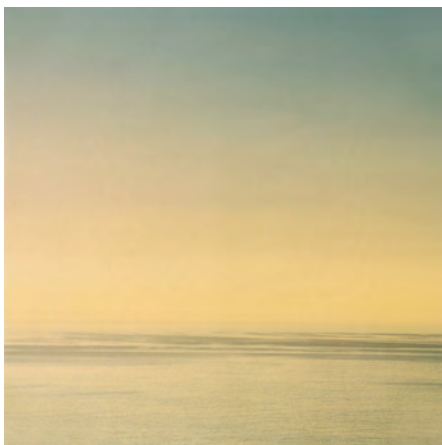
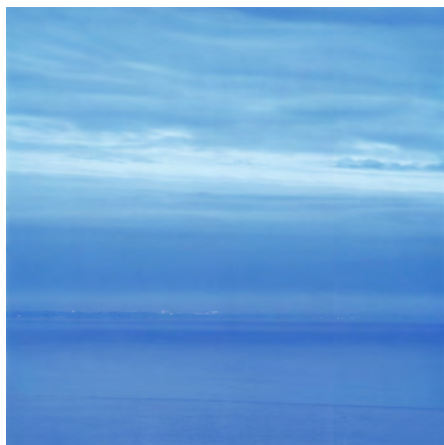
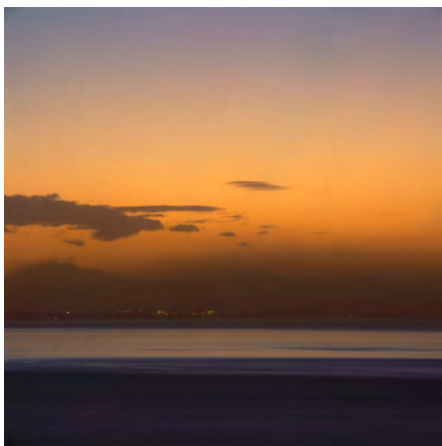
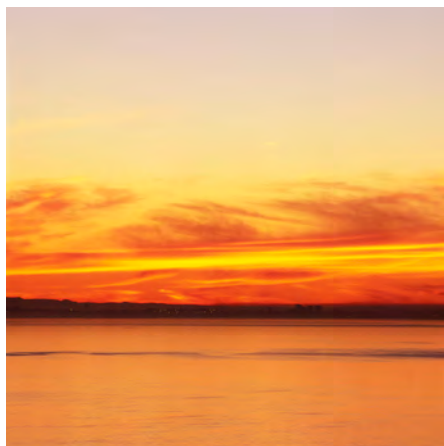


# Exposing Time

Capturing Change with Photography

March 6 to June 27, 2010



Doris and John Norton Gallery for the  
Center for Creative Photography  
Phoenix Art Museum

# Exposing Time

## Capturing Change with Photography

Doris and John Norton Gallery for the Center for Creative Photography, Phoenix Art Museum

Of all art media, photography is the most intrinsically bound to the concept of time. Most photographic images are the result of a camera whose shutter is open for a precise duration, in a particular place, at a particular moment. Though the photographic exposure is fleeting, the resulting picture reflects a concrete period of elapsed time. From the era of the medium's invention, photographers have experimented with what the camera could do to sculpt our understanding of temporal reality.

In the late nineteenth century, Eadweard Muybridge used multiple cameras to create a series of images, each short increments apart, which broke a rapidly unfolding action into its constituent parts. Originally designed to settle a bet about whether all of a horse's legs left the ground when running, Muybridge's project eventually explored all kinds of human and animal motions, taking advantage of photography's ability to capture sequential moments. Beginning in the 1930s, Harold Edgerton—an electrical engineer at Massachusetts Institute of Technology—employed stroboscopic flashes to arrest objects in motion. He was able to photograph things the eye could not perceive, such as a drop of milk splashing up from a hard surface, or a bullet slicing through a playing card.

