

Queensland College of Art, Griffith University
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MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

BY THE SUN

A collaborative exchange photography exhibition between
Queensland College of Art (Brisbane) and Tyler School of Art (Philadelphia).

Essay by Donal Fitzpatrick

Angela Blakely
Renata Buziak
Amy Carkeek
Ray Cook
Marian Drew
Alan Hill
Kelly Hussey-Smith
Christine Ko
David Lloyd
Bruce Reynolds
Martin Smith
Peter Thiedeke
Shehab Uddin
Jay Younger

Essay by Stephanie Lynn Rogers

Antony Anderson
Justyna Badach
Dimitra Ermeidou
Sam Fritch
Brad Jamula
Kris Kelley
Sharon Koelblinger
Martha Madigan
Jille Mandel
Julia Mead
Rebecca Michaels
Haigen Pearson
Stephanie Lynn Rogers
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Queensland College of Art

Brisbane



Brisbane: The Eviscerated Politics of a Non-Place

by Donal Fitzpatrick

Place is a strange value; how does this term and status become designated to a specific location or geography? Some attributes of spatial recognition and identification must conspire to evoke a special condition of physical memory that embraces the establishment of place as a ‘something’ as opposed to a ‘nothing’. In most cases, this designation is not achieved as a substitution of something for nothing, but as an amalgam, a doppelganger of both nothing and something. This doubling conspires to make the term ‘place’ function simultaneously as a fusion of place and non-place. In the instance of the Australian subtropical city of Brisbane, it is a place created as much by erasure as by establishment. This act of erasure functions as a political act of active censorship of what already exists and has existed prior to one’s act of recognition and, in so doing, ensures the perpetual presence of the value non-place within the establishment of place. In one sense, the emphasis here is on what appears after the act of disappearance. There is the question of the persistence of place, something that endures after its disappearance, and speaks to an order outside of what appears as place.

Brisbane was named after Sir Thomas Brisbane, the Governor of the primary British colony of New

South Wales. The selective development of the coastal area of Moreton Bay predated settlement in what is now Brisbane and was designated as sufficiently possessing the required negative attributes to make it an ideal location for the transportation and imprisonment of the worst convicts within the established penal colony of Australia. The English colonial authorities at the time perceived that New South Wales had become increasingly considered by the criminal classes as pleasant, and thus something wilder, darker, and altogether more unpleasant was badly needed to create the spectre of fear necessary for effective administration. Moreton Bay, already mentioned by Captain James Cook in his expedition journal and whose islands had been mapped and investigated by Matthew Flinders in a subsequent expedition, began its life in this way. It was the British Empire’s site of barren imprisonment that offered no prospect of redemption. If you were sent to St Helena Island in Moreton Bay, it was most likely to suffer and die, not to survive and prosper as a rehabilitated future colonist. Later, the neighbouring Peel Island would become a leper colony, further underscoring the regions negative and excluded status. It was not until the New South

Wales Surveyor General of Lands, John Oxley, was dispatched on an expedition of discovery to the north and sailed up the river flowing into the bay in 1824 looking for fresh water that Brisbane was identified. In a subsequent expedition the following year, it was established as a site for a settlement. Thus, Brisbane and its surrounding landscape were initially selected for their non-place status, outside of identity and history. These sites were deemed appropriate for the accommodation of designated non-persons, such as convicts and criminals, precisely because they were places bereft of the values of identity, relation, and history.¹

Brisbane was the town of his birth and the place that he had spent most of his life trying to be as far away from as possible. After Brisbane, anywhere looked good to him. He still recognised the scars active in his mind from having lived there too long. Always drive with one eye focused on the mirror, watching for police. He recalled that in the 1980s, the police were as bored as everyone else, with the exception that they were armed and dangerous; a praetorian guard whose sole occupation was to look after the interests of a corrupt local petty emperor and his regime of equally corrupt cronies. They fulfilled this service in the knowledge that they were immune to prosecution or censure; they could literally get away with anything with impunity. Brisbane, always a strange place, was, in that era, a dangerous town lost in a search for identity and power, and utterly devoid of cultural adherence. As a condition of place, it was defined effectively by lines from a Saints' song of the time—"lots of cars but not much town". This situation drove the cultural play of the place underground.

The monument at North Quay near the steep bank of the river to commemorate the first footfall of John Oxley the explorer onto what became the city was erected as a historically inaccurate afterthought. In a cavalier manner synonymous with the place, its erroneous presence functions

not as a commemoration of discovery but as a memorial to the local value system of 'near enough is good enough'. (It is in contrast with the excellent library bearing Oxley's name that fulfils this function of recognition and discovery.) The obelisk at North Quay bearing his name and purporting to acknowledge his landing is in reality an unconscious monument to the city's status as a non-place resistant to cultural imposition, and an ahistorical fiction.²

The city had, for a time in his childhood, been a sub-tropical vision of winding hilly streets with large yards, abundant fruit trees, and rickety paling fences surrounding wooden houses on stumps, just like the one in which he was born. A strange local architecture of nineteenth-century Georgian design made from wood and standing in elevated splendour above the heat. It was not floods so much as air circulation that explained the elevated nature of these houses. Brisbane was hot and humid for most of the year, and in January/February, it was unliveable. Those citizens who could fled the city for the north and south coasts, or, in the case of his family, for the islands in the bay. Those suburbs with their enormous blocks of land have all but gone now, subdivided by inner-city congestion into multi-dwelling debt-fuelled packages of habitation. The old cheap wooden houses of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries built for workers and immigrants are now restored to death, if they exist at all, and are unaffordable for all but the very rich. Contrary to popular mythology, this was always a desperate and miserable city.

The attributes of image resistance to both recognition and establishment raise again the question of an effective definition of place. How do we inscribe such a value to a particular space that enables us to determine this elusive concept of 'place'? In Brisbane, the sense of place is slippery. Everywhere is defined by somewhere else,

somewhere ill-defined, characterised by absence. There is a profound sense of misrecognition, as though the space itself resists conventional imaging. Like a mirror, the site seems to throw back visual interrogation and condemn the viewer to a splintered image and atomised space of their own imagining. Could this be a defensive intention on the part of the place? Some Indigenous people would not be surprised at the metaphysics of this suggestion. There has always been a question of exactly what white people see in this continent and whether in the end they see exactly what they want to see or, more strangely, what the land wants them to see. Such a defensive strategy as that of the invisibility of a place of waiting in time to return to the domain of the visual is a vision more geologic than human. A place that is not a place, or at least not a place capable of your recognition, is something like a dynamic of space determined by time. Non-place does indeed change over time from its colonial emptying out to the very sight refusal that allows the occupancy of such a clearing of space; a cleaning of the sticky cultural quality of space to render it ready for the possession and occupancy of globalism's tidal surge.³

