yell aggressive chants at a fraternity hazing—or maybe, in Trump's America, a presidential rally. On closer inspection, this crowd does have a few women, and at least one attendee who is not white, but ultimately, difference is lost in this sea</p>	<p>of white conformity. It is hard not to see this photograph through the veil of a rise in white nationalism, which has slowly gained public attention since 2016.</p>	<p>of white conformity. It is hard not to see this photograph through the veil of a rise in white nationalism, which has slowly gained public attention since 2016.</p>	<p>of white conformity. It is hard not to see this photograph through the veil of a rise in white nationalism, which has slowly gained public attention since 2016.</p>

<p>skin tone is darkened by moonlight and bodies are cropped and float along a fragmented landscape of memory. In <i>Scrapbook</i> identity comes in and out of focus, but evades a fixed definition or tie to place.</p>	<p>Femininity:</p>	<p><i>Becka and Rong</i>—to break out of these illustrations, these staged confines of femininity? Can girlhood be pictured with more agency? As Clifton's words so beautifully illustrate, the story of women can also—</p>	<p><i>must</i> also—be about turning into one's self without these pressures, without these debilitating restraints, and without these violent details, like smeared lipstick and the</p>
<p>turning into my own</p>	<p>turning on in to my own self at last</p>	<p>balance of inhabitable crowns. I ask again: can these girls blossom rather than wilt against the pressures of society?</p>	<p>While in Panas's work girlhood feels like a trap—like a small ballerina confined to a mirrored jewelry box, turning in endless circles to the sound of a slow, mechanical waltz—in Blas's work, the female body appears like a site of wonderment and magical possibility. Here, young women look inward to a place where possibility may be limitless. Unlike the citizens of <i>Happy Valley</i>, where race is pictured as threatening, disarming, apocalyptic, in Nydia's images blackness is staged with intimacy and vulnerability, and a sense of wonderful possibility. Figures are anointed with honey and glitter; bodily fluids like menstrual blood, which may elicit</p>
<p>turning out of the white cage, turning out of the lady cage</p>	<p>turning at last on a stem like a black fruit in my own season</p>	<p>at last¹</p>	<p>isolation, are pictured in <i>Gold Legs</i>, (2016) as a glittering stream of magic.</p>
<p>The story of female self-discovery is told in different ways in the works of Lydia Panas and Nydia Blas, who both focus on girlhood and the challenges and barriers of femininity. Panas's photographs belong to two separate series, <i>Sleeping Beauty</i> and <i>Promise Land</i>. In <i>Sleeping Beauty</i>, girls are photographed motionless, laying on the ground, arms and</p>	<p>bodies limp, dressed in lush colors of gold and red that pop against a dense green landscape. The camera's lens hovers over their bodies like a silent witness. These women are rendered helpless, as if wilting under the weight of societal pressure of what femininity and girlhood should look like. In two images from <i>Promise Land</i>, <i>Rebecca, Red Lipstick</i>, (2017) and <i>Quinn, Paper Crown</i> (2016), young girls are photographed</p>	<p>in the studio against a stark black background, as soft lighting highlights the suppleness of their porcelain skin. In <i>Quinn</i>, a girl balances a small crown on her head as if symbolically balancing the judgment that will follow and scrutinize her body as it matures into womanhood.</p>	<p>But, it's up to us to continue to "confront photography in the wakening of intractable reality"² and construct identity from lived experience, rather than place our faith in the unending, destabilizing bombardment of images that consumes so much of modern life and that entices us to self-fashion according to societal demands. Identity can be a trap, and the image its bait—but identity can also be limitless, boundless and formed over time, an unfolding blossoming, a slow turn according to our own rhythm, to our own season.</p>
<p>Panas' images of young girls in the woods appear eerie and unsettling to me, and suggestive of sexual violence or a loss</p>	<p>of innocence taken without permission. My mind wanders to the haunting photographs of Hans Bellmer of his 'artificial girl,' a handmade doll that he made in 1934 and photographed in many unsettling poses including in the woods, tied to a tree. I ask, are these girls helpless? I wonder, is there room for each of these girls—<i>Quinn, Elle, Ava</i>,</p>	<p>of innocence taken without permission. My mind wanders to the haunting photographs of Hans Bellmer of his 'artificial girl,' a handmade doll that he made in 1934 and photographed in many unsettling poses including in the woods, tied to a tree. I ask, are these girls helpless? I wonder, is there room for each of these girls—<i>Quinn, Elle, Ava</i>,</p>	<p>of innocence taken without permission. My mind wanders to the haunting photographs of Hans Bellmer of his 'artificial girl,' a handmade doll that he made in 1934 and photographed in many unsettling poses including in the woods, tied to a tree. I ask, are these girls helpless? I wonder, is there room for each of these girls—<i>Quinn, Elle, Ava</i>,</p>
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1 Lucille Clifton, "Turning." *Good Woman Poems and a Memoir 1969-1980*.
2 Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, Hill and Wang: New York, 117.

Eva O'Leary

Happy Valley
(2014-2018)

b. 1989
State College, PA

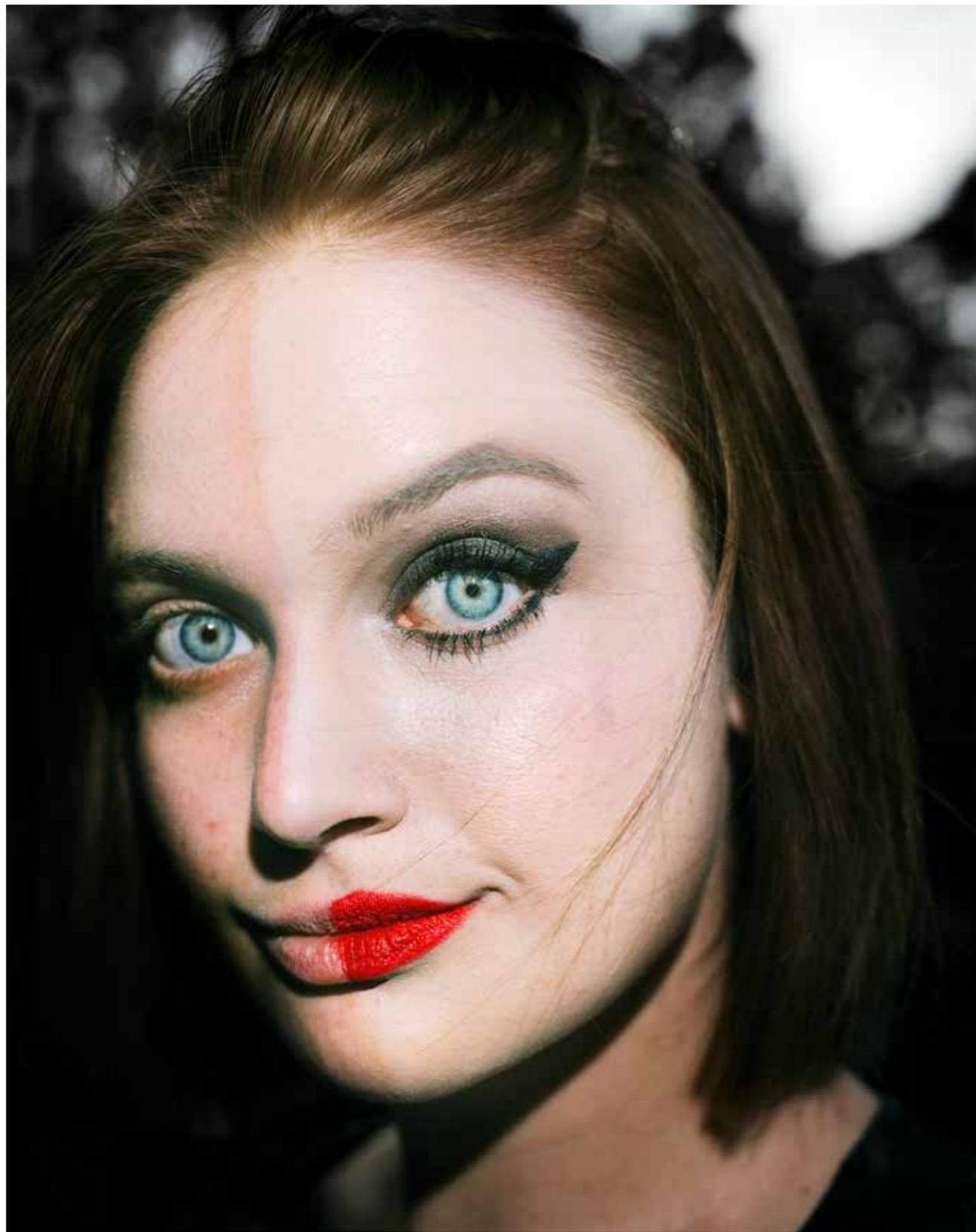


“I grew up in a college town called Happy Valley. It’s an intoxicating place where naivete and recklessness collide with big money—a football town that was once an icon of white, middle class Americana, but is now best known for an international sex scandal. ¶ Happy Valley is where I had my first drink at 14, and where my best friend first shot heroin three years later. Mothers peel their daughters off the floors of cheap motel rooms, and old men get young girls blind drunk on acrid vodka. It’s a polarized place: some get BMW’s at 16 while others have babies. This work draws from my upbringing to explore the relationship between fantasy and power.”

<p>In <i>Happy Valley</i>, Eva O'Leary grapples with a community's cultural system whose core values are structured around a particular sense of masculinity. She explores society's overwhelming pressures as expressed in advertising and the rituals that reinforce social roles in a college town obsessed with sports, both of which maintain norms for men and women that are ultimately alienating and toxic. For this series, O'Leary draws from her own experiences growing up and living in State College, PA, home of Penn State University.</p>			
<p>O'Leary's photographs evoke the uncomfortable tensions that defined her life in State College. Her pictures are characterized by clean forms and saturated colors—qualities often associated with commercial photography, yet their overall effect is one of unease. Some of the subjects in <i>Happy Valley</i> appear to be self-conscious of how they are being directed into social roles, while others are fixed in place, apparently lacking self-awareness. In these images, O'Leary recognizes the reassurances promised by surface appearances, while also suggesting how empty those promises may be.</p>			







Brendan George Ko

Scrapbook
(2014-2018)