Japanese photographer Hiroshi Sugimoto started a project in the 1970s photographing an entire motion picture in a single frame. Many people are familiar with the blur created by a moving figure during a long exposure. Sugimoto pushes this to an extreme. A feature film captured with a two-hour exposure produces a glowing white movie screen, illuminating the theater architecture. Sugimoto's resulting photographs give no obvious indication of the extended time they record, but when the conceptual framework is known, the images become rich with meaning. More recently, photographers Mark Klett and Byron Wolfe used re-photography to embed historical photographs of the Grand Canyon within contemporary images of the same precise location. In so doing, they call attention to societal changes that have occurred between the making of the photographs.

Photography is uniquely suited to documenting change that happens over such a long period of time it barely registers in the mind. Many photographers have exploited this quality by returning to the same subject—either a person, an exact view, or a general place—to capture change that has elapsed over months, years, or decades. *Exposing Time* explores a variety of approaches—and the dramatically different results—photographers have brought to the project of documenting change.

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“... photography is the best medium  
for visualizing changing landforms.  
When made properly, photographs allow  
us to see through time.”

—Mark Klett, 2003



## OVER THREE DECADES

Nicholas Nixon, *The Brown Sisters*. Collection of John Dubinsky and Yvette Drury Dubinsky

© Nicholas Nixon.

New Canaan, CT, 1975

Hartford, CT, 1976

East Greenwich, R.I., 1980

Cambridge, MA, 1989

Eastham, MA, 2000

Truro, MA, 2009

In 1974, inspired by annual holiday snapshots of his wife, Bebe, and her three siblings as children, Nicholas Nixon took a portrait of the four women. Unsatisfied with the results, he tried the next year, photographing Heather (age 23), Mimi (15), Bebe (25), and Laurie (21) with his 8 x 10 camera, creating a black-and-white print. The next year, Nixon photographed the women on the event of Laurie's college graduation, and when he also liked that portrait, he proposed that the sisters gather annually to continue the sequence of group portraits. Each year he makes a dozen or more negatives, always with the sisters arranged in the same order, and chooses only one to represent that year. Some of the documented changes are incidental: hair grows long or is cut short, clothing shifts to match trends, weight is gained and lost. Some of the changes, though superficial, seem telling—the pattern of wrinkles that inevitably appear on each woman's face record a lifetime of expressions: expansive smiles, furrowed brows, and shocked dismay. There are particularly revealing elements: the posture and gestures of each woman, which in life are so transient, speak forever of a particular moment. The body language among the women is especially powerful. It suggests complicated, evolving sibling relationships that—so far—span nearly thirty-five years.



## THE FORGOTTEN ONES

Milton Rogovin, *Lower West Side Triptychs*, 1973.

Collection Center for Creative Photography, The University of Arizona.

Gift of Dr. and Mrs. John Knaus

© 1952–2002 The Rogovin Collection/Courtesy

Center for Creative Photography, The University of Arizona Foundation.

Milton Rogovin's approach to portrait photography is documentary in nature, designed to illuminate the lives of those who lived in the Lower West Side neighborhood of Buffalo, New York. After refusing to testify before the House Un-American Activities Committee in 1952, Rogovin—optometrist, political activist, and photographer—was labeled "Buffalo's Number One Communist." With his political activities squelched, he saw photography as a way to communicate his deep desire for a more just and equal society. In 1972, he began a project motivated by his acute interest in exploring the lives and conditions of Lower West Side residents, many of whom were disadvantaged minorities, or unemployed, or living with alcoholism or drug abuse, people Rogovin referred to as "the forgotten ones." He often photographed people within their environmental contexts, showing peeling paint, graffiti, and littered streets, because he felt these conditions were part of a cycle in his subjects' lives. The project gained added depth in the early 1980s, when Rogovin returned to the Lower West Side to rephotograph his subjects, at his wife's suggestion. He wrote:

Finding the individuals who I had previously photographed was no easy matter. It had been my policy during the earlier period not to ask anyone their name or address. . . . I took a box of photographs to the corner where most of the activity took place—people would gather around me and I would show them photographs, one at a time. . . . Gradually, over a period of about sixteen months, I managed to find over one hundred individuals and families whose photographs I had taken during the 1970s.