He had always thought that climatically Brisbane was like a Chinese wok, rimmed in the west by mountains and to the east by islands. A river snakes its way through the middle and the air rises, heavy and humid, from its sunken basin, steaming everything and everyone in its sullen embrace. Relief from this stifling humid heat, when it comes, is dramatic and takes the form of intense tropical storms, the likes of which he could not recall encountering anywhere else. When he was a child, the adults around him would refer to a special order of storm as a 'five o'clock special'. During these particular meteorological events, the air would crackle and shift off the ground, the light would colour an alarming green, and the sky would transform into a black canopy that slid ominously

over the city. A strange ultra-violet intensity would ensue and anything and everything would begin to glow in an increasingly unsteady atmosphere of expectation. These were the established folkloric warning signs for the population to run. The city fell silent, workers crowded at windows and crammed into doorways to urgently inspect the sky for signs beckoning them to scatter. Some would move their precious cars to safety, compelled by the threat of jagged, fist-sized hailstones; others would set off in a frantic rush, by any means available, to secure their houses from the imminent onset of destructive winds and penetrating rain. The winds could lift the tin roof from a house in seconds and the rain would overwhelm gutters and drains, resulting in instant widespread invasive flooding. At these moments of chaos, fear, and mayhem, the city disrobed, and, in its sudden bright energising pulse of life and expectation, was almost beautiful. In its aftermath, the storm would leave a temporary cool calm in the air and the city would recline in a sensual beauty as though sprayed with champagne. The operatic intensity of these storms, as he remembered them, was not only a physical and atmospheric response to the local environment but also to the collective psychology of the population. These storms provided the drama the citizens so desperately craved. Without these stormy moments, Brisbane would be a place where nothingness continuously happened.

What of the role of time in this construction of place? People often speak about wanting to visit a place for any number of reasons, but they rarely acknowledge the site of this place within their consciousness. Is it escape, and, if so, from where and in distinction from where else in a world grown over with images resulting in a global sameness? Wanting to be in a Paris or San Francisco or Beijing is a fictional aspiration and dream, but what remains unasked is exactly when they want to be there. In this sense, it is not space or geography,

but time that they are truly referencing and even desiring. Place then in this context must always be an amalgam of space and time; without the value of time, it is a space and not a place, or is it? In *The Order of Things*, Michel Foucault demonstrated that place could be elevated to the status of non-place as a site from which to identify the various relations of power at work.⁴ It becomes like the missing square in a game with letters, the necessary space that allows the other factors present to move and assemble.

Later in life, he would locate his childhood wanderings back and forth through the suburban village of the Grange Heights in Brisbane as the origin of his concept of 'place', where he discovered the unsettling relativity of localised knowledge as an always partial truth and equal fiction. Later, as an art student, he drove a yellow taxi through all the streets of Brisbane city at night. Brisbane was at its most truthful in the wreckage of the night. At night, the city was a glorious, seamy, and grubby place. One regular client on Friday and Saturday nights was a bagman for what now might be called the mob. A handful of fifty-dollar notes torn in half denoted the understanding that he would drive exclusively for this customer until the work was done and then the other half of the notes would conclude the transaction. There has been a lot of revisionist writing about the striped sunlit sound and the bright and breezy life of Brisbane. This was not his experience.

1 See Marc Augé, *Non-Places: Introduction to An Anthropology of Supermodernity*, trans. John Howe (London: Verso, 1995), 78.

2 Mathew Condon, *Brisbane* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2010).

3 See Bruno Bosteels, "Nonplaces: An Anecdote Topography of Contemporary French Theory", *Diacritics* 33, no. 3/4 (Winter 2003): 117–39.

4 Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Random House, 1970).

Cast by the Sun Artists (QCA)

Angela Blakely & David Lloyd

The individual and collaborative works of Angela Blakely and David Lloyd are driven by a desire to explore the relationship between incident and memory. Their works investigate the envelope of time that we all occupy. Our presence is always temporal and our habitation of space fleeting. We make claims to this space–time relationship through a complex set of associations with objects, smells, atmospheres, and invested familiarity. In this way, we all construct our relationships to the phenomenon of ‘place’. Photography haunts this transformation of space into place. It places a window onto time, a complicated device for arranging a view of light on to a world that is forever ceasing and escaping our visual grasp.

Renata Buziak

The methods Renata Buziak uses to construct her images, and the subject matter of her practice, connect us to a permanent presence of natural knowledge. Furthermore, the history of plant knowledge is an enduring archive of native people’s history, and through Buziak’s investigations of flora, viewers get a glimpse of this. She focuses on the Quandamooka people’s rich history of plant knowledge from the beautiful world of Minjerribah. Everything is always already here and our long history of engagement is the living legacy of the natural world made manifest in Buziak’s artworks.

Amy Carkeek

In her work, Amy Carkeek seeks to interrogate the demise of the great Australian dream of home ownership, and chart its descent into its contemporary septic nightmare. The pursuit of a roof over one’s head has transformed in recent times into the investment-property-as-cash-machine or the buy-to-let phenomena. This debt-fuelled illusion of prosperity has delivered an inflated economy of land into the greatest private debt in our history. Her composite analogue and digital images peel away the surface of these illusions into a bold and forbidden practice of social iconoclasm.

Ray Cook

Loss stalks the images of Ray Cook, and his dynamic opening of the space of the camera as a space of theatrical purpose allows the viewer to experience this ability of the visual to document, evoke, ascertain, and bear witness to events. Phenomena disappear in their appearing, and Cook knows and understands this show-and-tell theatre of the elements with the genuine intelligence of an astute practitioner. Absence continues as a presence even in a culture of erasure; there is no forgetting unless we remember its function and implement its action. These images change the way we think of the photograph, less of a trace of light and chemistry and more of a miraculous scar—a trace that exists and changes, but, above all, persists.

Marian Drew

Place can serve as a narrative of exotica, somewhere where the once-present value of the magical still touches the earth and has not yet fled the planet. Marian Drew's images exist in a strange parallel world where the impossible exists as a realistic ambition of the possible. In this place, transformative phenomena continue to escape mean scrutiny and play with the elements of water, fire, and air above the ancient geology of earth. Photography here enters into these other worlds where we exist as desires, where every possibility cohabits with its opposite, and vision establishes the precept for everything to embrace everywhere.

Alan Hill & Kelly Hussey-Smith

The site as almost established, a space defined by partiality—these are the values that haunt the images of Alan Hill and Kelly Hussey-Smith. Like the 'Linger Longer' flats of my holiday excursions, they are spaces that appear partial, imaged in part by expectation and in part by an elusive service to displacement. The other place, the holiday house, the space that is not what it seems, a space that is excused, a casual condition of place not defined by taste or close inspection, a space justified by function, accommodation, and allowance. A genuine architecture of tangled intention, a substitute, a place that means nothing and yet services the exasperation of need. These images establish a set that exceeds itself, like the ambiguous status of the recently cleaned rental accommodation awaiting occupation and human compromise.

Christine Ko

In Christine Ko's work, we are introduced to the space between, commonly understood as interstitial; these non-places have an uneasy location in our perception of place. The narrow gap that exists between buildings that are often filled with the detritus of the city is an example of the seen-but-not-seen status of these spaces. Ko expands this field of the non-place to one between cultures and ethnicities; the image of personal physiognomy, subject to the turbulence of cultural separation and time, disconnect and reassemble a stranger state of being in the world than the one our common claims to ancestry and certainty allow. Here we are thrown asunder into a confusion of exacting dimension where we can truly lay claim to nothing and everything. To be in this circumstance is to welcome the winds between languages and the slippages between peoples as being the true terrain of culture.