b. 1986
Toronto, ON

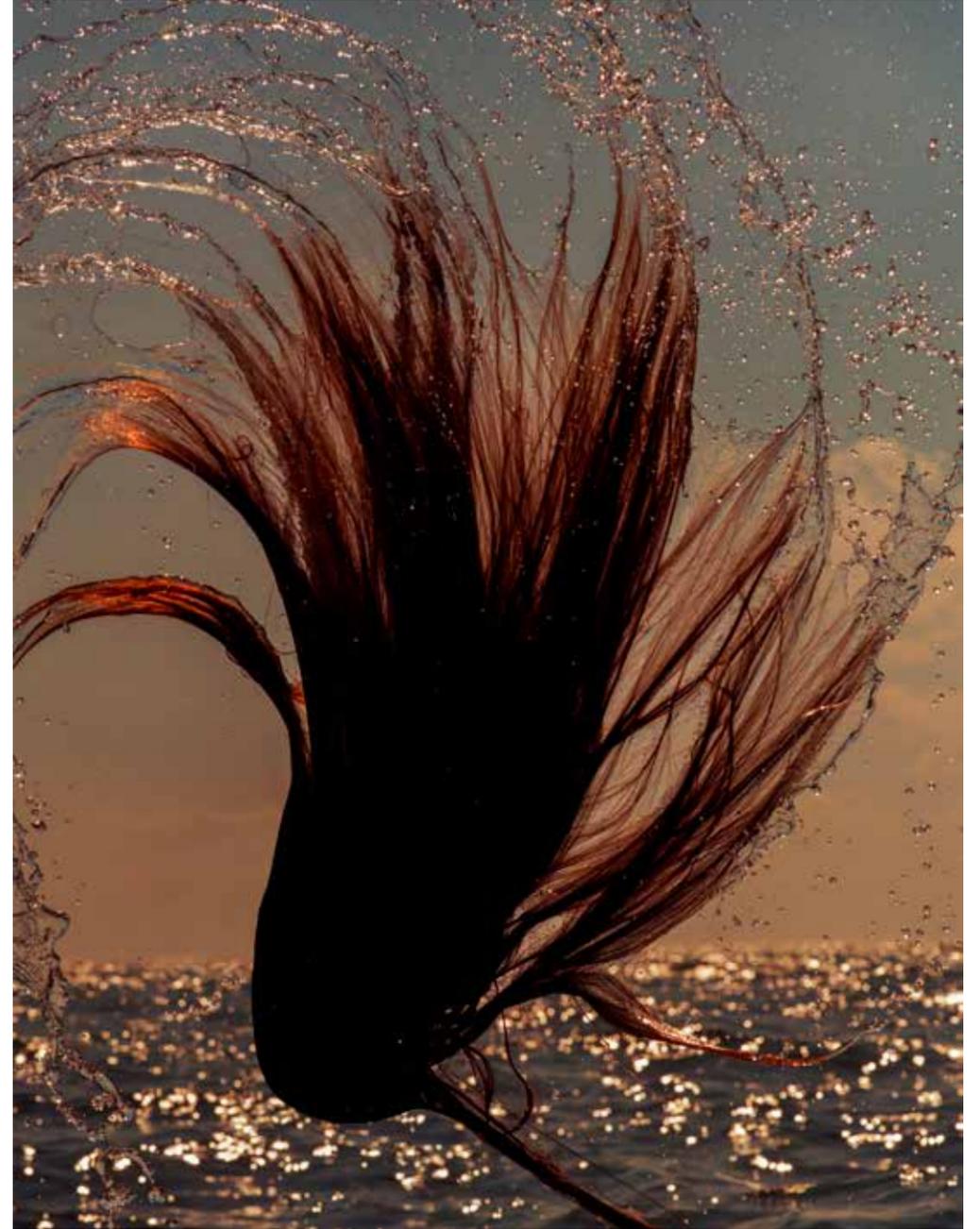


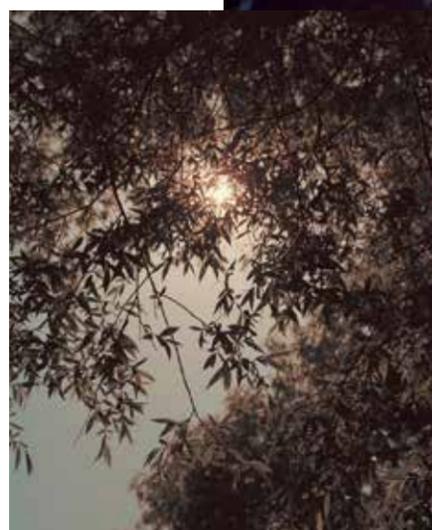
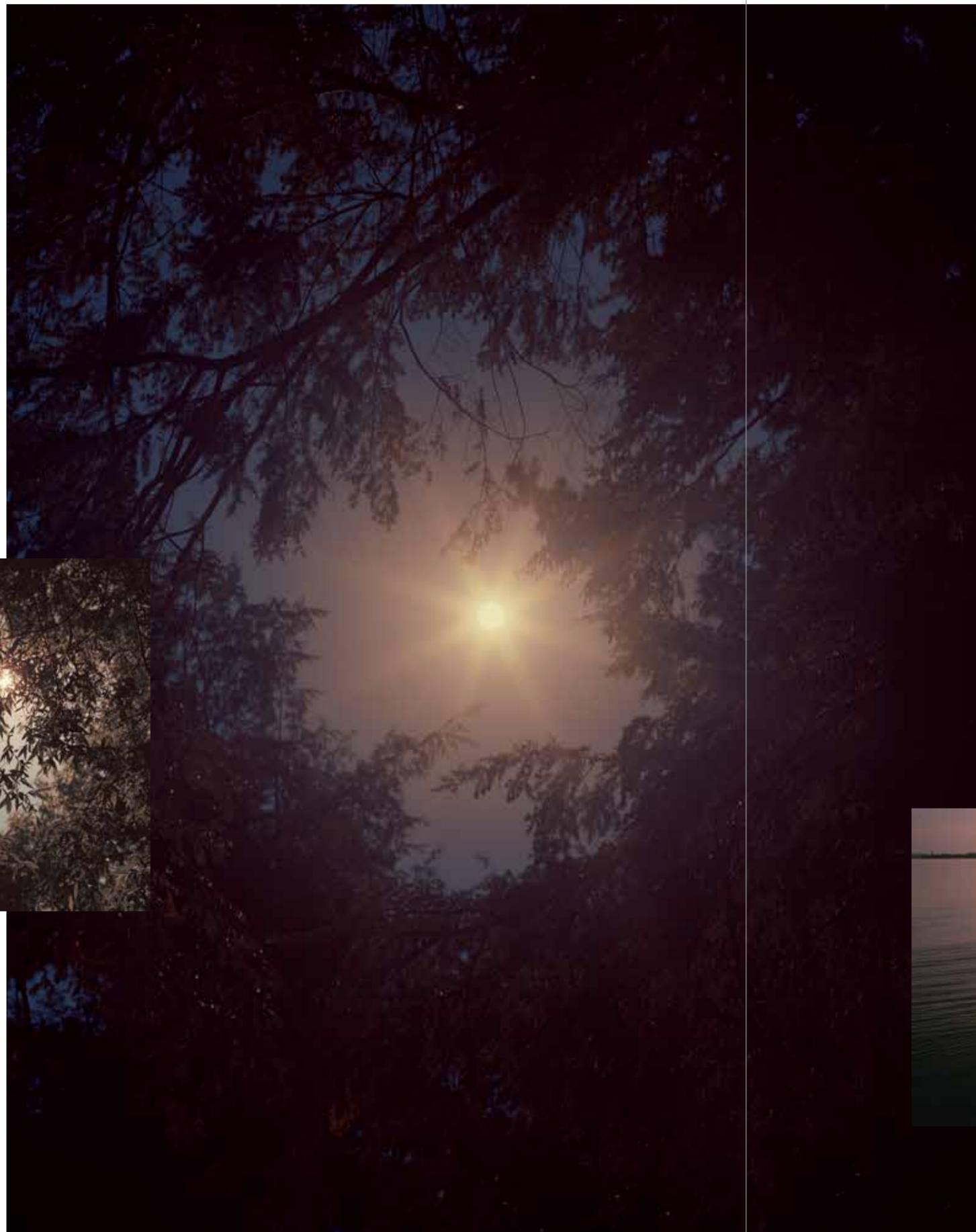
“It isn’t about truth, nor is it about accuracy. It is about carrying the spirit of the memory. My photographs aren’t about realism and precision; they are about manipulating the medium in order to summon the spirits captured within.”

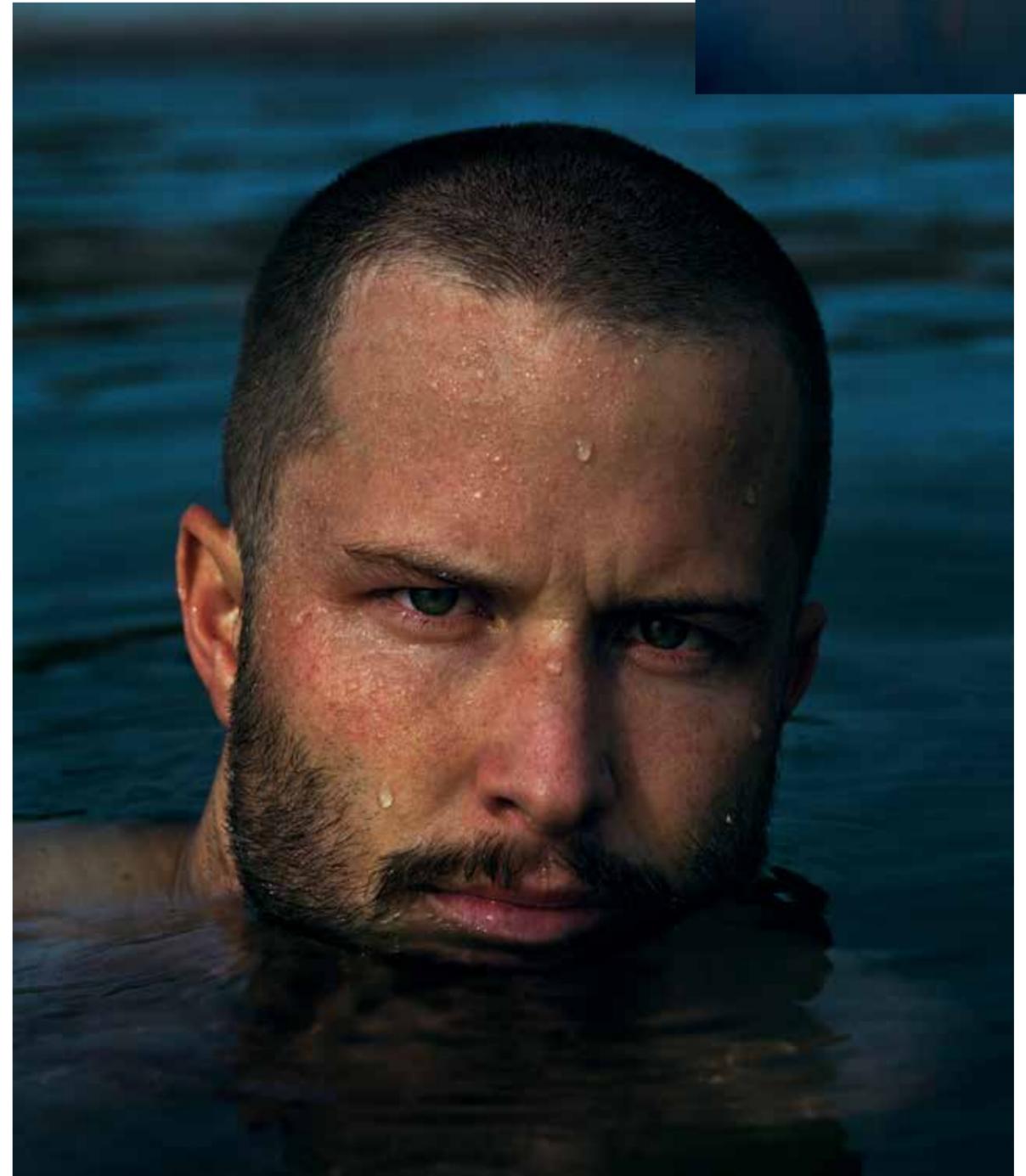
<p>Brendan George Ko's photographs shown here were made on Toronto Island, a small group of islands a short ferry ride from Toronto's harbourfront, with peaceful beaches and access to the lake. "Toronto," notes Ko, "is media-saturated, leaving less value for oral tradition. But it is the place I learned to use media to tell stories that come from oral tradition."</p>			
<p>Ko grew up in rural New Mexico and now shares his time between Hawai'i and Toronto. Both New Mexico and Hawai'i, each with their long traditions of oral history and story-telling, and the spiritual presence of the desert and the ocean, inform Ko's sense of being in the world. In his photography, Ko creates diaristic, autobiographical scrapbooks which</p>			
<p>honor his experiences and the places and people in his life. In his photographs, he evokes the emotional and spiritual qualities of his memories, making pictures that visualize his feelings about specific places, as well as about his larger orientation to the world. His work evokes an appreciation of the natural world and the elements, and his subjects' and his own grateful and</p>			
<p>humble self-awareness and joy to live in such a world.</p>			

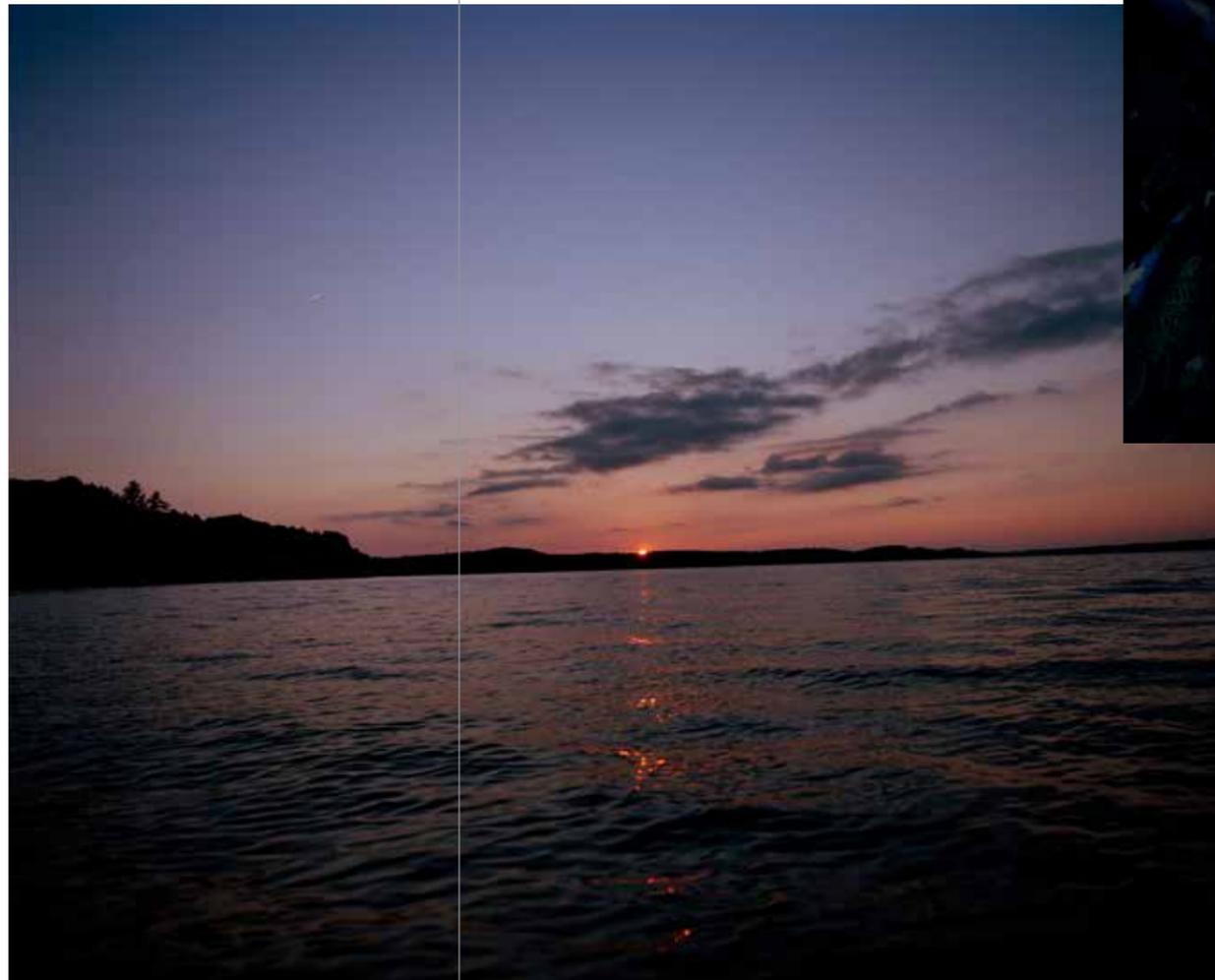
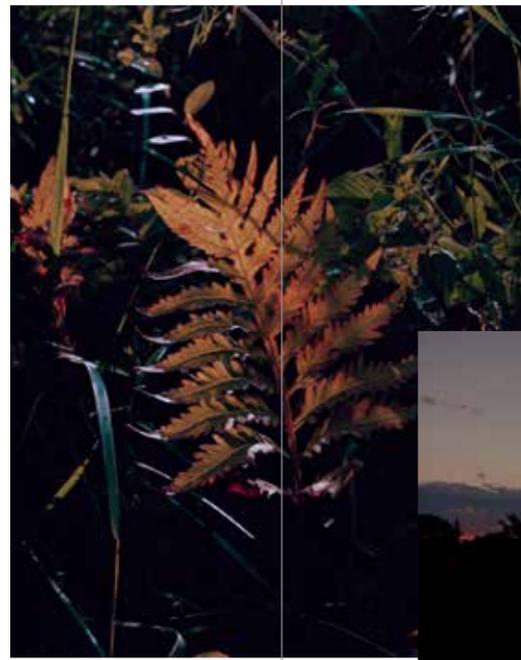


Father Forgive Them, from Nada 'dey-wey'stid, 2018









Lydia Panas

Sleeping Beauty
(2017-2018)

Promise Land
(2017)

b. 1958
Kutztown, PA



“I’m always exploring things that are sitting inside of me that I need to understand. I think that what I’m trying to do is create a space for a certain kind of empathy....I am capturing something that I am feeling, and it’s a very intimate place. What I’m hoping is that you as the viewer, whoever you are, you go into this place, where you connect with these images in whatever way you’re bringing yourself to them....I’m trying to tap into a place where we can all relate to a certain sense of human vulnerability, which can be a very uncomfortable place.”

