

snap shots

Volume 18 Number 3

November 2012

Jim Dow, Storyteller through Photography Sunday, November 4th, Americal Center, Wakefield, MA

Jim Dow's interest in places where people enact their everyday rituals, from the barbershop to the baseball park, has guided the path of his photographic career. He is concerned with capturing "human ingenuity and spirit" in endangered regional traditions—a barbershop with a heavy patina of town life covering the walls, the opulent time capsule of an old private New York club, the densely packed display of smoking pipes in an English tobacconist shop—artifacts of a vanishing era.

An early influence was Walker Evans's seminal book *American Photographs* (1938). Dow recalls the

Dow earned a B.F.A. and an M.F.A. in graphic design and photography from the Rhode Island School of Design in 1965 and 1968 respectively. He has taught photography at Harvard, Tufts University, and the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and his work has been widely exhibited. Among his series is *Corner Shops of Britain* (1995), featuring facades of small family-run businesses: vitrine-like shop windows showcase goods from candy jars to jellied eels. Another series, *Time Passing* (1984-2004), captures North Dakota folk art such as rural road signage, hand-painted billboards, and ornate gravestones.



Fenway Park Triptych, Jim Dow, 1982

appeal of Evans's "razor sharp, infinitely detailed, small images of town architecture and people. What stood out was a palpable feeling of loss...pictures that seemingly read like paragraphs, even chapters in one long, complex, rich narrative." After graduate school, Dow had the opportunity to work with Evans, and he printed his mentor's photographs for a 1972 Museum of Modern Art retrospective.

"I used to drive around the country looking out the car window until I saw something that I wanted to photograph," says Dow. "Nowadays the search for subjects is far more like Hollywood location scouting, involving a laptop, Google, websites like 'The Great LA Taco Hunt,' or 'Yelp/Portland/taco trucks,' a mobile phone and a ring-bound atlas with color-coded Post-its of information. Maps aside, none of these methods of picture hunting existed when I began."

Dow first gained attention for his panoramic triptychs of baseball stadiums, a project that began with an image he made of Veteran's Stadium in Philadelphia in 1980. Using an 8" x 10" camera, he has documented more than two hundred major and minor league parks in the United States and Canada. Dow says, "While I will use film until I don't, meaning I'll stop photographing at that point, I now scan everything I shoot and save it in multiple hard drives."

The talk itself will be the intersection of photographing and archiving, specifically using his current projects as examples of how these ideas function. He says, "It almost seems poetic that at the end of my career I am archiving the archive and, perhaps, when I'm through, the collection will take on a digital half-life of its own and be of use to someone else in ways I cannot even imagine at this juncture."

Newly Discovered Dag Identified as Possible Portrait of Emily Dickinson

Testing provides indication of authenticity

Until very recently, only one photograph of poet Emily Dickinson, an 1847 Daguerreotype of the poet at sixteen taken at Mount Holyoke Seminary, was known to exist. The discovery of a possible second is of great interest to literary scholars and photo historians. The later image, taken about twelve years after the older one, shows Dickinson with



Cropped and re-touched version of 1847 dag, Wikimedia.org

her friend Kate Scott Turner.

The daguerreotype was purchased by a collector who prefers to remain anonymous and was held for over ten years before being given to Amherst College in 2007. After considerable research, which included sophisticated com-



1859 image Wikimedia.org

parisons of the known and new images, scholars have concluded that the latter is, in fact, a rare image of the elusive poet. Among the tests performed were high-resolution comparisons of digital images and ophthalmological comparisons of the eyes and features in the two daguerreotypes. According to Michael Kell, head of the archives and special collections, "In Photoshop, it's a crazy-perfect fit."

Though many researchers agree that the image is indeed Dickinson, some still express doubts. There are continuing attempts to prove it beyond all question, and one effort is to try to match the dress in the photo with fabric samples of Dickinson's clothing.

Professor Martha Nell Smith of the University of Maryland, said to be instrumental in bringing this image before the public, stated, "Emily Dickinson is an icon in American literary history, but our image of her has been frozen. This powerfully changes our image of Dickinson."

Thanks for Participating in PHSNE Survey

We would like to thank the 110 respondents who participated in the September online survey. We sent the survey to 317 e-mail addresses we had on file, with a response rate of 35%. This rate shows that we have an involved membership who care about the organization. The responses are being reviewed for presentation to the Board and sharing with members in the near future.

Participants were entered into a drawing for eight \$25 gift cards. The winners were James Cunningham, Donald T. DiNaro, Jack Judson, Lance Kisby, Robert Kulinski, Dr. Janet C. Moyer, Gunter Mueller, John Shick, Robert Sieberg, Sam Swartz, Christine Thompson, and Basil Yankopoulos.

Several participants had trouble obtaining confirmation of a completed submission. We apologize for the inconvenience, but your efforts did count! The server captured the answers you provided in almost all cases. After investigation, we only found one "partial" survey that was substantially incomplete.

With a quick look, one result that stands out is the support that PHSNE's printed publications and face-to-face events have in this Web age. The top 3 most valuable benefits of membership selected were, in high to low order: *The Journal* (4.6 on a scale of 1 to 5), *snap shots* (4.3), and *Photographica* (4.1).

Again, thanks for participating!

PHSNE Membership

PHSNE membership is \$15 for students, \$35 for individuals and institutions, \$40 for a family, and \$45 for foreign membership. Join or renew online at phsne.org/paypal or send a check in U.S. dollars, drawn on a U.S. bank or dollar denominated international money order.

Members should check the expiration date on the *snap shots* mailing label before sending in dues.