Bruce Reynolds

In Bruce Reynolds's works, we are asked to reconsider the photograph in its now antique status as a manifestation of analogue surface coating. This focus on the chemical nature of the analogue photo-image links it to painting as another chemical practice that augments and changes surfaces. In doing this, Reynolds reminds us of the materiality involved in both photography and painting, and to the trade in rare and precious elements involved in such practices. His works evoke a rich connection involved in the pursuit of both practices as they chart a secret history of trade between Europe and Asia. Significantly, this approach also reminds us of the hidden materials present in the new digital technologies with their emphasis on clean shiny surfaces that remain utterly reliant on the trade in rare and exotic minerals and their resultant environmentally dirty and dangerous mining practices.

Martin Smith

In the relationships we navigate through contemporary media, we rarely consider its constitutive parts, surrendering instead to its totalising elements as a union of power and engulfment. In Martin Smith's works, these constitutive elements of media are laid bare. In particular, the powerful relationship between text and image is broken and they are presented as unequal magnetically powerful forces, capable of generating force beyond the sum of their parts. Smith functions like a burglar who breaks and enters only to scramble the furniture and leave a physical message to challenge our understanding, operating at the heart of our unconscious occupation of place. Text becomes image, and image becomes text, and the photograph functions not as optic but as a collaborative and inclusive surface. It is like a space in which to gather those precious things with which you have a relationship but do not fully understand.

Peter Thiedeke

In his images, Peter Thiedeke presents us with hybrid constructions of the natural world. In the construction of their monstrous hybrids that speak to the slow desolation of the natural environment and the degradation of flora, they hold an uncomfortable mirror to our own broader predicament. The annihilation of difference here is characterised as the fusion of invasive species and the concomitant eradication of the indigenous flora and fauna. The power of these images lies in their seductive beauty and their capacity to infect our consciousness as they both compel and terrify us.

Shehab Uddin

The role of photography to shock and disturb has increasingly diminished as we grow accustomed to a steady diet of short-term sensations delivered without context through a proliferation of media. Such obese consumption means that images occupy a brief moment until they are displaced by the next set of distressed images. This is not the case in the photographic work of Shehab Uddin. He directly involves himself in the encounters with the people he meets and documents, and, as a result, these images are truly disturbing. Shehab lives with the subjects of his photographs, sharing their food and life. In the case of Jarina Khala and her daughter Mali, it is the life of the homeless in urban Dhaka in Bangladesh. The image of Jarina chained to her mentally and physically disabled daughter Mali are as unforgettable as they are impossible to dismiss: they represent the unseen made visible.

Jay Younger

In Jay Younger's work, the world is the opposite of what it might be: it is literally inverted and perverted as though gravity's sole purpose is to pull your leg. The gestation of these jester images is in the political turmoil of the contemporary era dominated as it is by global democratic materialism. The niceties of parliamentary politics and cultural feminism have been shredded and reshaped into a mask of suffocating deception and force. The photographic image in this space must acquire an existential intensity in order to achieve traction in such a situation. It must erupt from confinement within a tyrannical binary of yes and no and devise a new operation of appearing. The political agenda of these works is to achieve a multiplicity of appearance within the chaos of the world.





Angela Blakely
Bought in Hope 2014, digital pigment print, 40 x 40cm

Angela Blakely

Renata Buziak



Renata Buziak

Abrus precatorius... poisonous, an abortifacient... 2012, archival pigment on paper, 33 x 29.2cm

Amy Carkeek



Amy Carkeek
Objects of Fear 2015, archival inkjet print, 80 x 80cm



Ray Cook

Would the last person to leave please turn out the lights 2015, archival inkjet print, 21 x 29.7cm

Ray Cook

Marian Drew



Marian Drew
Drake (one) 2014, giclee print, 49 x 59cm



Alan Hill and Kelly Hussey-Smith
Sunroom 2014, archival inkjet print, 40 x 40cm

**Alan Hill &
Kelly Hussey-Smith**



Christine Ko

There's a Place and Time 1 2015, archival inkjet prints, foamcore 40 x 40cm

Christine Ko

David Lloyd



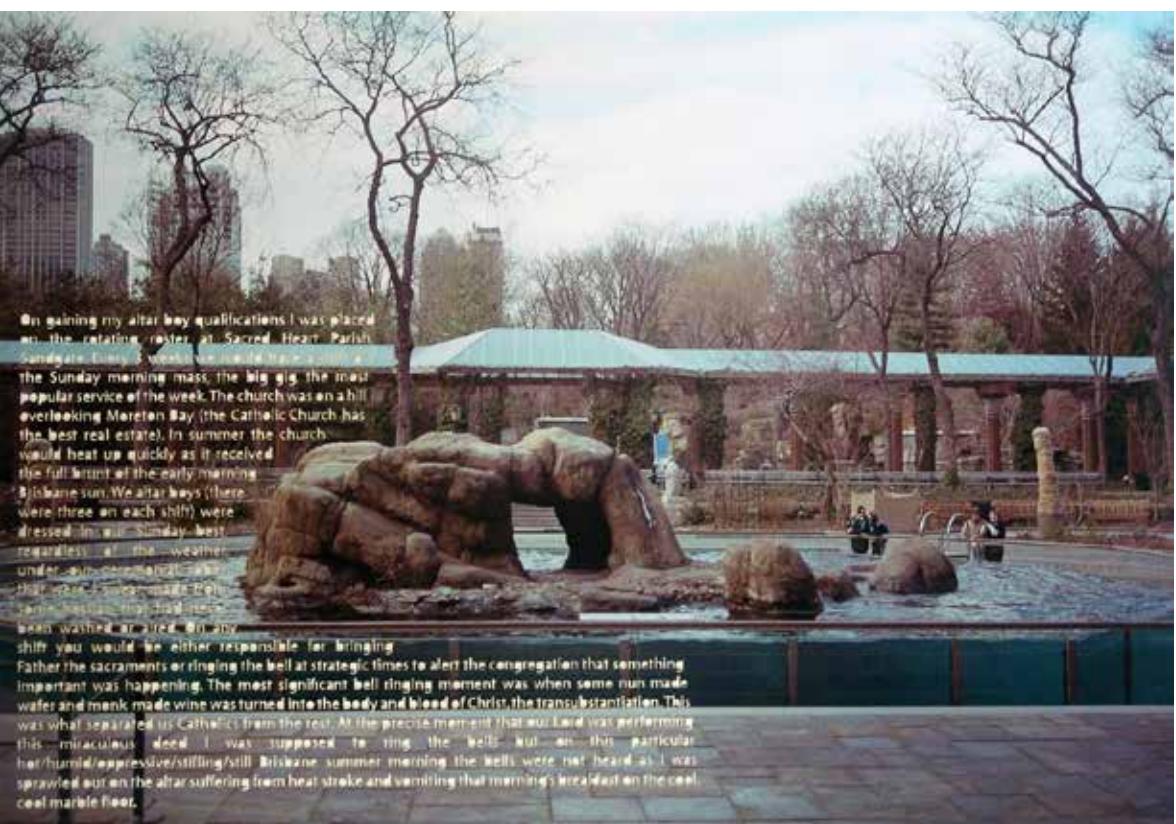
David Lloyd

Lost Without You (from the Anzac Day series) 2009/15, rag paper and archival inks, 43cm x 38cm