<p>Lydia Panas creates deeply intimate portraits from within the fields and woods of her farmland in Kutztown, Pennsylvania. Often focusing her lens on female subjects, Panas' images in this exhibition powerfully contemplate the relationship between the photographer and her subjects. In each image, the young women Panas has photographed—stretched languidly in the grass, or precisely posed in the studio—</p>			
<p>appear still and controlled, assuming classical poses that suggest vulnerability. They look back at us directly, confronting us with purpose. As viewers, we contend with not only their gaze, but with the emotional energy that simmers below the surface of the image. This experience can be disquieting, as we grapple with images that seem to sense us as deeply as we sense them.</p>			
<p>Panas' strong, empathetic connection to her subjects is in part what creates the startling sense of connection we feel when looking at her images. She allows her subjects to look back at her, unguarded, and develops a deep sense of attentive engagement as she creates her images. Letting her subjects be seen and see her in equal measure, Panas invites us</p>			
<p>as viewers to seize upon the supremely human connection taking place.</p> <p>Choosing to create these photographs from her home in Kutztown was intentional for Panas. As the child of immigrants, Panas speaks to her identity of double consciousness, split between her family's roots in Greece and their home in the United States. This experience prompted her to seek out the camera as a tool</p>			
<p>for locating her identity, and to be tangibly seen and heard. In her portraits, she extends these feelings to the subjects she photographs. Working from the farmland she and her family live upon, Panas looks intently, and responds to her subjects with an intense care and consideration.</p>			



Rebecca, Red Lipsrick, 2017





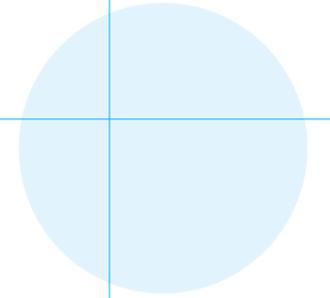
Nydia Blas

The Girls Who Spun Gold
(2016)

b. 1981
Ithaca, NY



“These photographs take something out of nothing. They take something out of the bare minimum that's been given, and they create something magical out of that.”



<p>The women and girls in Nydia Blas' photographs glow. The series they belong to, <i>The Girls Who Spun Gold</i>, takes its title from a book of the same name, an African-American adaptation of "Rumpelstiltskin", about a woman who is chosen to become the wife of the ruler of the land, because of her ability to spin gold. Presented through a lens of Black femininity, Blas' photographs spin tales rather than precious metal. Based in Ithaca, NY, Blas's photographs create spaces that center on young, Black females, experiencing joy, dignity, pride, love, and vulnerability. Significantly, they do this on their own terms, and for their own pleasure. Created collaboratively with a group of young women Blas met through her work at the Southside Community Center in Ithaca, the series stresses notions of connection and support through female relationships.</p>			
<p>These images are a glimpse into a world which sparkles with flecks of gold, revels in sumptuous fabrics, and exudes lush greenery. Blas' work emphasizes the use of magic as a tool of resilience against societal pressures that communicate that Black female bodies are about other people's pleasure, and not their own. Blas notes that while Ithaca is known as a progressive, liberal haven—complete with the tagline, "Ten Square Miles Surrounded by Reality"—the reality is that a great deal of segregational and socioeconomic divisions are still readily apparent to those who live there. Blas' photographs look to the hardships and struggles Black women face in their day to day existence, yet through the alchemy of her camera, those circumstances are transformed. These women appear regal. They control their space and their bodies, regardless of the oppression they face when they leave the magic of the world they have created with Blas.</p>			



Glitter, 2016





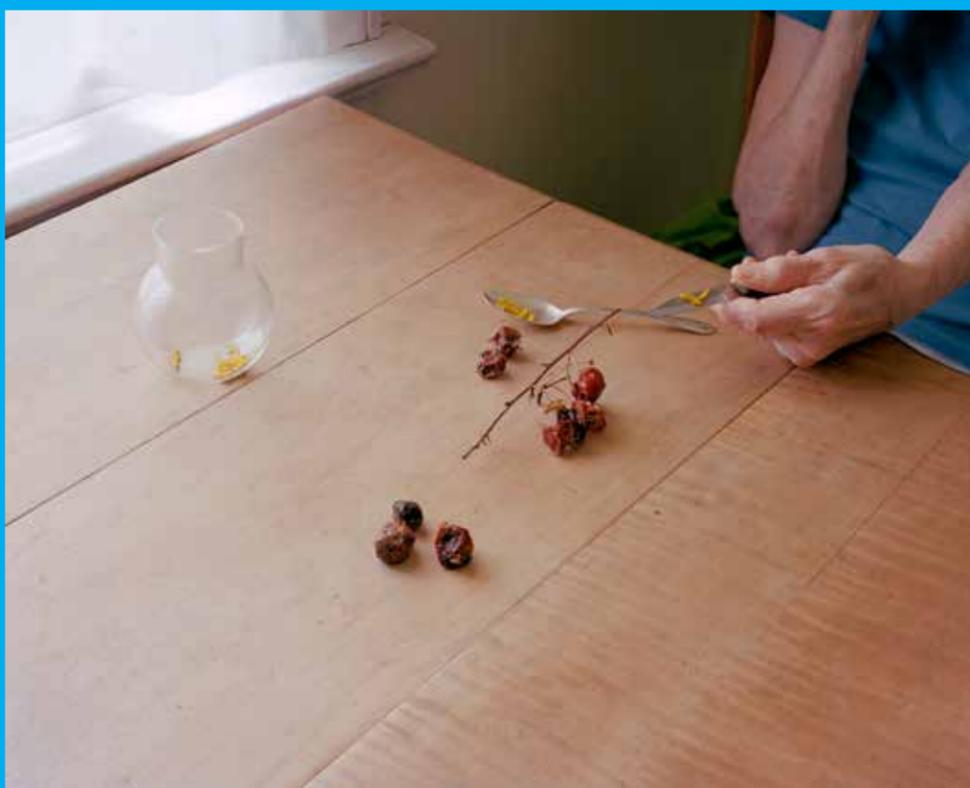


<p>Construction and Revelation</p> <p>Anna Lee</p>			
<p>Susan Worsham, Ahndraya Parlato, and Nando Alvarez-Perez use photography to tell elliptical stories that have multiple points of view. Worsham's and Parlato's personal photographs are marked by death but filled with images that stubbornly persist. Alvarez-Perez's work traces material histories replete with objects branded by symbols so mediated and remediated that</p>	<p>their advanced state of degeneration begets entirely new forms of meaning. All three photographers tell stories so uncanny that we can't help but feel that it's just a matter of time before they loop back again.</p>	<p>people and events that have passed, the birth of Parlato's daughter, Ava, electrifies her desire to frame their lives through remembrance rather than death. Parlato uses elements from intergenerational stories to construct a portrait of herself. This self-portrait narrates how Parlato's feeling of imminent disaster—shaped by the murder of her grandmother and her mother's</p>	<p>suicide—eventually turns into positive self-definition and a fighting will to live.</p>
<p>In <i>Bittersweet on Bostwick Lane</i>, Susan Worsham gives herself the impossible task of photographing loss—in her case, a family that no longer exists. Unlike the photographs</p>	<p>in a family album, Worsham's are mostly unpeopled, save for the recurring image of Worsham's childhood neighbor, Margaret Daniel, whose stories help Worsham to recall details about her now-deceased family. Daniel's interest in the natural world weaves threads through Worsham's memories, opening her attention onto phenomena she experienced as a child but now views as an</p>	<p>adult. It comes as no surprise when Worsham discovers that her favorite light to make photographs comes through the windows in Margaret's basement. Photographing familiar places and proxy objects allows Worsham to draw together oblique details about her father, mother, and brother. But the fit is never perfect, and Worsham's photographs become the spaces where hazy pieces from</p>	<p>multiple puzzles coexist.</p>
<p>Like Worsham's work, Ahndraya Parlato's installation, <i>Who Was Changed and Who Was Dead</i> (2013–present), constitutes its photographer-protagonist in a present that is heavily inflected by what has come before. Just as Margaret serves as Worsham's guide into spaces densely overlaid with</p>	<p>and photographs are underneath the mantel instead of on top of it, piled up against each other on the floor. And if domestic photography evokes babies and flowers, Parlato instead gives us images of babies' faces obstructed by objects and an arched stem of orchids, double-exposed like a weather vane in motion.</p>	<p>For the artists in this inaugural edition of <i>Radial Survey</i>, the geographic lines of inclusion demarcate a somewhat arbitrary premise. We are told that a wide swathe of America has been forgotten politically, but what is it, precisely, that has been left behind? It is an act of humility to engage such an open question. Works by Worsham and Parlato suggest that the answer has</p>	

<p>something to do with the reminder that one of the most essential struggles—delineating one's self amongst others—exists in this America too, within a political body defined most aggressively by those who live outside of it, and who know it the least. The specificity of these individual stories has the power to drill deep holes into glossy regional narratives.</p>	<p>Nando Alvarez-Perez has also trafficked for several years in projects that ask open questions—particularly through an iterative series of works titled <i>Post-industrial Living Situations</i>. The installations in this series revolve around how photo-based work, and a form of aesthetics made possible by photography, can engage and activate his viewers to construct new possibilities.</p>	<p>For Alvarez-Perez, these possibilities are informed by a keen view of how culture is consumed under capitalism. In <i>Memorex Narcissus and the Angel of History</i> (2018), for example, what looks like an innocuous painting of two wrestlers is actually oil pastel on an inkjet photo of an iPhone photo of a magic lantern slide of a bronze cast of a roman marble replica of a Greek statue...</p>	<p>During a conversation around <i>Radial Survey</i>, Worsham shared an anecdote about stopping at a gas station to use a restroom while photographing in the Mississippi Delta. There, she saw a child watching a TV, and found herself thinking: here is a child in the middle of nowhere. Almost as soon as she had that thought, she realized that nowhere to her was <i>somewhere</i> to that girl.</p>
<p>From one point of view, Alvarez-Perez's work seems to exist in an aesthetic universe that is worlds apart from those occupied by Worsham and Parlato. Worsham's work fits into genres like landscape, portraiture, and still life, and compels representation by using highly specific spaces and light. Parlato's photographs</p>	<p>put themselves in dialogue with these same genres, primarily to reveal the limits of their representative capacities. Meanwhile, Alvarez-Perez's work feels removed from personal representation altogether. His constructions are dense with symbols and symbolic meaning. They are heavily constructed, both on the level of individual images and as complete installations.</p>	<p>And yet, all three photographers situate their work at intersections of collective meaning-making. They cull stories from neighbors, relatives, personal objects, and from our material histories, and create totems designed to radiate outward. Put simply, these photographs are designed to represent questions that they alone cannot answer.</p>	<p>Worsham, Parlato, and Alvarez-Perez ask us to direct our attention away from the issue of who gets to tell the story, and to focus instead on the question: for whom does this story matter? For Worsham, this question prompts the realization that the most poignant insights into her family's story are held by a woman not related by blood. For Parlato, the feeling of her</p>
<p>infant daughter's dependency has reversed the trajectory of a life formerly defined by women who were not able to protect themselves. For Alvarez-Perez, hope springs eternal, even in the face of atrophying signification. By de-centering themselves as sole authorial agents, these photographers suggest that paths carved deeply into the ground can sometimes lead to unexpected</p>	<p>places, and that destinies do not always define possibilities.</p>		

Bittersweet on Bostwick Lane
(2009-2014)

b. 1969
Richmond, VA



“A black walnut branch falls to the ground and she picks it up and says ‘look at it, it’s a fungus, it’s a wood-rotter, it’s made especially for just that black walnut branch. To take it back to nature, it pulverizes it.’ Taking a walk with her, nobody else would notice that fallen branch or know that there’s a specific type of fungus that grows on that branch, that lives off that dead branch that takes it back to nature. Which means the soil is enriched and things can grow better, new things can grow. That, in a nutshell, is walking with Margaret, from one part of the yard to the next, and all of a sudden I realize that there’s a really big circle of life.”

<p>Susan Worsham's series <i>Bittersweet on Bostwick Lane</i> is a rich interweaving of memory and mythology, color and metaphor, personal meaning and opaque mystery. Quiet and poetic, Worsham's photographs gently navigate a "landscape of loss". Her images are centered around her childhood home in Richmond, VA, where her brother committed suicide</p>			
<p>after he was badly injured in a motorcycle accident when the artist was a child. Working from the basis of her brother's death, Worsham creates images about regeneration. With no family remaining in her childhood home, Worsham continues to probe her memories under the guidance of her former neighbor Margaret Daniel. Here, Daniel, who was close with Worsham's</p>			
<p>brother, plays the multi-dimensional role of guide, mother, friend, historian, biologist, and philosopher, offering wisdoms and memories with which Worsham creates her images and finds meaning in the everyday. Time and tense blur the world along Bostwick Lane. The living and the dead exist in the same space, and the cycle of life is evident in every detail. The blood of tragedy</p>			
<p>is connected with the red-orange flesh of fruit and dried berries. A looming Camellia tree, reminiscent of one from her childhood, echoes Daniel's arched back; a curvature hat reminds the artist of her brother's spine.</p>			









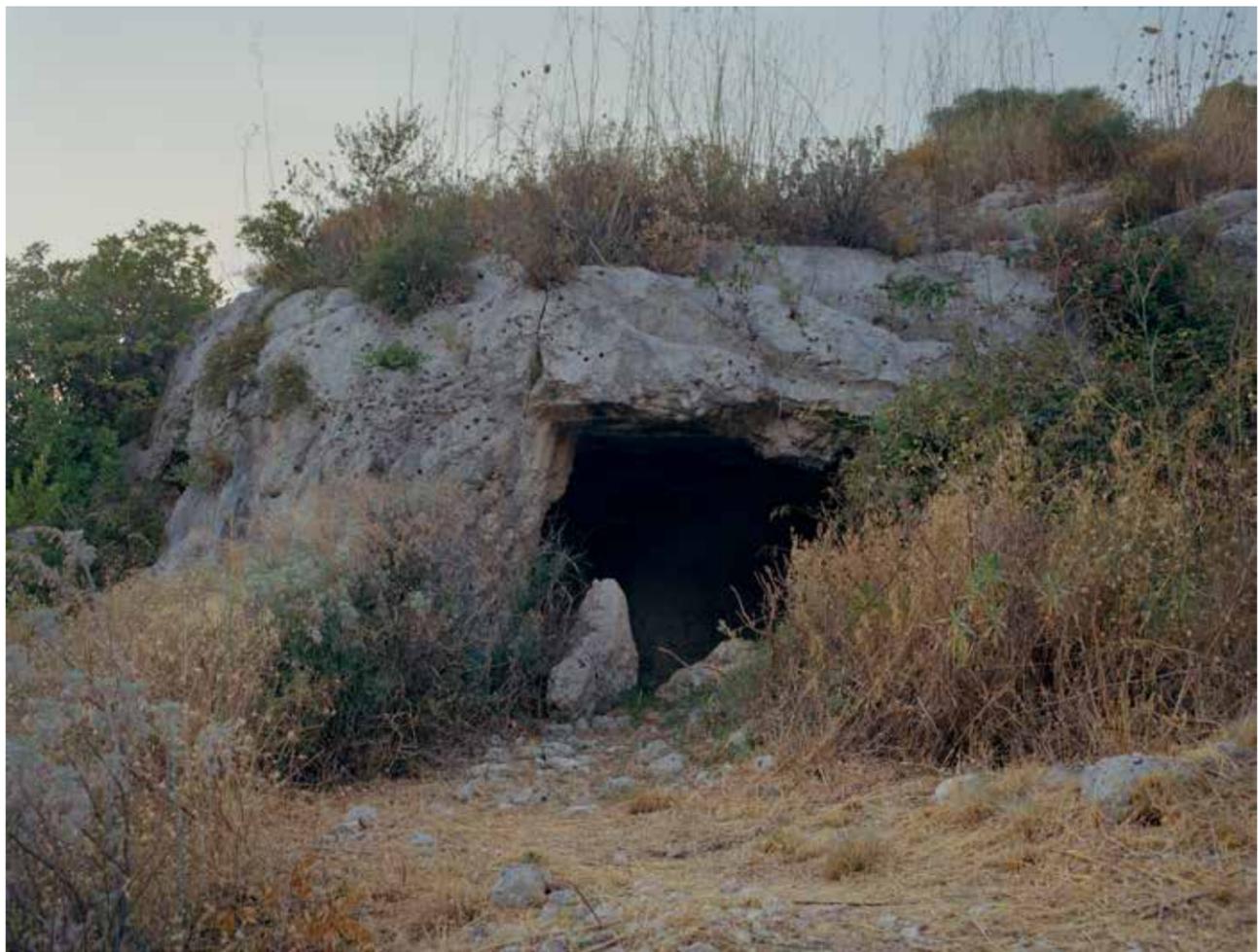
Who Was Changed and Who Was Dead
(2013-the present)

b. 1979
Rochester, NY



“Prior to the birth of my daughter, I had no conscious fear of my own mortality. Not being a religious person, I phrased death to myself as, ‘the time when I won't be here anymore.’ Though incomprehensible, this didn't seem scary or sad, just a simple fact. Additionally, having survived both the suicide of my mother and the murder of my grandmother, I also characterized myself as someone to whom bad things had already happened to. Fate, take note. ¶ After [my daughter's] birth, I found myself on the other side of the spectrum. Suddenly death was everywhere, and I was scared. I wanted to be alive. I needed to be alive. I was scared of dying because Ava needed me.”