Rogovin paired the 1970s and 1980s photographs, and when he returned to the area again in the 1990s and in the early 2000s, he then created triptychs and quartets. These groupings, with ten-year intervals between images, compress the passing time, distilling lives into a few views. Each picture updates the status, health, family, or attitude of the subjects, conveying monumental change from one frame to the next. By compressing thirty years into four images, Rogovin's photographs also allude to the inevitable changes of birth, aging, and death that all people—regardless of their social conditions or specific neighborhood—experience.



# INTERVALS

Milton Rogovin, *Lower West Side Triptychs*, 1985 and 1992.

Gifts of Dr. and Mrs. John Knaus

©1952–2002 The Rogovin Collection/

Courtesy Center for Creative Photography,

The University of Arizona Foundation.



## AFTERMATH

Franke Gohlke, *Aftermath: The Wichita Falls, Tornado*. 1600 Block Aldrich Avenue, Looking East, April 14, 1979/June 1980 © Frank Gohlke.



Frank Gohlke's before and after pictures made in his hometown of Wichita Falls, Texas, following the destructive 1979 tornado, and at Mount St. Helen's, following the 1980 eruption, defy expectations. Gohlke first chronicled destruction, and then repair—in one case, human, in another, environmental. In popular visual culture there is an expectation that a "before" picture will represent the ongoing status of a thing, and that the "after" will represent the subject following a visible change, such as snapshots demonstrating dramatic weight loss, or "Glamour Shots" portraits capturing someone who has been transformed by makeup and hair styling. When an act of nature creates devastation, often there is no image of the identical scene prior to the event. Instead we rely on our imaginations to supply the normal precedent to the view (often conveyed to us through news coverage) of a ravaged home, a flooded town, or a burned forest. Gohlke returned to Wichita Falls a year after he depicted the mangled remains, and the comparative views show a physical environment that appears to have healed. The images offer a scene of normalcy and hint at what we might have seen if there had been an earlier photo, one that preceded the current "before." Just as the rebuilding of Wichita Falls suggests human resiliency, Gohlke's sequential pictures of Mount St. Helens suggest the power inherent in natural events. Gohlke explained that images of natural disasters cause us to "feel the magnitude of our own impotence in the face of the planet's ordinary processes." His images of the volcano, one, two, and ten years after the eruption, however, suggest that there is a resiliency to the land—even though it may be engaged on a much longer time scale—that is worth observing, as well.



Franke Gohlke, *Aftermath: The Wichita Falls, Tornado*. 4503 McNeil Street, Looking North, April 14, 1979/June 1980 © Frank Gohlke.

Many people have lived through suburban development, but the change is difficult to envision. Aspects of the process—demolition, construction, and a shifting demographic—happen so slowly, in such small increments, and across such a vast area that it is hard to track. And then, after years of these slow and dispersed changes, suddenly a place seems totally transformed. Picturing this evolution and charting the various courses that take place was Andrew Phelps's project in Higley, Arizona, in its last three years, before the town was absorbed into the greater Phoenix suburbs. Phelps was born and grew up in Mesa, Arizona, and visited his grandparents in Higley as a child. Higley was primarily an agricultural community of citrus groves and alfalfa fields. In 1991, Phelps moved to in Salzburg, Austria, with his wife and small children. He recorded the final stages of Higley's transformation during visits back to the state beginning in 2006. Whether it was his childhood familiarity with Higley, or the great physical and cultural distance he currently has from his subject, or perhaps a combination of the two, these photographs successfully evoke—without the use of comparative images of precise locations—what suburban development looks like. The documented change is decidedly nonlinear, involves people and places, and conveys a sense of loss without being overtly judgmental or critical.