Bruce Reynolds



Bruce Reynolds
Cypress Field #2 2015, inkjet print, 29 x 31 cm



On gaining my altar boy qualifications I was placed on the rotating roster at Sacred Heart Parish Sandy Bay. We were a small crew. On the Sunday morning mass, the big gig, the most popular service of the week. The church was on a hill overlooking Merton Bay (the Catholic Church has the best real estate). In summer the church would heat up quickly as it received the full brunt of the early morning Brisbane sun. We altar boys (there were three on each shift) were dressed in our Sunday best regardless of the weather under sun cream and hats that were never made to be washed or dried. On any shift you would be either responsible for ringing Father the sacraments or ringing the bell at strategic times to alert the congregation that something important was happening. The most significant bell ringing moment was when some sun made water and monk made wine was turned into the body and blood of Christ; the transubstantiation. This was what separated us Catholics from the rest. At the precise moment that we knew was performing this...miraculous deed I was supposed to ring the bells but on this particular hot/humid/ oppressive/stifling/still Brisbane summer morning the bells were not heard as I was sprawled upon the altar suffering from heat stroke and vomiting that morning's breakfast on the cool, cool marble floor.

Martin Smith
Hot, humid, oppressive, still 2008, pigment print with cut-out letters, 90 x 120cm

Martin Smith

Peter Thiedeke



Peter Thiedeke
Halcyon #05 2015, archival inkjet print, 17.7 x 15.6cm



Shehab Uddin
No Life on the Street 2012, digital pigment print, 60 x 47.5cm

Shehab Uddin



Jay Younger
Mayu (from the *Inversions* series) 2015, archival inkjet print, 40 x 40cm

Jay Younger



Tyler School of Art, Temple University

Philadelphia

Cultural Dividends: The State of the Arts in a Historic City

by Stephanie Lynn Rogers

No landscape is ever a blank slate. There is always something that was there before it, or someone who has shaped it, and, in turn, shapes the people who come next and the future possibilities of place. For Philadelphia, it was the Lenape people, sent to Oklahoma long ago.¹ Their words have morphed just like the places they represent: Conshohocken, Manayunk, and Passyunk.

History runs long and deep at the confluence of the Schuylkill and Delaware Rivers. It is an important, heavily touted aspect of Philadelphia and its identity. A section of Old City is referred to as “the most historic square mile in America”, and the city and surrounding area are certainly rich in national historic markers and Revolutionary War artefacts. These are the kinds of things the tourism board means when they talk about history: the Liberty Bell, Independence Hall, the Valley Forge Battlefield.

Just west of the spot where William Penn landed, a long list of Philadelphia’s historic firsts is carved in stone. The city was the first capital of the United States, boasts the first public library in North America, and chartered the first fine arts academy in the country. Philadelphia was also home to legions of innovators who amassed other, perhaps more trivial, firsts. In case you were wondering

which city had the first mustard, Penn’s Landing Park will remind you that it was Philadelphia in 1768.

Historically, Philadelphia was the undisputed cultural, social, and political centre of the United States. Essayist Michael Zuckerman puts it succinctly: “Together, in the years before 1800, Philadelphians organized almost all the essential institutions of the modern America that emerged in the nineteenth century”² After 1800, New York City surpassed Philadelphia’s population, and Washington DC was made the nation’s capital,³ but many of those essential institutions Zuckerman refers to live on and pay continual cultural dividends, including Bartram’s Gardens, The Library Company, the Philosophical Society, and blocks full of ornate architecture that will take your breath away.

However, much has unfolded in the two centuries since the colonial era that has had no less impact on the city. For example, an industrial heritage and a largely working-class population created strong labour unions and a down-to-earth ethos.

Philadelphia prides itself on being a city of neighbourhoods, and the changes are dramatic as you move from one neighbourhood—or even one block—to the next. It takes little imagination to see how the history of redlining has impacted

Philadelphia well into the twenty-first century. Redlining was “the figurative or literal process of drawing red lines around areas to which lenders refuse to make loans, or make loans on less favorable terms”.⁴ The practice was usually based on race, and led to the physical and, eventually, the social decline of many neighbourhoods as home- and business-owners couldn’t fund repairs and property values stagnated or declined. While the Fair Housing Act made redlining illegal in 1968, its legacy lives on.

Redlining was practiced all over the United States, as were many other forms of systematic oppression, but that history manifests strongly here. Half a century after segregation stopped being actively enforced, you can physically see its legacy in neighbourhoods that remain largely mono-racial. You can also see it in statistics that testify to gaping racial disparities,⁵ ranging from wealth to income to who has no choice but to send their children to a failing public school system.⁶

‘History’ may be the first word people think of when they think of Philadelphia, but ‘grit’ is often the second. This is not a reference to the coarseness of the soil or even the residue on the subway walls. The history of Philadelphia’s economic disparities has led to violence and crime, and the whole city adjusts to that tenor. Local stores sell T-shirts that say “I’m not angry, I’m just from Philly”, and transplants quickly adopt the walk: sunglasses on, slight scowl, purposeful pace. Philadelphia demands a thick skin and the projection of physical and mental toughness.

While ‘gritty’ is almost always a derogatory description of place, ‘grit’ praises people with tenacity, work ethic, and purpose. They are two sides of the same coin. Grittiness demands grit, and the grit of Philadelphians more than compensates for the grittiness of Philadelphia. If you want something done in this city, go do it. Whereas New Yorkers would chase the sponsorship of a powerful gallerist or capital-rich supporter and Minnesotans

would wait for grant funding, Philadelphians call a few like-minded friends and get to work.

Philadelphia’s premiere co-operative gallery, Vox Populi, was founded in 1988. The city’s artists have discovered what its labour unions have known for years: that collective efforts and the pooling of resources can create opportunity. From the growing number of co-operative gallery and studio spaces to a strong Do-It-Yourself music scene, Philadelphia’s culture-creators make up for a relative lack of capital with an impressive amount of hard work.

The barriers to entry are low: any house or garage can become a concert venue, and all it takes is a coat of white paint to turn an empty storefront into a gallery. From the DIY PHL calendar to a Facebook event, getting the word out is just as easy. The art community is maturing alongside the artists who took matters into their own hands in the late 1980s, fed by a perpetual influx of wide-eyed talent from the six art schools within the city limits.

The presence of cheap rent and a growing scene is beginning to attract attention. There are rumours of artists moving from New York to Philadelphia to take advantage of both. Some talk about Philadelphia becoming “the New Brooklyn” after the New York borough that has spent the last decade transitioning from working-class enclave to a happening arts hub.

In many ways, this would be a terrible thing for the city. Brooklyn’s astronomical rate of gentrification has already pushed out many of the artists who helped make the borough hip in the first place. They’re moving further down the subway line. Young artists are still moving there, but increasingly look elsewhere. Philadelphia doesn’t need to be the new Brooklyn. In the best-case scenario, it would be the new old Philadelphia.