<p>Ahndraya Parlato's installation <i>Who Was Changed and Who Was Dead</i> lyrically examines feelings of love, anxiety, and grief that the artist experienced through life- changing events: the deaths of her grandmother and mother, and becoming a parent herself. Parlato conveys these overwhelming emotions in intimate and surprising ways. Photographs of her daughter</p>			
<p>are mixed with symbolic images, many of which are placed on the ground, overlapping and leaning against the wall. This installation obscures perspective, confuses narrative, and undermines the preciousness of the art object. Some photographs relate to a specific moment, like that of the blue orchid the artist's mother once gave her during a visit. Other images are more general</p>			
<p>symbols, referencing shelter and the power of natural forces. A grid of four colorful images dotted with specks of white are photograms, which Parlato made by placing her mother's ashes on the surface of photographic paper. When the paper is exposed to light the shape of the ashes become a fixed ethereal presence in the image. Nearby these</p>			
<p>photograms, small handmade ceramic vessels surround a photograph of the artist's infant daughter. These tiny vases and cups serve as a metaphor for the fragility, individuality, and unique beauty of each life. Ultimately, <i>Who Was Changed and Who Was Dead</i> is equal parts memorial for those who have passed, shrine to those who are most cherished, and reminder of the unbreakable connection</p>			
<p>between love and loss.</p>			



Some women disappear more easily than others.
Some go kicking and screaming, pulled by their hair.
Especially if it's long.
Others have been disappearing since...
Maybe 6yrs old?
I'll tell you after my daughter turns 6yrs old.
I can tell you; we were not born this way.

*

I'm often asked how I turned out so "normal." First of all, normalcy doesn't exist. We all know that. What people mean is how I manage to function in the world, how I got an education and a husband and a job and am a mom and an artist, when you were mentally ill and we were poor and had no family to help us.

I always say it's because you used large words and snuggled me. I was never talked down to and I always felt loved. But it was also because I knew you'd kill anyone who fucked with me. I'm only half joking. I'm also only half joking when I say that, despite not being mentally ill, I wouldn't be unhappy if my children felt the same way.

*

You're the baby. Your name is Momma.

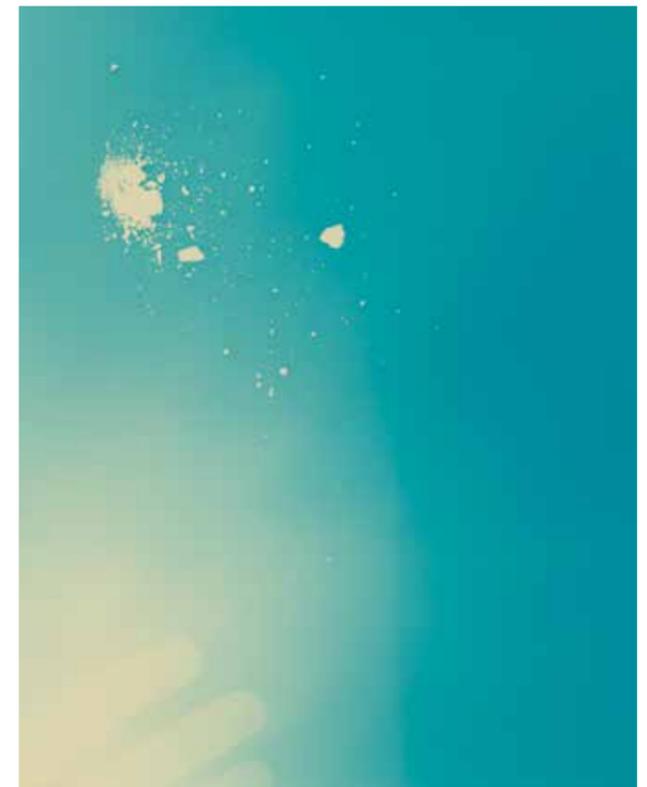
I'm reading an interview with the journalist, Martha Raddatz, and she casually mentions her father dying when she was three years old and how she has no memory of him. My stomach drops. You are three. I feel nauseous thinking that if we were separated, you might have no memories of our time together. I imagine you being kidnapped. I know in some ways I would have helped form your adult self and of course in the beginning you would ask about me. But knowing I have been irrevocably changed by you, but that you still have the potential to be re-formatted shakes me.

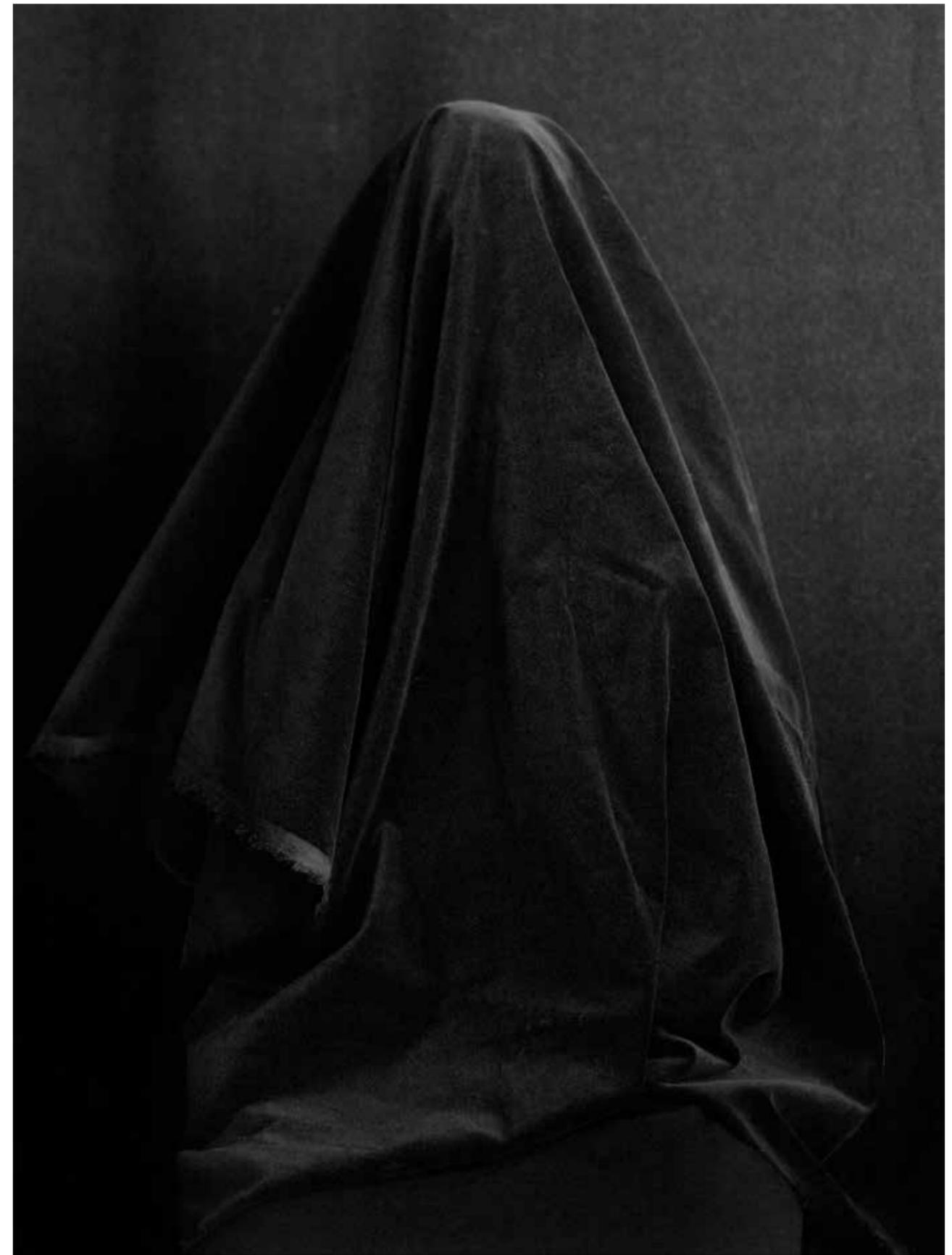
I imagine you being abducted by crazies. I only allow myself to imagine the abductors as the kind of crazies who love children but are unable to have them themselves, and so convince themselves it's ok to steal someone else's. I do not allow myself to imagine all the other crazies.

"It's locked after 8:30am. But the kids are outside, so you could still, you know." A mother describing the security at her child's school.

*

I'm thinking about dirt turning into clay, and clay turning back into dirt. I'm thinking about vessels holding water, which we all need to live. I'm thinking about vessels holding our bodies after we die. I'm thinking about amateurs pushing clay around and making heavy, clunky objects that, though misshapen and uneven, still suffice. I'm thinking about all of us parents, clunky, but hopefully still sufficing.









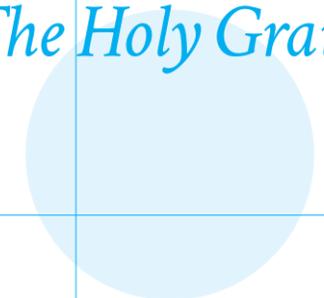
Nando Alvarez Perez

Memorex Narcissus and the Angel of History
(2018)

b. 1988
Buffalo, NY

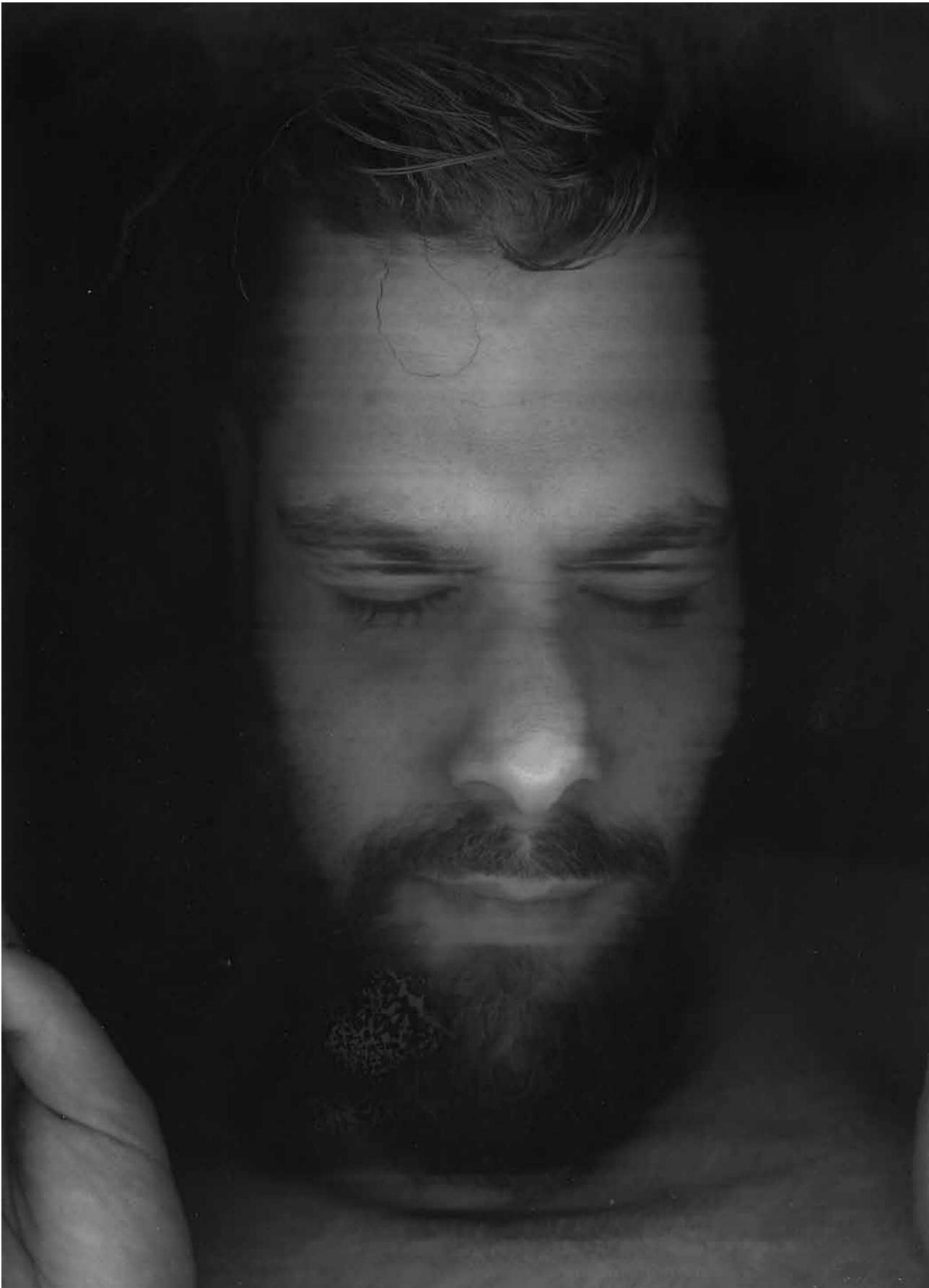


“This piece is about how history collapses into objects that are both symbolic and kitsch, like an imploding star. Like how the Holy Grail of Arthurian legend becomes, over time, a Memorex video tape copy of *Monty Python’s The Holy Grail*.”



