



Contact: Katrina Carl
(805) 884-6430
kcarl@sbma.net



Loretta Lux, *The Drummer*, 2004. Pigment print. Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Museum purchase with funds provided by Tim Walsh and Mike Healy.

SBMA Celebrates Decade of Photography Acquisitions
Ten Exhibition Features Gifts from Museum Collector's Group

September 27 – December 21, 2008

September 22, 2008 – The Santa Barbara Museum of Art celebrates the gifts made possible by PhotoFutures, the avid collector's group that has helped to build the Museum's permanent photography collection as well as support photographic exhibitions. Founded in 1998 by William Brian Little and Mrs. Kingman Douglass, PhotoFutures enters their tenth year. In acknowledgement, SBMA showcases 58 acquisitions with the exhibition ***Ten Gifts of SBMA PhotoFutures***

While the 35 individuals that comprise the current PhotoFutures group hail from a variety of professions and backgrounds, an appreciation and passion for photography remain consistent. Long-time PhotoFutures members and supporters of various SBMA exhibitions, Fred and Stephanie Shuman, were recently interviewed on the topic of collecting photography. Stephanie notes, "You appreciate the photographs every time you walk by them or stop to look at them....Our focus [for collecting] really comes from inside us and how we enjoy the work." Fred continues, "What we do becomes much more enjoyable, more important as we become more knowledgeable... That's one of the benefits that comes from being involved with the Museum and a group like PhotoFutures."

On their advice to new collectors, Fred states, "... become educated about the medium and be part of a community of like-minded people. Santa Barbara makes that especially easy."

He continues, “One of the real attractions of photography is how accessible it is. With the growth of digital photography, it’s become even more so. You can find beautiful pictures that are still relatively affordable...It’s a very exciting time.”

The **Ten** exhibition highlights this exciting time by focusing on those areas of strength in the Museum’s photography collection, including California photographers, Western Pacific Rim artists, the intersection of art and science, and contemporary works.

California Photographers



Dorothea Lange, ***Roadside Ranch Camp*** Ca, 1936. Gelatin silver print. Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Museum purchase with funds provided by PhotoFutures.

With the Museum, and many PhotoFutures members based in Southern California, building a collection that incorporates the photography of artists working in California has been of special interest. This collecting category incorporates both artists born in the state and those who focus on California subjects in their work. For example, the Depression-era farm laborer photographs of Dorothea Lange, who was born in New York but relocated to San Francisco early in her career, have become iconic images of mid twentieth-century rural California.

The documentary, photojournalistic style of Dorothea Lange, Horace Bristol, and other early California photographers continues to influence artists practicing in the state, such as Robbert Flick whose diptych underscores the limits of two-dimensional art when rendering the experience of time and place. Also featured in the exhibition are photographers David Maisel (his series ***Lake Project***), Karen Halverson, and John Humble.

Photographers of the Western Rim



Chen Nong, ***San Xia 2*** (detail), 2005-2006/2007. Eight hand-colored gsp, ed. 5/10. Santa Barbara Museum of Art.

In response to the burgeoning cultural and economic influence of many East Asian nations, the Museum has identified Western Pacific Rim photography as an important area of development for the collection.

In particular, recent additions to the collection from China, Japan, and Korea - all nations in the midst of significant technological and economic growth - express the complex nature of cultures in flux. Western Pacific Rim artists also experiment with using the medium of photography as a means to reflect upon the rapid transition from traditional to modern ways of life.

The image above is a detail from a group of eight hand-colored photographs depicting groups of Chinese men wearing mock armor created by the artist to evoke the terracotta army of Emperor Qin Shi Huangdi which was discovered in the region in 1974. The San Xia region of mainland China is home to the Three Gorges Dam which harnessed the power of the Yangtze River resulting in dramatic environmental changes. In his melancholic portraits of local Chinese who were hired by the government to demolish their communities in anticipation of the regional flooding, photographer Chen Nong calls attention to the socio-cultural and environmental impact of modern industrial development.

Art and Science



Joan Fontcuberta, ***Goglyan2***, 2005. C print. Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Museum purchase with funds provided by PhotoFutures.

Scientific photography is a growing sub-section of the SBMA collection. Since its inception, photography has been a useful tool in scientific research by expanding the powers of human observation. Many scientific photographs transcend the context of their production, blurring the lines between art and science. Early scientific photographers such as Dr. Dain L. Tasker and Wilson A. Bentley created works of both technological and aesthetic excellence.

Contemporary photographers continue to explore the boundaries between scientific and artistic observation of natural phenomena by designing innovative photographic techniques. Walter Chappell uses electromagnetic energy to create bioluminescence that activates the silver, resulting in an image that reveals the intricate structures of his subjects. Other artists have turned to digital and computer-generated imagery to explore the natural world from a technological point of view, such as Joan Fontcuberta whose ***Goglyan2*** is constructed of 10,000 images that he found on the popular search engine using search terms such as 'sky,' 'inferno,' and 'purgatory'.

Contemporary Photographers



Sandy Skoglund, ***Revenge of the Goldfish***, 1981. Silver dye bleach print. Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Partial gift of Donnelley and Cinda Erdman and partial museum purchase with funds provided by PhotoFutures.

Contemporary photographers often take inspiration from the work of their predecessors in order to stretch the technological and conceptual boundaries of the medium. Other contemporary photographers have turned to digital technology to fashion imagined realities.

Sandy Skoglund photographs installations that she builds in her studio, employing actors to populate her fabricated tableaux. In the large-scale print (pictured above), a young man, consumed by nightmarish anxiety, sits at his bedside, inundated by flying goldfish while his mother sleeps nearby.



Jackie Nickerson, *Grandmother, Masiyunde Township Western Cape, South Africa* 2004. Lambda photograph, ed. 4/4. Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Museum purchase with funds provided by PhotoFutures.

In 2007, members of PhotoFutures attended the international contemporary art fair known as Art Basel Miami Beach. Relationships forged between the collectors while traveling, increased knowledge of contemporary photography, and exposure to private collections in Miami led to the joint purchase of the above photograph during the annual PhotoFutures Buying Spree event in 2008.

In this sharply-focused portrait, the penetrating eyes of a South African woman gaze out from her dust-covered face. While traveling in Africa, Nickerson was impressed by the work ethic, positive attitude, and pride she detected in many of the farm workers. Her images work to portray the human face of contemporary South African agriculture.

This exhibition has been made possible through the generosity of Jane and Ken Anderson and PhotoFutures.

For more information on PhotoFutures, contact Karen Sinsheimer, SBMA's Curator of Photography at 805.884.6411.

The Santa Barbara Museum of Art is a privately funded, not-for-profit institution that presents internationally recognized collections and exhibitions and a broad array of cultural and educational activities as well as travel opportunities around the world.

***Santa Barbara Museum of Art, 1130 State Street, Santa Barbara, CA.
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