Picturing Place

Less than half of the artists featured in this exhibition are originally from Southeastern Pennsylvania. Like Philadelphia’s residents, they

come from across the country and around the world. The chosen theme of this exhibition, place, is broad enough to encompass their disparate practices. This does not make the inherent challenges of representing place through photography any easier.

Any image of a place is necessarily a simplification—a complicated, ever-changing location, frozen in time and reduced to two dimensions. It is often a single perspective in a situation where another vantage point or moment might have been just as effective.

Several of the works shown here tackle these limitations through the combination of multiple images that allude to history or demonstrate the passage of time. For example, Rebecca Michaels and Byron Wolfe utilise sequences to show change over time, while Antony Anderson suggests it by showing how the scene changes from one split-second to the next. Brad Jamula's photo collage displays a multitude of images, not only across time but also from varying perspectives.

Other artists address the passage of time in a single image that hints at the layers of history leading up to the moment that the photograph was taken. The work of Kris Kelley, Jill Mandel, Julia Mead, Haigen G. Pearson, Stephanie Lynn Rogers, and Tamsen Wojtanowski illustrates place while implying a human presence that was there, whether a second or a decade ago, though their photos show no people. These images play on the psychological aspects of location, and the strong impulse to read human drama onto a set of meaningful objects, evocative colours, or suggestive locations.

In many ways, the work of Harrison Walker fits into this category as well, though his submission features many people. From the cut of their bathing suits to the toning of the print, we can imagine that the scene he shows us took place many years ago. This implication changes the reading and asks the viewer to complete the narrative.

Justyna Badach, Sam Fritch, Mark Wincov, and Byron Wolfe show photographs in which the relationship between people and place is strong and often primary. The locations are much more than backdrops for portraiture, enhancing our understanding by contributing mood through colour and contextual clues through objects. In many cases, the work of these photographers places the people at the centre but gives viewers the strong impression that these locations have made them who they are.

Martha Madigan and Stephanie Lynn Rogers address the relationship between place and plants, rather than place and people. By focusing on other species, Madigan and Rogers both refute an anthropocentric worldview and convey its pervasiveness—it is difficult to look at these beings without assigning them human characteristics.

For Dimitra Ermeidou, Sharon Koelblinger, and Antony Anderson, the relationship between people and place is a means to address larger, more conceptual, concerns. Ermeidou tackles the historical connection between devastated landscape and government propaganda. Koelblinger explores the beauty and power of simple textures and forms, touching on the influence of suggestion and the strength of human imagination to fill in even large gaps of information. Anderson's work reveals the workings of the distribution systems that control our media, and how they influence our experience of the world.

Viewing these works, I am left with a profound sense of the interconnection of things—rocks, rivers, plants, animals, buildings, and, above all, people. Each of the artists included here bears the influence, large or small, of the places in which they have lived and worked, of which Philadelphia is only one. Each place depicted has been shaped by the people who pass through it. The relationship is a complicated dance, like a chicken-and-egg scenario in a process of continual evolution.

The photographs themselves become part of that cycle. Photographs persuade. They have the power to alter perception, effecting large change. Jacob Riis used photographs of New York City's slums to advocate for social reform.⁷ Later, Ansel Adams's photographs of the King and Kern Rivers in Northern California aided the Sierra Club's successful campaign to create King's Canyon National Park.⁸

We are well past the era when photographs fit neatly into the categories inherited from painting—landscape, portrait, or still life. Photography viewers have become more sophisticated along with the medium. The photographers shown here utilise a variety of techniques in the creation of nuanced work. The challenges of conveying place through photographs are complicated, but so are these images—collections of silver, iron, pixels and ink that establish the personal and local histories present in each individual location.

- 1 "Lenape Indians, the Original Philadelphians," NPR.org, 25 July 2008, <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=92914200>.
- 2 Michael Zuckerman, "Philadelphia: A City of 'Firsts' That Feels Little Need to Brag," NewsWorks.org, 14 January 2012, <http://www.newsworks.org/index.php/local/phrasing-philadelphia/32661-philadelphia-a-city-of-firsts-that-feels-little-need-to-brag>.
- 3 Ibid.
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Cast by the Sun Artists (Tyler)

Antony Anderson

Antony Anderson's work reveals the systems that enable contemporary culture. In his colour-separation photographs, Anderson breaks down the CMYK (Cyan, Magenta, Yellow, and black) or RGB (Red, Green, Blue) colour channels to reveal each photograph's make up.

However, only a portion of the image breaks down. Layering three images taken in rapid succession, the colour separations highlight what has changed in each subsequent shot. No one colour is given hierarchy over the others. Instead, they collectively speak to the arbitrariness of a single, definitive moment by showing the images taken right before and right afterwards.

American at Berks references the intersection of two streets one mile east of Tyler School of Art. In his choice of imagery, Anderson represents an experience of Philadelphia that isn't displayed in tourist brochures, but that is just as recognisable for many residents. Advertising competes with graffiti for our attention, while a somewhat tattered American flag flies over a scrap metal recycling facility. The intersection shows Philadelphia's post-industrial legacy as well as the working-class roots that remain a large part of the city's demographics.

Justyna Badach

To create the *Bachelor Portraits* series, Justyna Badach placed advertisements in supermarkets and online to seek out subjects she describes as "men who tend to exist on the margins and are often considered invisible by society". As a woman whose subjects are all male, Badach reverses the stereotype of the male artist and female subject.

Badach considers these portraits to be collaborations, and writes that the images focus on the subjects' "home life—the safe places where they withdraw from the world to think, meditate, and act out their fantasies". She often

displays her description of their interaction alongside the images, emphasising and expanding upon the relationship between photographer and subject. Badach herself tends toward social avoidance; through this project she not only allows an opportunity for introverts to experience human connection, she works to fulfil that same need for herself.

Dimitra Ermeidou

Artists often revisit older images, freeing them from the news cycle to create thought-provoking contrasts with today's events.

So it is in Dimitra Ermeidou's work, which features photographs taken by Farm Security Administration photographers in the 1930s. Photographers such as Dorothea Lange, Walker Evans, and Gordon Parks captured people and places of the American landscape for government and newspaper use, all under the editorial guidance of Roy Stryker.

Rather than discard the negatives he disliked, Stryker rendered them useless by punching a hole in each one. Ermeidou writes, "The black holes of the punched negatives become a metaphor for the violent impact of the Depression on human lives". She continues, "[the] lack of image information addresses the role of censorship and politics in troubled times, questioning photography's documentary function".

Descending black dots against the straight-line horizon suggest a graph. The landscapes themselves illustrate the dust bowl and the role of environmental devastation in the Great Depression. Ermeidou identifies as a "Greek artist-photographer... working in Philadelphia", which calls to mind the international implications of any financial crisis. No matter how you look at them, Ermeidou's images evoke powerful parallels with recent events.

Sam Fritch

Sam Fritch's La Mott Community Garden project traces the connection of people to a particular place; in this case, a garden that has been a focal point of a community for over fifty years. Fritch writes, "Many gardeners are relatives and friends. Some live across the street and some drive 30 minutes to tend to their crops."