<p>Nando Alvarez Perez's vibrant installations playfully explore big ideas about humanity's distant roots, and its many possible futures. Using photographs, sculpture, found objects, and performances, he shows how culture consumes and replicates itself, over and over, distorting itself as it repeats in ways that generate new ideas.</p>			
<p><i>Memorex Narcissus and the Angel of History</i> illustrates this repetition over time by centering the installation around an image that has undergone several layers of processing: a photograph that the artist made of an oil pastel drawing, on an inkjet print, of an iPhone photo, of a magic lantern slide, of a Roman replica of a lost Greek sculpture of wrestlers. The image is surrounded by sci-fi novels and books of critical theory that inform Perez's visions for the future. Next to the large photo hangs an acrylic cutout, based on a drawing of the artists' face. Everything is organized within an aluminum frame—a material that references the cheap temporary displays seen at trade shows or sci-fi conventions. Wallpaper created from photographs of Italian frescoes surrounds the installation,</p>			
<p>and a dozen or so other books, tapes, and seemingly random objects are scattered throughout. However, all of these objects and images reference time on scales that range from human to cosmic, and mythmaking that is both ordinary and epic.</p>			
<p>Around the corner from the main installation hangs a large scale photograph of the tombstone of the legendary science fiction writer Philip K. Dick shares with his twin sister Jane, who died in infancy. The image is a memento mori, full of poignant and mysterious details. A toy race car sits on top of the headstone, fake flowers rest before it, and a cat's face is engraved between the names of the twins. This photograph, like the rest of Perez's installation, is brimming with monumental wit, wonder, and pathos.</p>			





Nando Alvarez Perez *Memorex Narcissus and the Angel of History*



From left to right: Artists' scan of his face, mask pattern for installation, 2018



<p>Held in Abeyance Miranda Mellis</p>			
<p>Simone Weil wrote that “Attention consists of suspending our thought, leaving it detached, empty, and ready to be penetrated by the object. It means holding in abeyance what we already know about this object.”</p>			
<p>Melissa Catanese’s work ‘holds in abeyance’ in this way, allowing us to ‘suspend’ what we think we know about, say, a foot, a light fixture, a branch. But if any object may be a valid object for contemplation, then what kind of theology is this?</p>			
<p>In many museums are ritual objects which, in vitrines, on display, are in a sacrilegious position relative to the purposes for which they were originally created and intended. Learning the provenance of such sacred objects and returning them to where and whom they belong is part of the work of decolonizing museums.</p>			
<p>And then there are works that seem to exist to remind us that our images, our things, our components, the accumulated storehouse of objects that have remained with us—even our bodies—all that has given us a sense of continuity over time—is the provenance, ultimately, of all that infinitely and indefinitely exceeds us. That we are ultimately dispersed into other bodies, human and nonhuman. That the ideas we have about our life come from the future as well as the past.</p>			
<p>Such are Catanese’s images of unbecoming, of edge states. They form a metonymic constellation. The edge of a forest leads to the edge of a room leads to the edge of a body. There is warning here, taboo and delicacy, an ambiguous invitation to question: Why do senses of meaningfulness extend and recede, evade and then disclose, come forward and then dissipate? How can the same thing be both unfixated and pinned to a time; lost in space and yet imbued with a purposive stillness; at once exposed and secret, composed and entropic, ordinary and yet unrecognizable?</p>			

Apsis
(2018)

b. 1979
Pittsburgh, PA



“Editing and sequencing is an intuitive process that’s tricky to articulate. I like to think of myself as a conduit, working in service of the images and their desires, but the fact is, I also have my own psychological motivations at stake, and that force is somewhat abstract. I’m creating a fiction by placing one photograph next to another in a sequence, and I try to get to a headspace where that fiction, or those new associations, can reveal themselves in the process. I think about formal and conceptual structures when I’m editing. I like repetition. I like dissonance. It sounds new-agey, but the connections are metaphysical.”

<p>Melissa Catanese's three paneled photographic collage <i>Apsis</i> relishes in the connections one makes when studying a group of images that initially seem to have little context or relationship. Rather than tell a specific story with her images, Catanese creates an enveloping atmosphere, full of mystery, tension, and wonder. Working from an inventory of images, including those made by the artist as well as anonymous found photographs, Catanese builds ambiguous narratives. By combining photographs from her own archive with found images, she questions the authorship and transparency of a photograph. Catanese creates meanings that drift away from the surface of the image into something personal, intuitive, and poetic. While she thinks of herself as a kind of conduit, "working in service of the images and their desires", she readily admits that her own psychological ambitions are also at play in her work. Moving between these two modes of thought, Catanese's work brings forth incredibly nuanced and provocative narrative potential from these images.</p>			
<p><i>Apsis</i> draws its inspiration from the works of filmmaker David Lynch, and his surreal and ambiguous takes on the detective genre. Although it is impossible to solve, <i>Apsis</i> presents its images as evidence from a crime. In one part of the collage, an image of a fingerprint suggests a perpetrator; in another, a golden curtain brushing the carpeted floor of a room is perhaps a crime scene. The figures depicted in her images become potential victims of this imagined investigation. A wire curling along the ground lends a slightly ominous feeling. One can almost hear the faint buzz of the fluorescent light at the top of the frame.</p>			
<p>The tension between the individual images contained within <i>Apsis</i> and their mysterious greater whole is central to Catanese's work. The title itself refers to the extreme points of an elliptical planetary orbit. This cosmic reference is fitting, because <i>Apsis</i> reads like a map of constellations. One can choose to see it for its celestial whole, or one can focus on an individual image, a heavenly body.</p>			







The Destiny of This Place

Ashley McNelis

The land acts like a conduit for the stories and legacies that are linked to it. Of the artists in the *Radial Survey* exhibition, Morgan Ashcom, Jacob Koestler, Jared Thorne, and Corine Vermeulen most actively engage with the idea of a sense of place. Each of these four photographers are, in their own way, documenting a particular terrain. However, while their methodologies do not necessarily fall within the bounds of traditional landscape or documentary photography, in deviating from the genre, their approaches make their projects powerful. While their practices and projects are quite different, they all map and reflect upon the manifestation of histories, mythologies, and systems in different landscapes. Their projects also exemplify the shared experiences of uncertainty, as well as hope for the region's future.

Ashcom's inclusion of fictive elements in *What the Living Carry* is a clear break from the documentary tradition. The fictional town of Hoy's Fork consists of Ashcom's childhood memories of rural Virginia, common Southern tropes, and mythical elements. The subjects, with whom Ashcom collaborates, layer their own perspectives into the construction of the project. Together, these layers evoke a strange but convincing narrative.

This added context deepens the narrative and amplifies the mythic power of Hoy's Fork, which appears to be suspended in time. The atmosphere is heavy, as if weighed down by history. A sense of foreboding seeps through the images. Once, perhaps, the landscape was idyllic; there are still aspects of the sublime in the images. Now, however, nature has slowly overtaken the town; its residents, trapped within a similar cycle of entropy, have inherited its legacies of hardship and trauma. In one photograph, an elderly man reclines next to a bottle of champagne and stares wistfully into the distance. In another, a young

teenager holds a similar pose while idly twisting a straw in a Styrofoam cup; there is little hope that his trajectory will be different from the older man's. *What the Living Carry* questions how the history of a place—real or fictive—is absorbed into a larger mythical narrative.

For his *Interrupter* series, Jacob Koestler photographed sites that were once signs of progress but which now exemplify the decline of American industry. Nature has begun to reclaim what was once monumental in the region; in a way, this transformative act speaks to its resilience. *Kinzua Bridge, Pennsylvania* (2017/2019) is a prime example of nature's adaptive capability. The railroad bridge, once one of the tallest in the country, was destroyed by a tornado in 2003. Today, the fallen structure—whose rusted steel is complemented by the surrounding fall foliage—is one of the most visited sites within Kinzua Bridge State Park. In its current state, it is still awe-inspiring.

In Koestler's photographs, slippages—in the form of lens flares and light leak effects—cast an almost heavenly glow, magnifying the forlorn beauty of the landscape. Intentional or otherwise, these glitches or "interruptions" point to the failure of the camera as an apparatus, as well as the fallibility of our own perceptions. In attempting to determine what the future of this landscape looks like, Koestler reminds us that our memories, and the tools we have to remember them by, are not entirely effective. This lack of clarity, objectivity, and ability to be omniscient leaves the viewer with a sense of unease: about the sustainability of the region, and about what may transpire in the future.

Jared Thorne's project, *26 Planned Parenthoods*, in which he photographs reproductive healthcare centers and their surrounding environments in Ohio, furthers this anxiety while raising questions

about power. At last count, there were only twenty-three remaining Planned Parenthood locations in Ohio that offered abortion services, and the number will likely continue to decrease. In his practice, Thorne grapples with issues related to accessibility; he also challenges the legacy of landscape photography and the genre's lack of work by or about women and people of color. He began this series as a way to engage with a landscape new to him. Through the landscape, he was looking to explore the region's underlying power structures and socioeconomic dynamics. Describing social distances by drawing attention to spatial distances, he comments on how these systems affect the lives of women, people of color, and underserved populations.

The project's typology is reminiscent of that of the New Topographics photographers who unromantically documented the built landscape of the American West in the 1970s. Thorne photographed the clinics from afar, allowing the viewer to look closely at the surrounding environments. The importance of perspective is highlighted by the multiple angles provided by the three diptychs in the installation. In contrast to New Topographics works, these photographs are subtly emotionally and politically charged. Details—such as a blue and white "Trump for President" sign—remind the viewer of the overarching sociopolitical context of the region. In foregrounding the quotidian nature of each setting, however, Thorne suggests that the presence of Planned Parenthoods alongside other businesses should not be controversial. By focusing on such a contested subject, Thorne investigates who has a right to these spaces, and the power structures that allow or deny access to them. The disquiet found within Thorne's photographs evokes the anxiety surrounding the very real possibility of a future in which Planned Parenthood locations are even more scarce, or entirely unavailable to the people who need them the most.

In her series *Your Town Tomorrow*, Dutch photographer Corine Vermeulen also deals with how existing power structures have impacted the citizens of a particular place. In this case, they are the resilient but precarious residents of the city of Detroit,

where Vermeulen has been based since 2006. The series exemplifies the ways in which the people have persisted during periods of social and economic hardship. *Erin and her son Nye* (2011) depicts a mother and son in one of the urban farms which were created in order to sustain the community during the recession. In the photograph, Erin gazes steadily at the camera while standing barefoot in the garden. The portraits are an intimate and effective way to make visible the darker truths of a city.

Vermeulen's social documentary approach shifts the focus away from the tired narrative of a city once in decline and now ready for revitalization. However, her work does represent a city in transition. The title of the project, *Your Town Tomorrow*, is reminiscent of a real estate company slogan. In the series, symbols of the community contrast with patriotic references and artificial objects. *Statue of Liberty* (2017) depicts a lonely silver statue of Lady Liberty holding a torch aloft on a forlorn sidewalk. These moments of disconnect contribute to the sense of unease present in the images. The residents of Detroit are, as Vermeulen has stated, at a crossroads. It still remains to be seen how they will fare as the city continues to change, with and without the needs of their communities in mind.

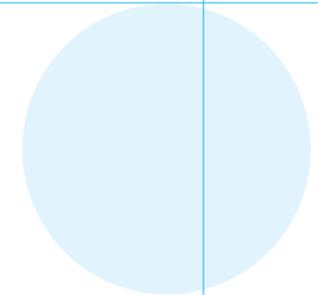
These four photographers recognize that they have captured their subjects within a state of transition. By fixing this precarious moment in time, the photographers ask us to hold onto it. Each photographer has discovered the potential in this liminal state. While looking back, Ashcom warns of the dangers of becoming stuck in the past. In the industrial rust belt, Koestler finds resilience and beauty in an unresolved moment. Similarly, Vermeulen acknowledges the persistence of humanity in an unpredictable situation. Thorne's examination of our nation's systems reveals the ways in which they are impermanent and subject to larger cultural shifts. The constancy of change, as the underlying subtext of each series, reminds us to recognize and appreciate what we have, as it is impossible to know what the future holds. However, by understanding the region's challenges and building upon its strengths, we may be able to take action and shift the direction of our collective future.

What the Living Carry
(2011-2016)

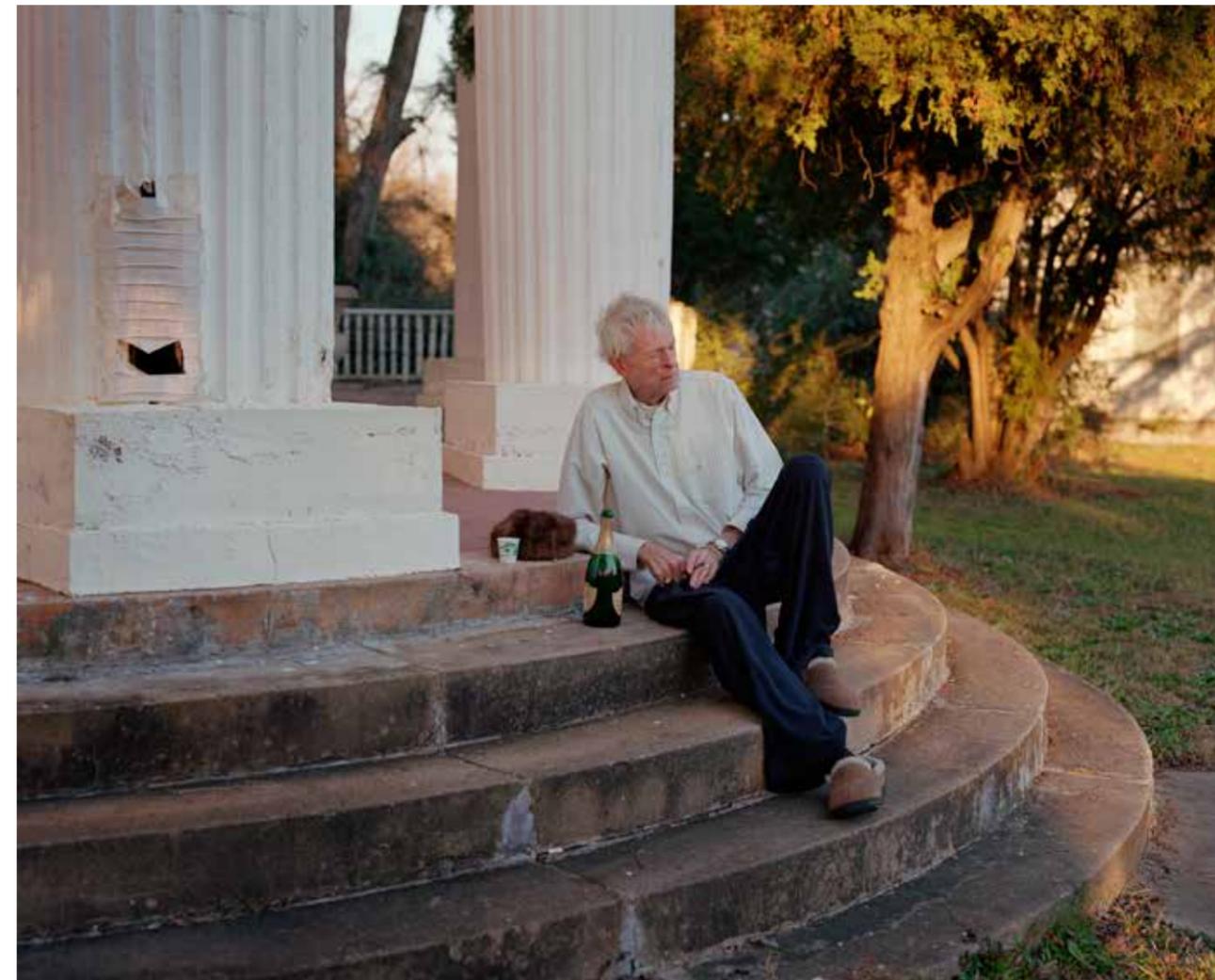
b. 1982
Charlottesville, VA



“When my father was young he rode horses for William Faulkner. This was around the time [Faulkner] was writing his last book called *The Reivers*. There’s a main character in the book, a 12 year-old boy who rides, and we always would say that aspects of my father were in this character in this work of fiction. And the family joke was that he had hired my father just to observe him. That’s always around my idea of the process of how things are absorbed and how that gets changed into narrative and carries a sort of power.”