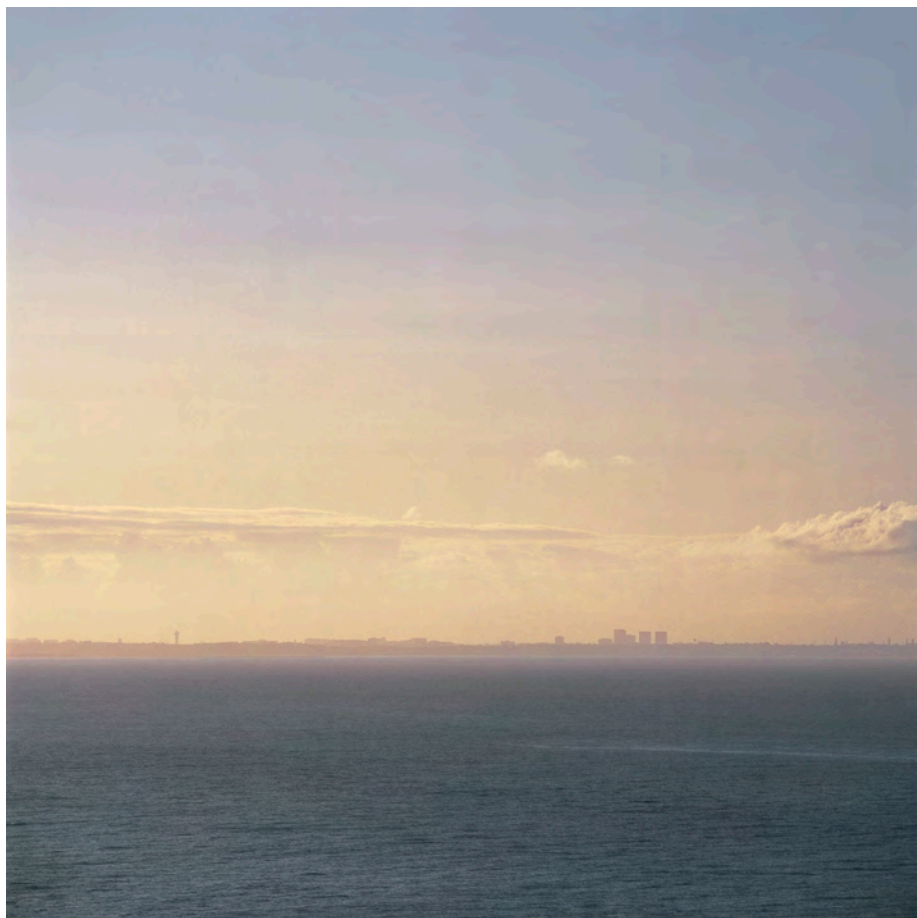
Andrew Phelps, *Roping Reynosos, Chihuahua Festival*, 2007  
© Andrew Phelps.



## A SENSE OF LOSS

Andrew Phelps, *Billboard Homes*, 2006 © Andrew Phelps.





## **SAME TIME**

Robert Weingarten, 6:30 #30 / April 2, 2003

© Robert Weingarten.



## SAME PLACE

Robert Weingarten, 6:30 #129/December 11, 2003

© Robert Weingarten.



Robert Weingarten embarked on a landscape project on New Year's Day in 2003 that collapses intervening days, exposing an unexpected range of color. Weingarten's endeavor depended on strict parameters: the subject would be sea, cityscape, and sky photographed from outside his Malibu bedroom, looking southeast over Santa Monica Bay. The photographer would use a 2 1/4-inch square format camera fitted with a 350mm lens and employing a slow-speed, fine-resolution, color-saturated transparency film. The focus was set to infinity with an aperture of f/22; an exposure would be made at 6:30 a.m. each morning he was home. The only variables that remained were the effects of light, weather, and the shutter speed, which would adjust to capture the available light. Weingarten's use of 6:30 a.m. as the time of exposure eliminates the other hours of the day, repeating that morning scene like the reassuringly steady beat of a bass drum. The colors, however, are anything but steady. The shifts from one day to the next are dramatic, juxtaposing bright blues with lemony yellows and streaks of orange and red with lavender skies and silvery water. Despite the changes, the pattern suggests a cycle, refuting a linear perception of time. Here, time is exposed as a human invention that seems to pale in importance to the regular turning of the planet, first away from, and then toward the sun, providing us with another sunrise.