Fritch's photographs document the importance of this community gathering space. They convey the dignity and pride of subjects who clearly collaborated on their images. The gardeners hold the tools of the trade—rakes, a watering can—as they strike semi-formal poses flanked by the vegetables of their labour. One flashes a broad smile, supporting Fritch's description of a "warm, healthy, peaceful community". She's posing proudly in her plot; the halo of a straw hat frames her face.

Brad Jamula

Starting with a Google search for "city of philadelphia images" (also the title of the piece), Brad Jamula created a collage of Philadelphia with the first twenty-five results. His amalgamated view shows different perspectives, from sidewalk to aerial. Buildings such as City Hall and the One Liberty Place tower are seen repeatedly from multiple different angles. Historic row houses, Interstate 76, and the industrial shipyard also make an appearance, but most of the buildings are in the seven neighbourhoods that make up Center City.

Philadelphia itself covers more than 120 square miles (310 square kilometres). Center City, which stretches from Spring Garden Street in the north to South Street, and from river to river, takes up just over two square miles. Jamula's work begins to dissect the slick, tourist-brochure-worthy skylines. Anyone who has spent significant time in other parts of the city will notice the omissions—are South Philadelphia, North Philadelphia, or West Philadelphia represented in any of this? Who decides what represents a city?

The digitally removed row house just right of centre seems especially poignant. By incorporating this gap, Jamula suggests the ever-present cycle of tear-down and rebuild. What was here before? What should come next?

Kris Kelley

In Kris Kelley's photograph *Haden Hall*, the titular edifice is isolated in the landscape. A trim lawn belies the condition of the building; even the boards that blockade what once was a doorway are falling apart. We can't make out the sign pasted on them, but the message is easy to surmise: No Trespassing.

To borrow John Szarkowski's appropriately interior metaphor, Kelley's photographs of buildings are both mirrors that reflect the viewer's perspective and windows into the photographer's experiences. They invite viewers to read narrative and psychology onto structures, creating either anthropomorphic architecture or stage setting for historic human drama. Each interpretation will inevitably be influenced by an individual's attitudes towards abandonment, decay, and historic preservation. They also reflect Kelley's own upbringing in rural Maryland, her particular relationship to the surrounding countryside, and her childhood experience of having her father abandon her family.

Sharon Koelblinger

Sharon Koelblinger's work exists at the intersection between photography and sculpture, as she mines photography's inherent ability to flatten space and confuse scale. Koelblinger's subjects both suggest and resist recognisable form. The title *Ever/est* calls to mind the great mountain in the Himalayas. The vaguely triangular subject is somewhat mountain-like, but not nearly enough for the viewer to think it actually is a representation of the world's tallest peak.

From the curl and tear of the paper to the spiral of string hanging from a point just beyond the edge of the frame, there is no real attempt on Koelblinger's part to fool her audience. Rather, the work demonstrates just how evocative a simple shape or title can be.

Martha Madigan

In both *Saguaro Fallen (Day)* and *Saguaro Fallen (Night)*, Martha Madigan combines two different photographic records—digital and cyanotype—to create striking composite prints. In many ways, the digital images are more descriptive, showing colour and volume and making the species more easily identifiable. The cyanotype photographs, however, are more direct—presenting the actual outline of the fallen saguaro. They become aura-like, enveloping, and appearing to radiate outward from the digital image.

The scale of Madigan's prints is important. At six feet high, the size mimics that of these giant cacti of the American Southwest. By merging digital and photograph into a single image, Madigan describes the individual cactus in many different ways. We can imagine that the spikes of the cactus represent the nutrients contained within the deceased cactus, spreading outwards into the surrounding ecosystem.

By displaying the images vertically, Madigan facilitates another important shift. She is visually and symbolically resurrecting the Saguaro cactus. Its imposing scale and presence live on in her prints.

Jille Mandel

Jille Mandel's *Looking at Elberta* manages to be both calming and unsettling at the same time. The four boats are safely anchored, with sails and rigging carefully stored for the next excursion. Subtle tonal shifts create a soothing atmosphere. It is unclear whether the fog that seems to merge with the surrounding hills is coming or going. The water is mostly calm, but dark shadows in the foreground waves hint that it might not stay that way.

Less obvious at first glance is the tilt of the horizon line. It's subtle but there; the balance of the scene seems to tip on the pivot point of the nearest boat. The effect is slightly disorienting. Mandel combines these atypical compositional choices to create an image that is serene and mysterious, yet somewhat ominous.

Julia Mead

Julia Mead's photographs record seemingly minor moments in her daily life and travels—moments that often embrace people and places outside of the mainstream. Working intuitively, she finds the poetic that exists within the everyday.

In *Living with Each Other*, two extra-tall stumps partially obscure the view of a house. Each is topped with a circle of snow, and, together, they support three rows of prayer flags strung between them. Through the title, Mead encourages a metaphoric reading. We may think of the people who live inside the house, but the two stumps seem to be the more obvious subject. The physical relationship between the two—the way the smaller one has a leftward lean that perfectly matches the curve of the stump on the right—also enhances the sense of connection that goes beyond the suspended string of flags.

Rebecca Michaels

Looking east from the Temple University train platform on 11 September 2012, Rebecca Michaels's view includes vacant lots, row homes, and the large brick building of Joseph C. Ferguson Elementary School. The water-tower-topped tan building in the distance houses family-owned Charles Schober furniture company.

By the time Michaels took her final photograph in this series almost eight months later, it had been announced that this school was one of twenty-three public schools that would close that year. The Paseo Verde apartments were nearing completion, obscuring the surrounding neighbourhood.

Depending on whom you ask, this neighbourhood is Kensington, North Philadelphia East, or Temple Town, and it has long been either African-American or Puerto Rican. Paseo Verde appears to be the perfect image of gentrification and displacement in the neighbourhoods near Temple University.

It is, however, the result of collaboration between the local non-profit Asociación de Puertorriqueños en Marcha and a private developer. Almost half of the units rent below market rate to low-income tenants.

The moniker itself nods to the project's LEED Platinum certification. That these neighbourhoods are changing rapidly is undeniable. Beyond that, consensus is complicated. Michaels's photographs of this site raise the question: whose aesthetics and values set the standard, and whose interests are addressed by development?

Haigen Pearson

Much of Haigen Pearson's work focuses on the pervasiveness of popular culture and the allure of advertising. From Michael Jackson dolls to posters of the pope, Pearson's images demonstrate the problematic side of all that persuasion without disguising the elements that made them attractive in the first place.

In *Leaving Returning*, two speedboats heading in opposite directions cut diagonally across an otherwise placid blue expanse in which the watery horizon fades imperceptibly into a cloud-coloured sky. The white wakes of the boats provide a point of tension in an otherwise peaceful image. *Leaving Returning* is an arresting image by itself; when read in the context of Pearson's larger body of work, more subtle themes begin to emerge.

The boats' appearance of being pleasure vessels and their obvious speed are seen from a far distance. It is left to the individual viewer to imagine the scenes taking place on the speedboats. My mind fills in the bikini-clad women and alcoholic beverages that might accompany such a boat in an advertisement. Are boats used to sell bikinis, or is it the other way around? These questions are left up to the viewer as Pearson takes the long view of the scene.