<p>In <i>What the Living Carry</i>, Morgan Ashcom depicts the places and people of the fictional town of Hoy's Fork. The rural community he constructs takes its name from the headstone of Jo Hoy, an enslaved man buried near the artist's childhood home in Free Union, Virginia. By working in photographic fictions, Ashcom allows himself narrative freedoms that traditional documentary approaches might hinder.</p>			
<p>He is an active participant in the process, and his image-making is a collaborative act with his subjects—each bringing their own understandings to the scenes that Ashcom builds. The artist says, "calling it fiction is an acknowledgment of the reality of the process that I'm engaged with."</p>			
<p>The world of Hoy's Fork is one of deep reds and dense woods. It is comprised of isolated individuals and fragile structures. Ashcom's attention to every detail in this fictional town—from the drunk men and the lost dogs, to the town map—helps him create a world that seemingly traps its inhabitants, tethering them to their histories and shaping their identities. Interspersing this fragmented narrative is a set of texts—</p>			
<p>letters responding to a fictional 'Morgan's' requests—written by 'Eugene' of the 'Center for Epigenetics and Wellness of the Spirit'. These artifacts serve as a kind of unreliable guide through this series, adding notes of context that only deepen our curiosity about Hoy's Fork and its inhabitants.</p>			





Center for Epigenetics
and
Wellness of the Spirit

476 Wellness Lane
Hoys Fork
255-4562
wellnesslebatyahoo.com

May 15th

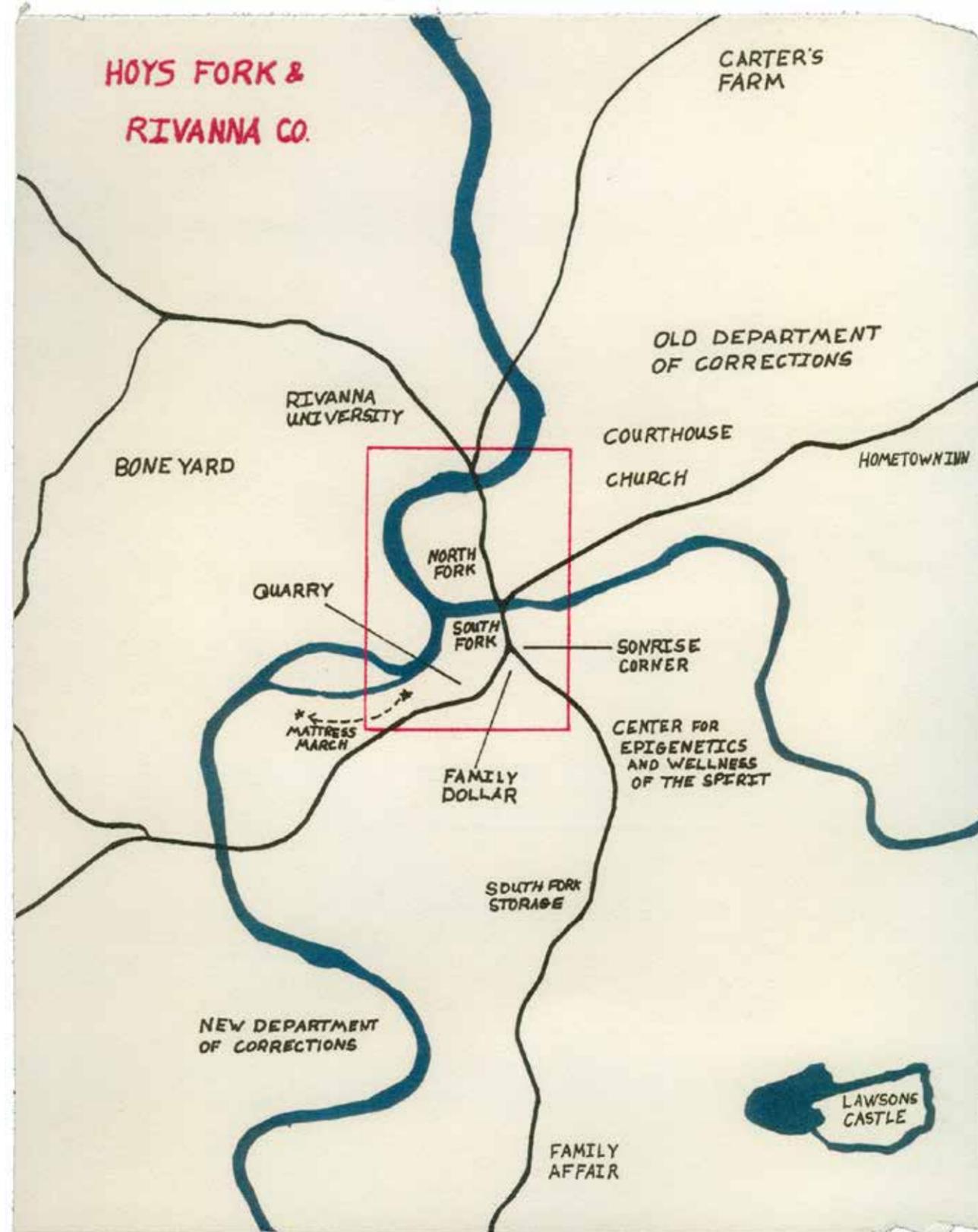
Dear Morgan,

Happy belated birthday.

I will let you know if I need an out of town lawyer. WE sounds very qualified but I am afraid folks do not respond well to outsiders in the courtroom here. I look forward to seeing you later this month.

As you probably know by now, I am a perfectly anxious fellow so I have been trying to take my mind off everything going on in the Fork. The other day I threw a little party and I even bought some special cigars. They are the Banker series by H Upmann. Over \$100 a box for fifteen of the delicious Belicosos at 6.1". It was a themed party where the conversation was all about 1699—the wars they had going on in Europe between the English, Scottish, the Dutch Republic and the Russian and Ottoman Empires and so forth—the wars we had going on here with the French and Indians and what not. Everyone was invited to think about that year and note the time of the year and all that implies—and having resources of things like ^wood to burn and a fireplace to cook in—all the attributes of being extremely confident and well off people speaking with conviction in 1699 in a woodland lodge of our choosing.

Center for Epigenetics and Wellness of the Spirit | P.O. Box 876 | Hoys Fork, Rivanna Co. FAX: 255-4562







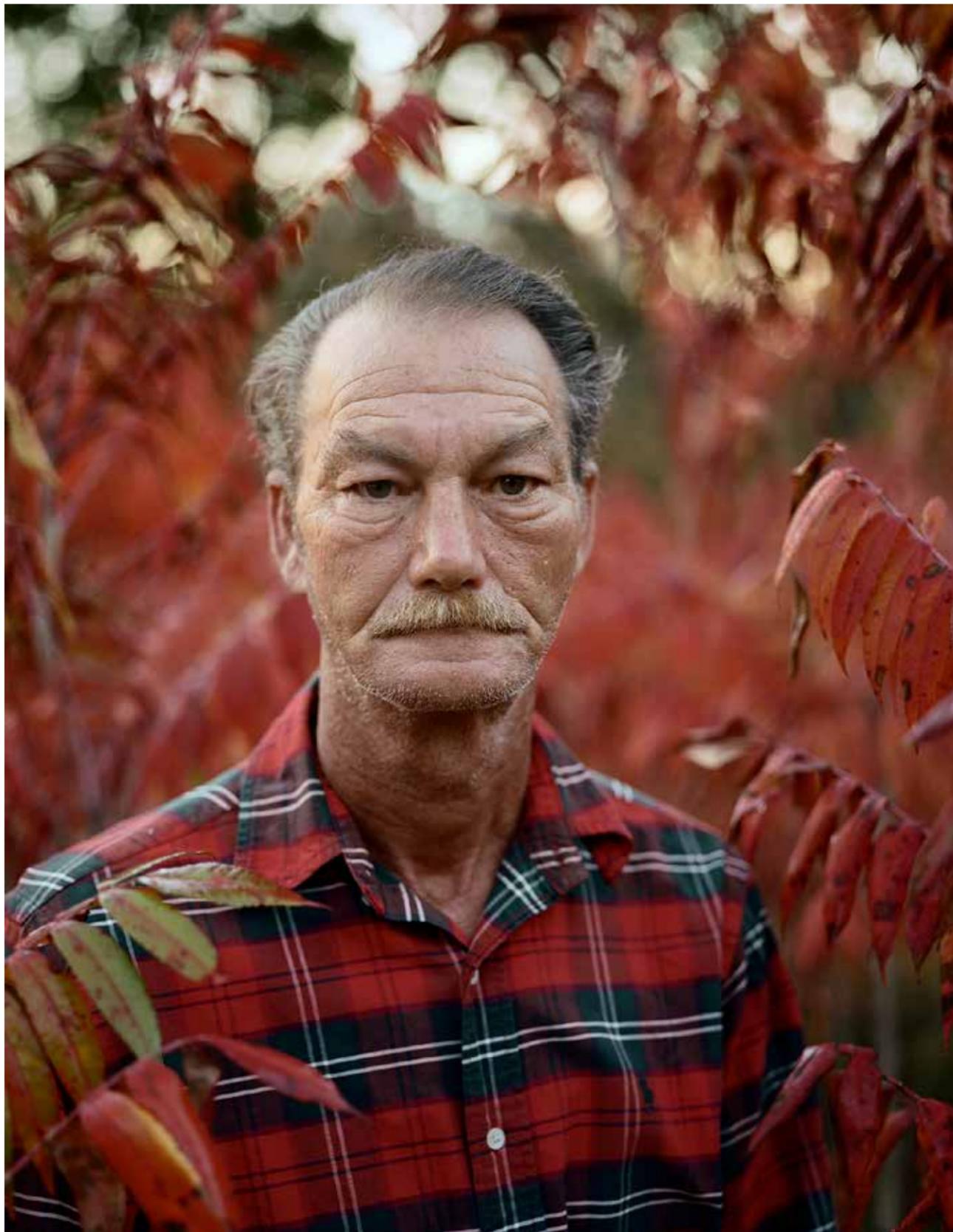
We talked and so forth. Everybody put on their fur coats with the fur next to the skin, you know-inside out? And all our shoes were loosely tied, hands and mouths affixed to various delicacies-cigarettes, cigars, wine and berries and so forth.

The night after the party I dreamt that I was in my 20s riding the bus and five charming boys got on and rode five blocks. On the way off one of them leaned over and groped a young woman and then fled into the woods. When the police arrived they conferred with one another and agreed that this was in fact something nihilist children just did from time to time. They just told the woman to go home. I suspect she hesitated to tell her husband on account of her being reduced to nothing and all there on the bus-but by that time there was no one on the streets and the bus had disappeared so naturally I went into the woods after the boys. Inside was like a maze and there was no way to leave and there was a bunch of beautiful people with all the potential in the world doing various things in disarray and such. But no one had a direction-and they were aware of time-each second carefully drawn and cataloged and contemplated and so forth. No one spoke. I observed this monotonous scene for as long as I could manage because I felt it was a useful exercise. Then I woke up and drafted the enclosed map.

Well that is all I have to report from the Fork for now. Things are quiet for a change aside from an occasional late library book and the usual round-town shabbiness of the RU students. As expected, the police have not found anyone responsible for my car since I submitted the incident report. Look forward to seeing you soon, and don't forget to bring some prints from the photo study you did on me.

Sincerely,
Eugene

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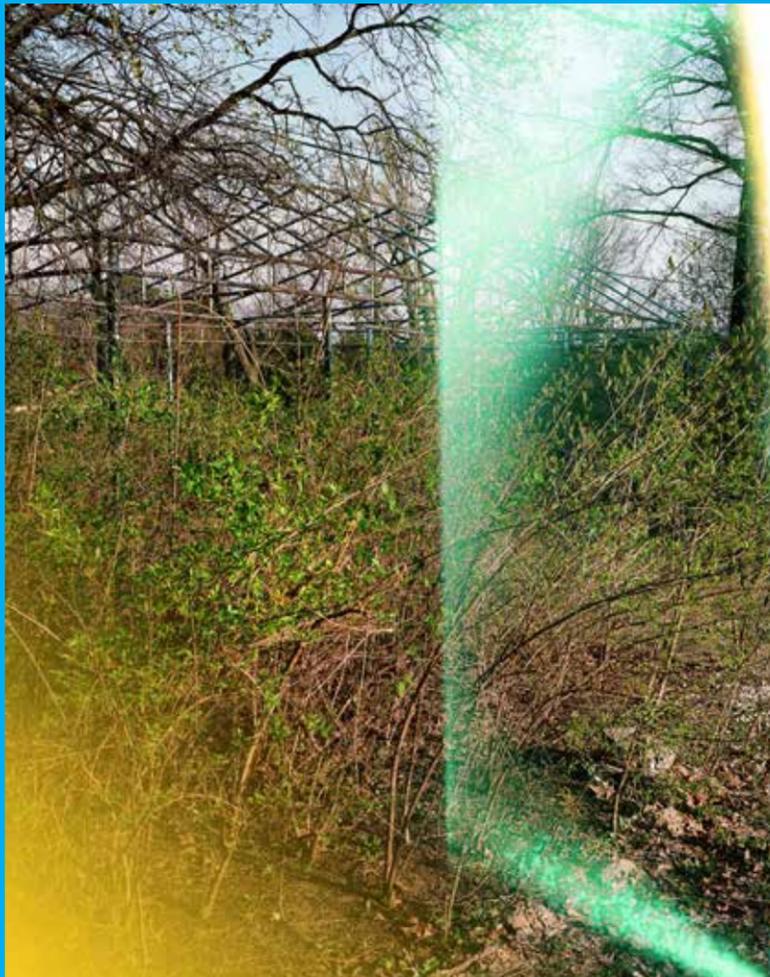