Rebecca Senf, PhD

Norton Family Curator of Photography



Milton Rogovin, *Lower West Side Triptychs*, 1973.  
 Gift from the collection of Robert and Kathi Stein  
 ©1952–2002 The Rogovin Collection/  
 Courtesy Center for Creative Photography,  
 The University of Arizona Foundation.

Milton Rogovin, *Lower West Side Triptychs*,  
 1985 and 1992.  
 On loan courtesy of The Rogovin Collection, LLC  
 ©1952–2002 The Rogovin Collection/  
 Courtesy Center for Creative Photography,  
 The University of Arizona Foundation.



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## LECTURE

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### Exposing Time: A Photographer Documents a Changing World

Wednesday, April 21, 7 p.m.

Environmental photojournalist Gary Braasch shows how time exposures and repeat and sequential images can evoke motion and change. He focuses on documenting natural history and climate change for international magazines, exhibitions, and books.

Sponsored by the Museum's In Focus.

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## FILMS

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### Double Feature: Milton Rogovin

Wednesday, May 26, 7 p.m.

#### Picture Man: The Poetry of Photographer Milton Rogovin

Rogovin determined that he had more to say about the lives of the people in his photographs, and wrote poems about some of his most meaningful images. These photo/poems were woven into this film. 20 minutes.

#### The Rich Have Their Own Photographers

In 1957, Milton Rogovin was declared "Buffalo's Number One Communist" by the *Buffalo News*, and his life was turned upside-down. Effectively, his political voice was silenced as society shunned him and his friends disappeared. Refusing to be silenced, he found a new political voice—a camera. 60 minutes.

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**All programs** included with Museum general admission unless otherwise noted.

Always free for Museum Members.

For information on these programs, please visit [phxart.org](http://phxart.org).

# A LANDMARK PHOTOGRAPHY PARTNERSHIP

In 2006, Phoenix Art Museum and the Center for Creative Photography at the University of Arizona in Tucson inaugurated a highly innovative and unprecedented collaboration to bring the finest in photography to Phoenix Art Museum visitors. It established a vibrant new photography exhibition program at the Museum, while bringing the Center's world-renowned collections to new and larger audiences.

The Center for Creative Photography is one of the world's largest repositories of materials chronicling photography. Founded in 1975, it now houses 3.8 million archival items and 80,000 fine prints by photographers including Ansel Adams, Edward Weston, Harry Callahan, Aaron Siskind, Frederick Sommer, W. Eugene Smith, Louise Dahl-Wolfe, and Garry Winogrand.

One of the nation's leading art museums, Phoenix Art Museum presents international exhibitions of the world's greatest art and features a collection that spans the centuries and the globe—American, Asian, contemporary, European, Latin American, and Western American art, and fashion design. Not to be missed are the Thorne Miniature Rooms, the interactive family gallery PhxArtKids, great shopping and dining, and a variety of public events.

Now, through the combined efforts of these two organizations, Phoenix Art Museum visitors will experience unparalleled excellence in the field of photography in the Museum's Doris and John Norton Gallery for the Center for Creative Photography.

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www.creativephotography.org

Phoenix Art Museum

CENTER FOR CREATIVE PHOTOGRAPHY

## COVER

Robert Weingarten, 6:30 am, 2003 © Robert Weingarten.

#04/January 5

#18/February 13

#05/January 7

#28/March 26

Support provided by Lowry Hill. Promotional support provided by Tempe Camera. Additional funds for gallery guide from In Focus: A Photography Support Organization of Phoenix Art Museum.