Stephanie Lynn Rogers

Stephanie Lynn Rogers's work often uses scale shifts to comment on contrasts between natural organisms and the human-built environment. Here, she focuses her lens on one of the murals that Philadelphia is famous for.

The City of Philadelphia started the Mural Arts Program (MAP) in 1984 to combat graffiti. It has created more than three thousand murals throughout the city and has inspired home and business owners to create others. Like all of the murals around the city, this one brightened

its post-industrial surroundings when it was fresh. Like most of the murals in Philadelphia, this one is starting to fade and peel; MAP focuses more on the creation of new works than the maintenance of existing art.

The Seussian scene is punctured by moss and plants that have anchored themselves in the wall's crevices, beginning the process of turning this image of the landscape back into a landscape itself.

Harrison Walker

Harrison Walker often combines multiple images into one. He deftly manipulates both digital negatives and hand-mixed photo emulsions to create prints that suggest open-ended narratives and create an invitation for the viewer to complete the story.

The Gathering gives us the barest suggestions of place—reflections reference a shoreline, the line of marks that forms a horizon line suggests the remnants of a pier. Look closer, though, and the way the image was made starts to reveal itself. From the way the brushed emulsion and the reflections echo each other to the reappearance of the same figure elsewhere in the photograph, sustained looking changes the reading from a simple beach scene to a panorama that cuts across time as well as place.

Mark Wincov

Mark Wincov's work is concerned with the acts of looking and of remembering much more so than the people who (perhaps unwittingly) occupy his frames. In some of his images, mobile phones and iPads mediate the act of looking, just as they do in our everyday lives. Susan Sontag wrote that "to photograph is to convey importance". As mobile phones have made photography cheaper and more readily available than Sontag could have ever imagined, it seems like the adage has been twisted: anything at all important *must* be photographed. In *Denon, Room 6*, the *Mona Lisa* is out of focus in the background, as Wincov focuses on the iPad screen of a woman photographing the image. The irony is that the woman is no more focused on the painting itself than Wincov is.

The three men in *The Island* turn their backs to the camera, obscuring both their faces and the landscape at which they gaze. Wincov doesn't need Michelangelo Pistoletto's mirrored substrates to turn the viewers' focus back onto themselves—the refutation of both portrait and landscape as we know them does the same thing.

Tamsen Wojtanowski

Tamsen Wojtanowski's photographs demonstrate the textures of her subjects' psychological presence as much as their physical surface. What we see is evocative; what we don't see is filled in by the imagination, as the viewer's own memory adds image to the impenetrably black areas.

An empty turtle shell, a long-discarded snakeskin, and a plucked chicken serve as *memento mori*. Blurred leaves were made so by the wind, perhaps, but they also suggest another presence, as if someone has just brushed by and the plants are still quivering. The cover of a geometry book draws attention to the geometry present in each photograph. The individual images are simple; meanings accumulate and complicate when they are seen together.

Byron Wolfe

Byron Wolfe has built his reputation through re-photographic surveys of the American West (combining his work and historic images). Like that work, *Fourteen Plum Years* describes humans' changing relationship to the environment. Unlike that work, all the photos here are Wolfe's own, and the connections being explored are personal.

Wendell Berry's writing has impacted Wolfe's thinking about environment. Wolfe cites Berry's essay "The Conservation of Nature and the Preservation of Humanity": "When we include ourselves as parts of belongings of the world we are trying to preserve, then obviously we can no longer think of the world as 'the environment'—something out there around us. We can see that our relation to the world surpasses mere connection and verges on identity."

Wolfe includes his own fingers in the second image, but, more significantly, his neatly printed handwriting connects his hand to all of the images. The growth of his son is connected to that of the plum tree as the boy checks the depth of the hole for the sapling, and later, tree and boy seem to merge in a window reflection. Ripening fruit and a nod to the solstices testify to the passage of time.



Antony Anderson

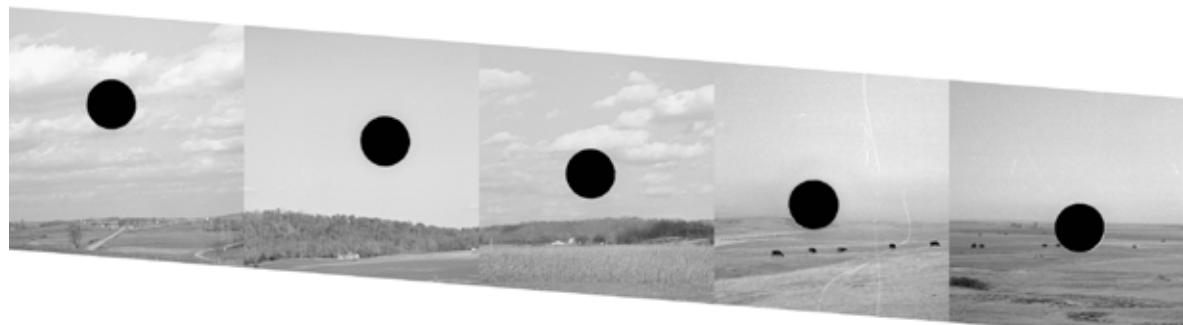


Antony Anderson
American at Berks 2014, digital pigment print, 43.2 x 35.6cm

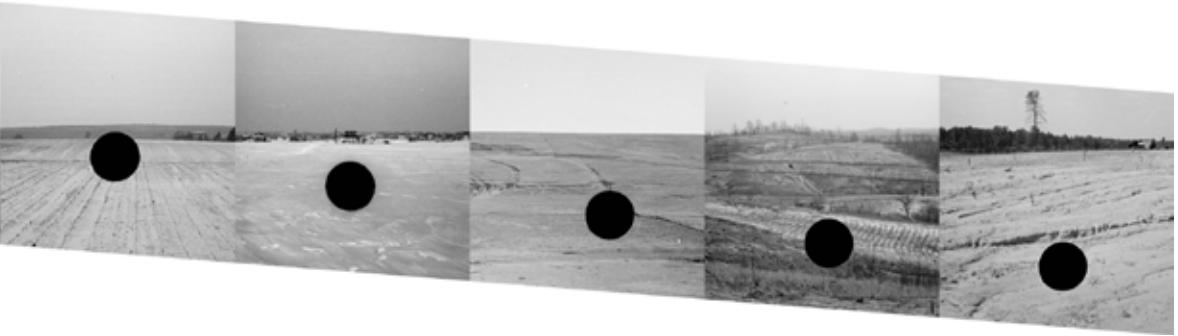


Justyna Badach
Nick 2009, digital pigment print, 38.7 x 50.8cm

Justyna Badach



Dimitra Ermeidou



Dimitra Ermeidou

Landscape of Recession (from the *Stryker Bullet* series) 2011, digital pigment print, 61 x 332.7cm



Sam Fritch

From the La Mott Community Garden Project 2015, digital pigment print, 27.9 x 35.6cm

Sam Fritch



Brad Jamula
City of Philadelphia Images (digital collage of segments of 25 images taken from a Google search for "city of Philadelphia images") 2015, digital pigment print, 61 x 137.2cm