Jacob Koestler

Interrupter

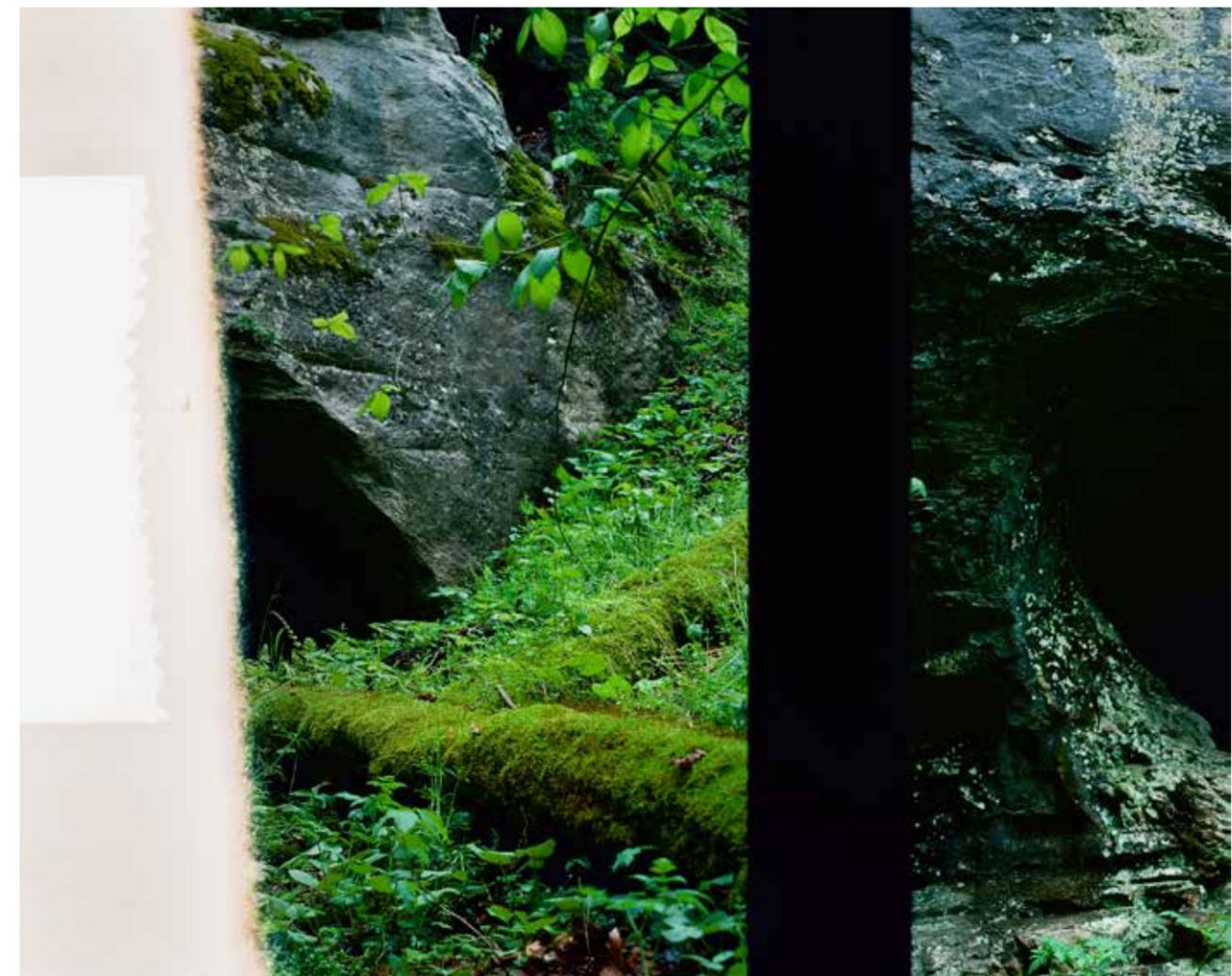
(2016-the present)

b.1984
Cleveland, OH



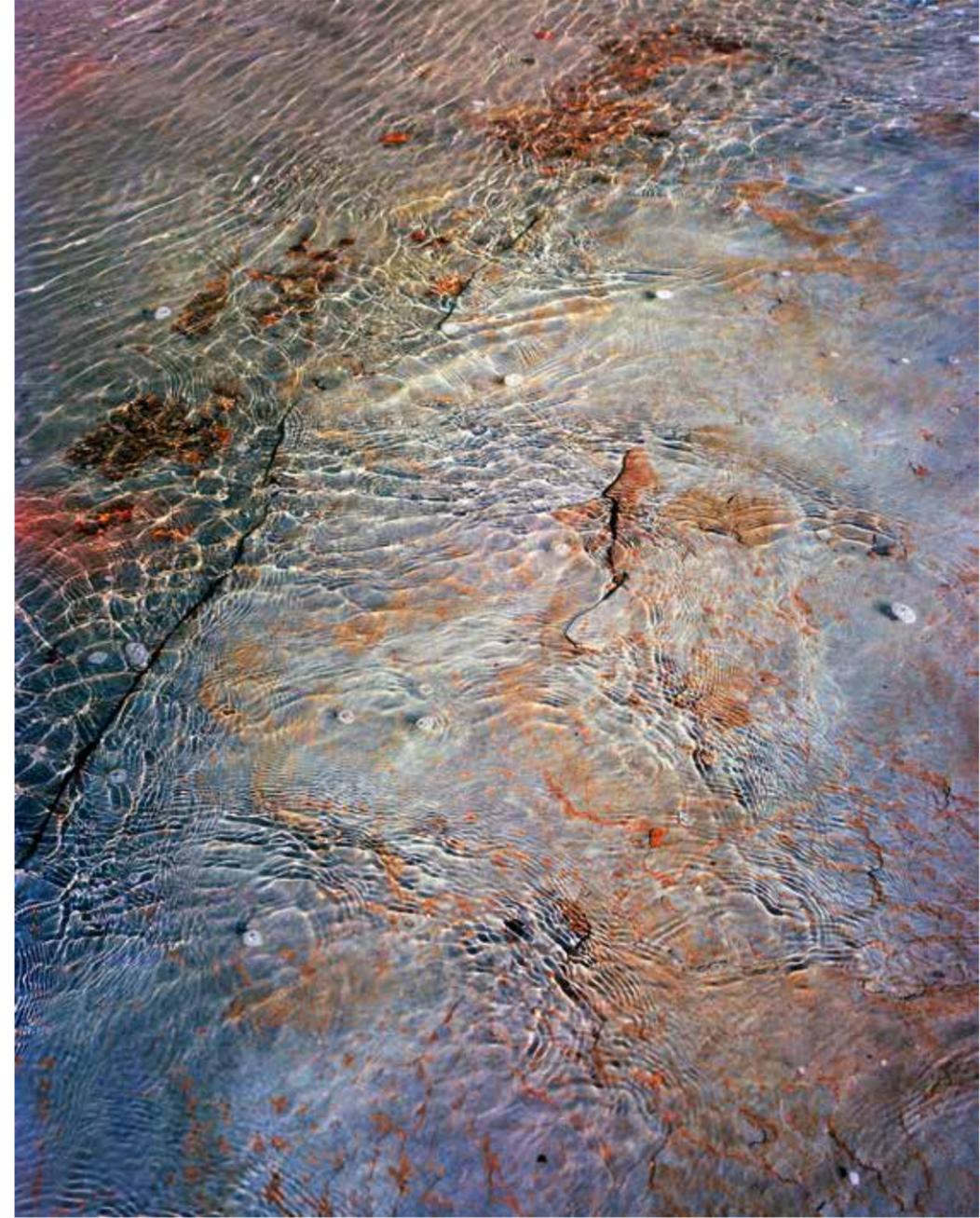
“My work will take me to various locations throughout the Rust Belt, and I always make time to walk, to stray from the beaten path in search of these layered industrial scenes. There is a lot of time between the shutter click and when I print an image. I do not plan on finding anything specific and am often surprised by what I see. The initial urge to make an image is instinctual. Any clarity comes later in the studio, connecting the dots and recontextualizing the original experience.”

<p>Jacob Koestler's work depicts the vague terrain of what he calls the Ohio River Valley's "post-industrial places in the process of reinvention." A central image in this sequence shows the Kinzua Bridge after it was struck by a tornado in 2003. The bridge was built in 1882 and was once billed as the "Eighth Wonder of the World", and briefly held the record as the tallest railroad bridge in the world. After the bridge collapsed, a cap was built on the portion that remained, creating a scenic lookout of the wreckage. Koestler strives for images where you can see what was and what is simultaneously, as once-utilitarian structures of a thriving industrial economy become scenic history, new marks across an old landscape.</p>		
<p>These images of impacted landscapes and decaying structures are further affected by "unplanned contributions," interruptions from photographic chemicals and light leaks. Koestler's willingness to allow these analog remnants, a mark of his own photographic presence, into his process speaks to his knowledge of the underlying history that determines what a place looks like. Other elements</p>		
<p>in these images, like a section of fence threaded through the landscape in <i>Fence Cluster at Sunset, Ohio</i>, or water pooling over a cement surface in <i>Dam Floor, Pennsylvania</i>, further disrupt Koestler's depictions of the land. Rather than fight against these moments of interruption, the artist leans into them, stating that, "An interruption is usually rude, but in some cases it can cut through a declarative statement, offer an opposing idea, and create a conversation with multiple viewpoints."</p>		



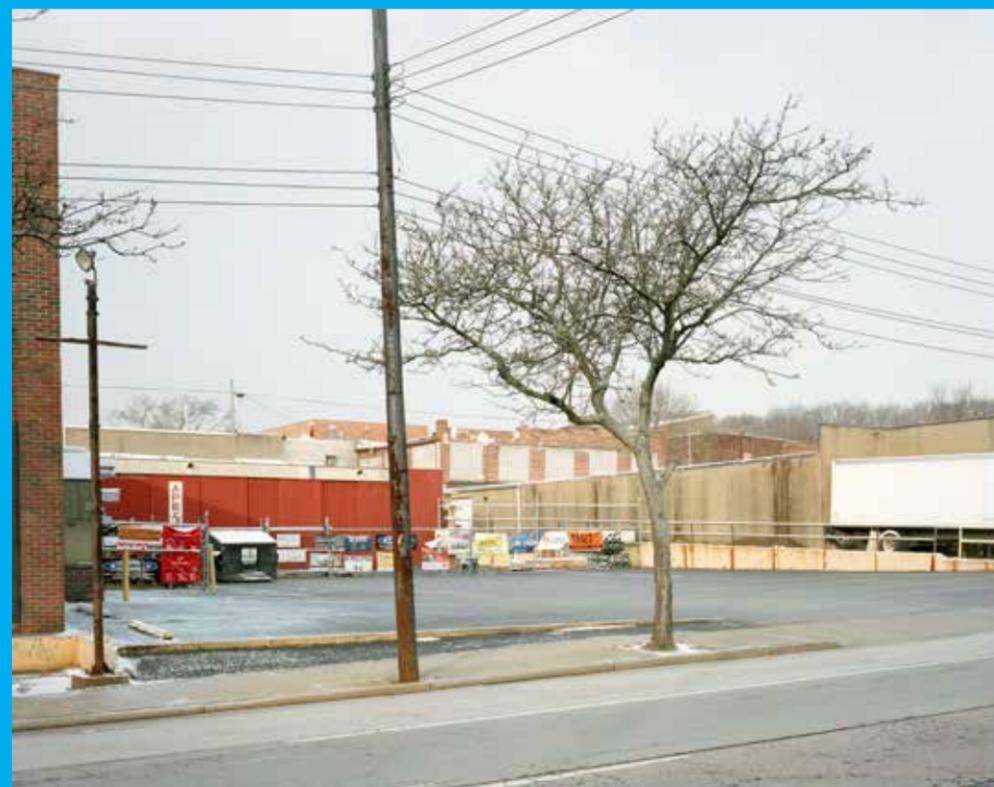
Two Views of the Same Cave, West Virginia, 2016/2019



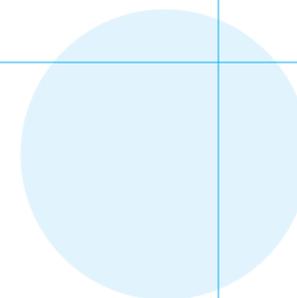


26 Planned Parenthoods
(2015-2018)

b. 1981
Columbus, OH



“I make work that speaks to where I am, asking: what are these communities really like? My hope is that these images will be as carefully considered as I considered them, and that the viewer’s eye will want to look and to wander.”



<p>For his series, <i>26 Planned Parenthoods</i>, Jared Thorne spent two and a half years traversing the state of Ohio, creating images of the twenty-six titular organizations scattered across the state. While the title includes a reference to Ed Rusha's austere conceptual art book, <i>26 Gasoline Stations</i>, Thorne's series is imbued with emotional and political meanings that Rusha deliberately eschewed. Choosing to work primarily in the early hours of Sunday mornings—when Planned Parenthood protestors weren't positioned outside the buildings—Thorne's photographs are almost all devoid of people. This sense of quiet and stillness prompts viewers to look and think about the architecture of each city, and the environments which surround these buildings. In Thorne's use of broad, sweeping views of the urban landscapes, the location of the Planned Parenthood is not often obvious, if present at all, creating in the viewer a natural inclination to seek out the building within the landscape.</p>			
<p>Thorne hasn't put these out in the open for us. Our eyes must carefully scan the photographs to spot the small blue sign low to the snowy ground in Youngstown, nearly blocked from view entirely by a tree in Akron, or hovering above a neighborhood porch in Canton. Thorne speaks of this series as acting as a kind of guide, or map, to the state of Ohio. In being asked to carefully consider each image, we find ourselves slowly becoming acquainted with a landscape that is still</p>			
<p>struggling economically, and whose city's populations are, in the artist's words, "hemorrhaging people." Thorne's images of Planned Parenthoods—an organization whose funding and very presence is continually under threat—become emblematic of shifts in power, speaking to where ideas of access and belonging exist within the state.</p>			