Brad Jamula

Kris Kelley



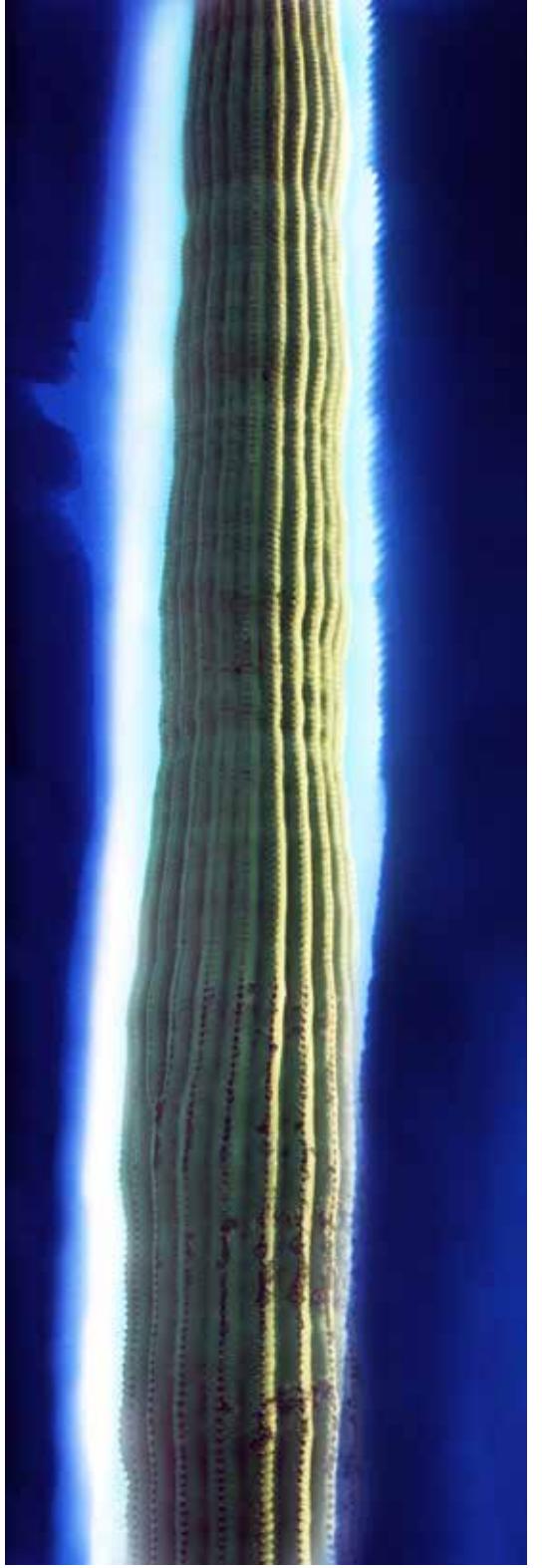
Kris Kelley
Haden Hall 2014, digital pigment print, 33 x 48.3cm



Sharon Koelblinger
Ever/est 2013, digital pigment print, 55.9 x 38.1cm

Sharon Koelblinger

Martha Madigan



Martha Madigan
Saguaro Fallen (Night) (from the Sonoran Desert series) 2015,
solar photogram/archival inkjet, 60.96 x 182.88cm



Jille Mandel
Looking at Elberta 2014, digital pigment print, 61 x 91.4cm

Jille Mandel

Julia Mead



Julia Mead
Living with Each Other 2014, digital pigment print, 55.9 x 83.8cm



Rebecca Michaels
39°58'55" N 75°8'58" W 2012–13, digital pigment print, 43.2 x 129.5cm



Rebecca Michaels

Haigen Pearson



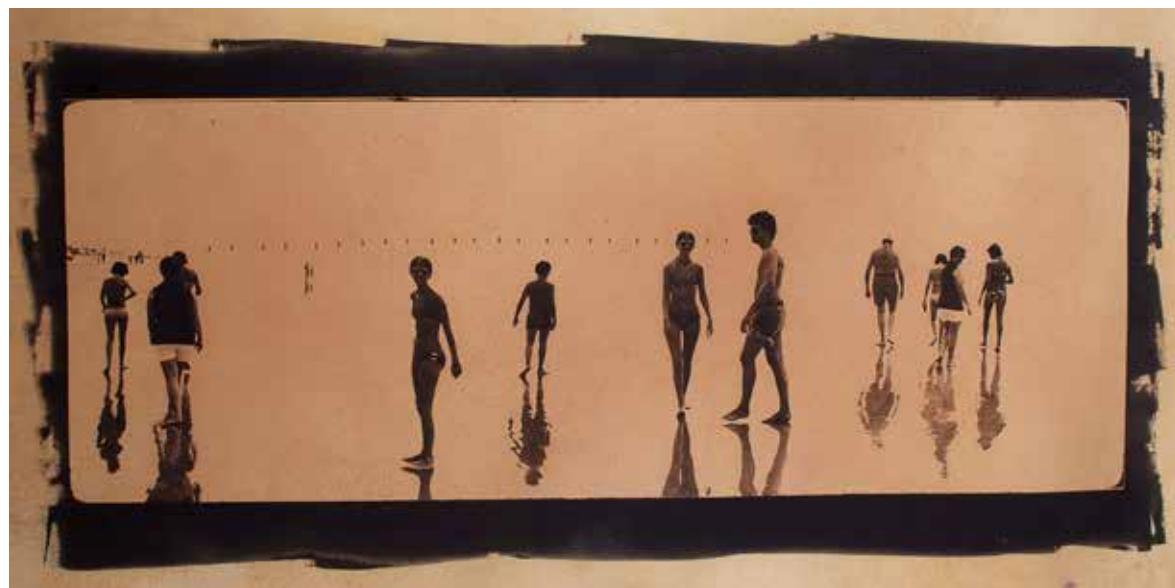
Haigen Pearson
Leaving Returning 2014, digital pigment print, 40.6 x 50.8cm



Stephanie Lynn Rogers
Mural by the Manayunk Canal 2014, digital pigment print, 38.1 x 57.2cm

Stephanie Lynn Rogers

Harrison Walker



Harrison Walker
The Gathering 2013, cyanotype print toned with tannic acid, 49.5 x 99.1cm



Mark Winicov
The Island 2013, digital pigment print, 40.6 x 58.4cm

Mark Winicov



Tamsen Wojtanowski
Soma 2013, digital pigment print, 61 x 61cm

Tamsen Wojtanowski



Byron Wolfe



Fourteen Plum Years 1999–2013 (multiple titles and dates),
digital pigment print, 43.2 x 251.5cm

From left to right:

First Day: Planting a Tree at Our New Home, July, 1999

From Our Favorite Tree (The Weeping Santa Rosa), July 3, 2002

While Pruning the Plum Tree, I Pause To Watch You through the Window, November 30, 2002

Shortest Day: At Noon on the Solstice through the Eyes of the Weeping Santa Rosa Plum, December 21, 2002

Sunset at the Plum Tree, May 14, 2003

Longest Day: Fallen Plums from Another Broken Bough, June 21, 2003

Father's Day and the Final Picture before Moving Away from Our First Home, June 16, 2013

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151 IN THE SUN

JUST BY THE SU