Your Town Tomorrow
(2007-2017)

b. 1977
Detroit, MI

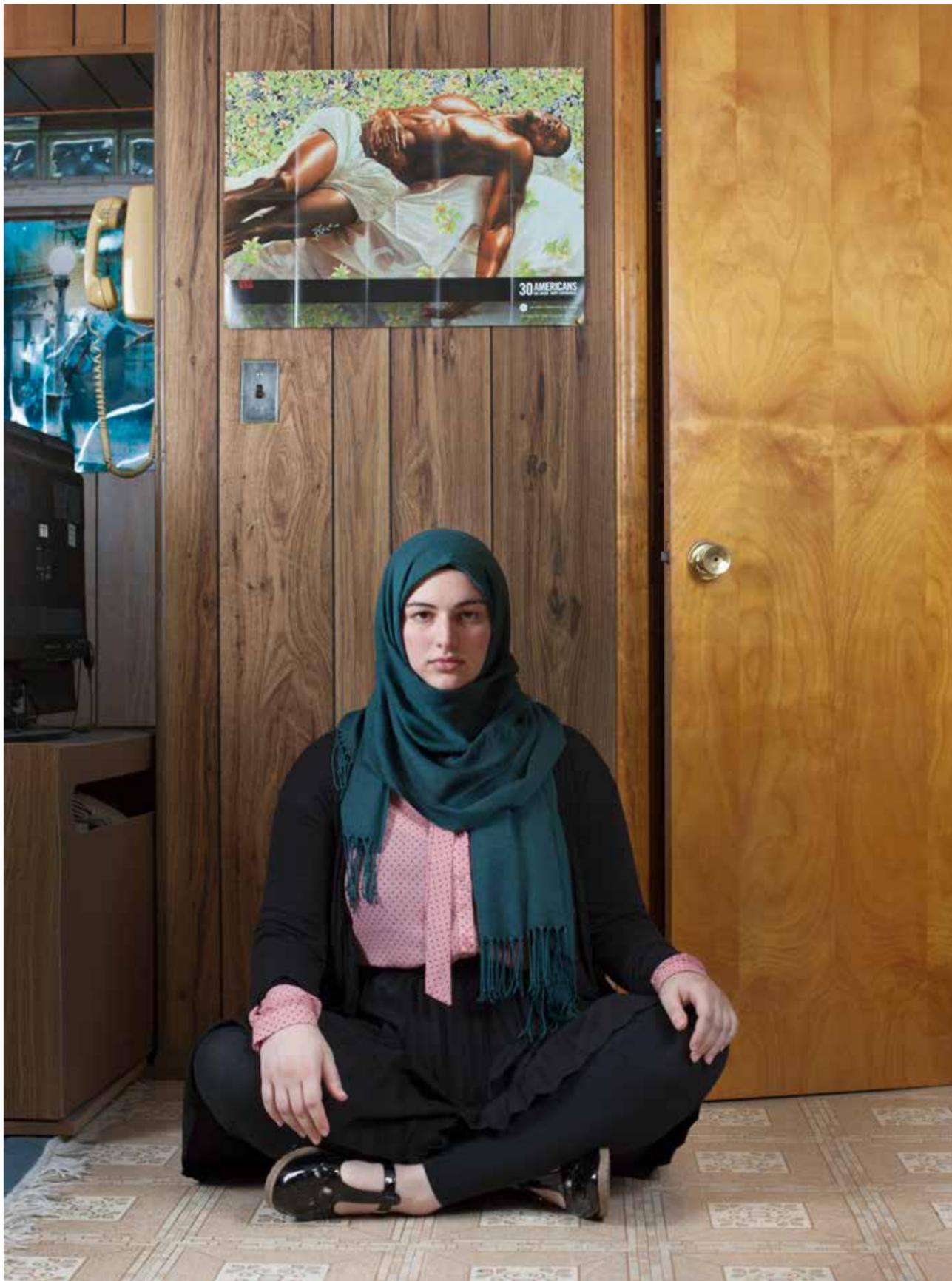


“Although documentary in format, [*Your Town Tomorrow*] is also a very personal series as it chronicles my life and work in Detroit, the communities where I have lived, and my friends and neighbors. Detroit has been the site of complicated change since I moved here thirteen years ago. Real estate developers and corporate investors have altered the character of the city. ¶ The national media claims Detroit is a “new” city of great economic opportunity, but it hardly recognizes the people who have lived here throughout the changes. A city’s residents define its identity; the people of Detroit are essential to its culture and vitality. These images are not meant to survey a Detroit ‘as is’. Rather, they function as a glimpse into an alternate reality, where everyday life stands at a crossroads: between hope and despair, vulnerability and strength, the past and the future.”

<p><i>Your Town Tomorrow</i> is a decade long, immersive photo-documentary project that shows the city of Detroit in the midst of a monumental and challenging transition. Photographed largely between 2007 and 2017, this project chronicles the city as it entered the great recession, and then later as it emerged as a site of opportunity for outsiders to benefit from reinvestment and gentrification.</p>			
<p>But Vermeulen doesn't focus her camera on Detroit's infamous post-industrial landscape. Instead she turns primarily to the people of the city: community gardeners, families, activists, and long time residents. Her photographs are firmly entrenched in the humanist school of social documentary photography. Vermeulen engages and connects with her subjects, learns their stories and histories, and photographs them with dignity.</p>			
<p>This generosity of spirit comes through powerfully in her portraiture. The people in this selection of images exude confidence, confronting Vermeulen's camera directly, but there is also a subtle uncertainty in her subjects. A striking young woman with purple hair, wearing a jacket covered in</p>			
<p>buttons promoting activist causes and punk bands wrings her hands, perhaps unsure of her place in the future of her city. <i>Your Town Tomorrow</i> shows the landscape of Detroit through surprising details that also suggest its uncertain future. Long and beautiful grass in an overgrown field obscures the decaying buildings. A replica Statue of Liberty seems lost, absurdly watching over a building's</p>			
<p>electric meter. Some sort of light pole or cell phone tower is dressed up as a bright red palm tree against a grey sky; this image combines the silly and the mundane to suggest the emerging presence of something insincere and artificial.</p>			



Palm Tree, Fresh Fish House, Highland Park, 2011







We
never
live
only
where
we are .

Radial Survey Vol.1 Artists	
<p>NANDO ALVAREZ-PEREZ is an artist and educator based in Buffalo, New York. He holds an M.A. from the San Francisco Art Institute and has exhibited throughout the Bay Area and internationally, including at the Material Art Fair in Mexico City, the Drake One Fifty in Toronto, Interface Gallery in Oakland, California, and the Visual Studies Workshop. He has taught courses at the California College of the Arts, UC Berkeley, and the San Francisco Art Institute. He is the co-founder of The Buffalo Institute for Contemporary Art.</p> <p>MORGAN ASHCOM is an artist based in Charlottesville, Virginia whose work explores the tension between invented and experiential narratives. Ashcom's work has been exhibited and published nationally and internationally, including two solo exhibitions at Candela Gallery and the Houston Center for Photography in 2018. Ashcom has been an artist in residence at Light Work and has taught at Western Connecticut State University, Ithaca College, University of Hartford, Cornell University, and the University of Virginia.</p> <p>NYDIA BLAS is a visual artist living in Ithaca, New York. She holds a B.S. from Ithaca College, and received her M.F.A. from Syracuse University in the College of Visual and Performing Arts. She was one of six selected talents of World Press' 2018 6x6 Global Talent Program for North and Central America and was a recipient of the 2018 Light Work grant. She has completed artist residencies at Constance Saltonstall Foundation for the Arts and The Center for Photography at Woodstock. She has been featured in The New York Times, New York Magazine, The Huffington Post, Dazed and Confused Magazine, Strange Fire Collective, Lensculture, Fotografia Magazine, and more.</p>	<p>MELISSA CATANESE lives in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and is the founder of Spaces Corners, an artist-run bookshop and project space. She has been editing from a vast collection of over 20,000 photographs belonging to collector Peter J. Cohen for some years, and is the author of <i>Dive Dark Dream Slow</i> (2012), <i>Dangerous Women</i> (2013), and <i>Hells Hollow Fallen Monarch</i> (2015). Her work has been included in the Mulhouse Biennial of Photography, NoFound Photo Fair in Paris, and at institutions including Pier 24 Photography in San Francisco and Aperture Foundation in New York.</p> <p>BRENDAN GEORGE KO is a visual storyteller that works in photography, video, installation, text, and sound. Ko received a B.F.A. from Ontario College of Art & Design and a Masters in Visual Arts at the University of Toronto. Ko's work has been included in such events as The Magenta Foundation's annual photography exhibition and publication, Flash Forward, the juried exhibition Hey! Hot Shot by Jen Bekman in New York City, and in numerous auctions such as ACT's Snap! Live Auction, Buddies in Bad Times' Art Attack Auction, and Youthline's Line Art Auction.</p> <p>JACOB KOESTLER is an artist and musician from Johnstown, Pennsylvania. He holds an M.F.A. from the Photography and Integrated Media program at Ohio University. His practice includes photography, video and multimedia installation and he is a co-founder of My Idea of Fun, an art and music archive that features over 350 releases. He currently lives and works in Cleveland, Ohio, where he is a lecturer in the Photography and Video Department at The Cleveland Institute of Art.</p>

<p>EVA O' LEARY received a B.F.A. from California College of the Arts in 2012 and a M.F.A. from Yale University in 2016. Using photography, text and video, her work investigates issues such as identity formation and human behavioral patterns on the backdrop of wider social, cultural and philosophical implications.</p>	<p>Before joining the faculty at OSU Jared taught at the collegiate level in South Africa from 2010–2015. He has had solo shows both domestically and internationally.</p>	<p>CORINE VERMEULEN is a Dutch photographer who set up her studio practice in Detroit in 2006. She earned a B.F.A. from the Design Academy Eindhoven, and an M.F.A. in photography from the Cranbrook Academy of Art in Michigan. Her photographs have been featured in The New York Times, Brooklyn Rail, Time Magazine, The Guardian and The Fader, among others. She has had numerous solo and group exhibitions at national and international venues including, a solo exhibition at The Detroit Institute of Arts: <i>The Walk-In Portrait Studio</i> (2015), and group exhibitions <i>Constant as the Sun</i> at MOCA Cleveland (2017), and <i>This Land</i> at Pier 24 in San Francisco (2018).</p>
<p>LYDIA PANAS is an artist working in photography and video, dividing her time between Kutztown, Pennsylvania and New York, New York. Panas' work has been exhibited widely in museums and galleries in the U.S. and internationally. She has degrees from Boston College, School of Visual Arts, and New York University's International Center of Photography. She is the recipient of the Whitney Museum Independent Study Fellowship and a CFEVA Fellowship. Her photographs are represented in collections nationally, including the Brooklyn Museum, Bronx Museum, Museum of Fine Arts Houston, and the Museum of Contemporary Photography Chicago. She has two monographs, <i>Falling from Grace</i> (Conveyor Arts 2016) and <i>The Mark of Abel</i> (Kehrer Verlag 2012).</p>	<p>SUSAN WORSHAM is a photography-based visual artist blurring the lines between autobiographical and documentary work. She was awarded the first TMC/Kodak Film Grant, and was an Artist-in-Residence at Light Work. Her photography is held in private collections, and has been exhibited at the Corcoran Museum, The Photographic Center Northwest, and the Danville Museum, Virginia. Her solo shows include: Candela Books + Gallery, Light Work and The Ogden Museum of Southern Art.</p>	
<p>AHNDRAYA PARLATO holds a B.A. in photography from Bard College and an M.F.A. from California College of the Arts. She has recently published two books, <i>East of the Sun, West of the Moon</i> with Études Books and <i>A Spectacle and Nothing Strange</i> with Kehrer Verlag. She has also been a Light Work grant recipient, a New York Foundation for the Arts grant recipient, and a Magenta Foundation Emerging Photographer Award winner. In 2008, she created and curated Art for Obama, a fundraiser that included the work of over sixty photographers, including Philip-Lorca DiCorcia, Katy Grannan, Richard Misrach, Larry Sultan, and Wolfgang Tillmans.</p>		
<p>JARED THORNE holds a B.A. in English Literature from Dartmouth College and a M.F.A. from Columbia University. His work speaks to issues of identity and subjectivity as it relates to class and race in America and abroad. Thorne is an Assistant Professor in the Art Department at Ohio State University.</p>		

<h2 style="text-align: center;">Contributing Writers</h2>		
<p>JESSICA BECK is the Milton Fine Curator of Art at The Andy Warhol Museum. She has curated many projects including: Andy Warhol: My Perfect Body in 2016 and Devan Shimoyama: Cry, Baby in 2018—the artist's first solo museum exhibition, which debuted at The Andy Warhol Museum to great acclaim from The New York Times and The Burlington Contemporary. In 2019, she co-curated Kim Gordon's first museum solo exhibition in North America, Kim Gordon: Lo-Fi Glamour. Beck has published widely with The Whitney Museum of American Art, The Cantor Center for the Arts, Gagosian Quarterly, and Burlington Magazine. In 2017 and 2018, Beck served as the visiting scholar at Carnegie Mellon School of Art, where she taught critical studies and thesis writing seminars. She completed her MA with distinction from the Courtauld Institute of Art.</p>	<p>of Photography at Smith College in Northampton, MA. She has written and taught courses about particular areas of interest in photo history, including vernacular and process-driven photography. At CMA, she has curated Object/Set: Gauri Gill's Acts of Appearance and is currently preparing an exhibition about the conceptual, studio-based work of photographer Gina Osterloh.</p>	
<p>LEO HSU lives in Pittsburgh where he teaches in the photography program at Carnegie Mellon University. He has written extensively for Fraction Magazine and worked on the development of the pioneering photography website Foto8.com. Leo has co-curated several exhibitions at the Silver Eye Center for Photography in Pittsburgh, where he serves on the board. He has worked as a newspaper photographer in New Mexico and New Jersey and holds a PhD in Anthropology from New York University.</p>	<p>ASH MCNELIS is a writer, curator, and art historian specializing in modern and contemporary art and photography. She is currently a curatorial assistant at Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh. From 2017 to 2019, she was the curatorial assistant for Carnegie International, 57th Edition, 2018 at Carnegie Museum of Art. She holds a master's degree in the History of Art, Theory, & Criticism from the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University.</p>	
<p>ANNA LEE is the William J. and Sarah Ross Soter Associate Curator of Photography at the Columbus Museum of Art. Lee received her Ph.D. in Art History from the University of Chicago, and formerly served as Postdoctoral Fellow and Lecturer in the History</p>		

<p><i>Radial Survey</i> The Destiny of a Place</p> <p>April 4-May 25, 2019 Silver Eye Center for Photography</p> <p>Published by Silver Eye Center for Photography 4808 Penn Ave Pittsburgh, PA 15224 silvereve.org</p>			
<p>Silver Eye promotes the power of contemporary photography as a fine art medium by creating original exhibitions, unique educational programming, and a space for artists to learn, create, and connect through our digital lab. Our programs are dedicated to supporting the work of emerging, mid-career, and under-recognized artists and sharing that work with our diverse audiences in engaging and meaningful ways.</p>			
<p>Produced by Leo Hsu, Curator and Editor Kate Kelley, Curator Ross Mantle, Curator David Oresick, Curator and Executive Director Elana Schlenker, Curator and Designer Sean Stewart, Curator and Lab Manager</p> <p>Event and installation photography: Sean Carroll Copy editor: Sophie Wodzak Catalog design: Studio Elana Schlenker</p> <p>This catalog was generously supported by the HJ Simonds Foundation</p> <p>© 2020 Silver Eye Center for Photography. All rights reserved.</p>			
			

A new survey of
emerging and mid-career
photo-based artists
working within 300 miles
of Pittsburgh.

Nando Alvarez-Perez

Morgan Ashcom

Nydia Blas

Melissa Catanese

Brendan George Ko

Jacob Koestler

Eva O'Leary

Lydia Panas

Ahndraya Parlato

Jared Thorne

Corine Vermeulen

Susan Worsham