Send payments, changes of address, and other contact information, to Joe Walters Jr, PHSNE Membership Chair, P.O. Box 650189, West Newton, MA 02465. (Call: 617-826-9294; email: membership@phsne.org; or use the Web form at phsne.org/contacts).

snap shots, edited by Beverly Regelman, is published by the Photographic Historical Society of New England, Inc., P.O. Box 650189, West Newton, MA 02465-0189. Articles and exhibition/book reviews are always welcome. Send to snapshots@phsne.org. Authors retain copyright to their original articles; however upon written application to the *snap shots* editor, PHSNE may grant non-profit societies with similar aims and interests a one-time right to reproduce a *snap shots* article as long as the author and source are credited and a complimentary copy of the publication is sent to the PHSNE mailbox.

Two for One at Portland Museum of Art: Photographic Exhibit Accompanies Winslow Homer Paintings

Celebrating the opening of the restored Winslow Homer Studio in Scarborough, ME, the Portland Museum of Art will showcase the exhibition *Weatherbeaten: Winslow Homer and Maine*. Comprised of 35 major oils and watercolors painted during Homer's tenure in the Studio, the exhibition will introduce new perspectives on Homer's life and work.

The Museum will also present *Between Past and Present: Historic Photographic Processes and the Winslow Homer Studio*, an exhibition of contemporary photography made with a variety of historic processes available during Homer's lifetime.

From tintypes to platinum prints, cyanotypes to gum bichromate prints, these historical processes in the hands of today's photographers simultaneously evoke the past and capture the present. The Museum has commissioned a group of photographers for this project including Abelardo Morell (camera obscura), Keliy Anderson-Staley (wet-plate collodion), Brenton Hamilton (cyanotype and gum bichromate), Tillman Crane (platinum prints), and Alan Vlach (salted paper prints). Images of the Homer Studio will include architectural studies, views of the landscape, interior scenes, and even still-life subjects of the few objects that survive from Homer's day.

Weatherbeaten runs through December 30, 2012, and *Photographic Processes* through January 20, 2013. For additional information, including the Museum's address, hours, and directions, visit the website portlandmuseumofart.org.



Alan Vlach, *The South Window*

Rare Curtis Volumes Sold at Auction

On October 4th, Swann Auction House of New York City sold a complete set of Edward Curtis' book *The North American Indian* containing 772 photogravures on Japanese tissue, 111 signed plates, and 20 extra text volumes with an additional 1,505 photogravures, 4 maps, and 2 diagrams. The \$1.44 million dollar selling price set a record for any single lot in Swann's 70 year history.

It is not, however, the highest price ever paid for this set. That distinction goes to the \$2.88 million sale at Christies of New York on April 10th. We don't know what factors account for the difference in price.

Wellesley Exhibit Celebrates 40 Years of Collecting Photography

With today's plethora of outstanding photography exhibits, it's hard to realize that at one time there was a debate over whether photography qualified as "art." A *Boston.com* press release labels the 1970's as "a pivotal decade for photography" with "landmark shows" in which "the price for photographs exploded." It adds that "One sign of this growing prestige was that an institution like Wellesley College, with a long history of excellence in teaching art history and an enviable permanent collection at its art museum, started collecting photographs."



Marion Post Wolcotts, 1941
Winter Visitors, Sarasota Beach, FL

A Generous Medium: Photography at Wellesley 1972-2012 features over 130 photographs that tell the history of photography. Included is one of the oldest images from Fox Talbot's *Oriel Window at Lacock Abbey* as well as photographs by Ansel Adams, Diane Arbus, Eugene Atget, Walker Evans, Abelardo Morell, Edward Weston, and many others.

The exhibit can be seen at the Davis Museum at Wellesley College, through December 12th.

PHSNE Member Reviews

Two PHSNE members previewed the Wellesley exhibit and gave it rave reviews. They call it a "must-see" exhibit for members in the New England area. Admission and parking are free. Details about the museum and exhibit can be found at davismuseum.wellesley.edu.

If you're in the Portland area, the Homer Winslow exhibit also got thumbs up reviews from PHSNE members. There are several related photographic displays and artifacts throughout the museum; be sure to find all of them.

Photographica 78 Update

Show Manager and PHSNE President John Dockery reports that the 79th Photographica Show that took place in September was highly successful, and the auction on Saturday evening after the show closed was considered to be the best PHSNE has ever had. The Dollar Tables were full throughout the show and brought in a lot of revenue for the organization.

With 80 tables, the show was totally sold out. PHSNE added eight new members who either joined or rejoined. Kudos to the volunteers who manned the Dollar Table. There were several new folks, and they were superb.

Photographica 78 will be held on April 13th and 14th, 2013. We hope to see you there.

George Eastman House announces Dr. Bruce Barnes as the new director

*Barnes is president and founder of
American Decorative Art 1900 Foundation,
with experience as a business leader and investor*

George Eastman House International Museum of Photography and Film announced the appointment of Dr. Bruce Barnes as the Ron and Donna Fielding Director. Barnes begins his role as eighth director of the museum—the world’s oldest museum of photography and one of the largest motion-picture archives—in October 2012.



"I am honored to be selected to serve as the next director of George Eastman House," said Barnes. "The range of its activities and opportunities is exhilarating. . . Having devoted most of the last seven years to collaborating with major museums across the country and furthering art scholarship, I am eager to apply my strategic and management skills to leading George Eastman House. My background in innovative online education will be invaluable to the creation of a virtual museum that will provide global access to its superb collections. "

See the full press release at eastmanhouse.org/tools/pressroom/view.php?title=new-director-2012 for additional biographical information.

PHSNE Meetings

Meetings are usually held on the first Sunday of each month, September to June, at 1:30 p.m. at the Americal Center, 467 Main St., Wakefield, MA, preceded by a mini trade fair at 12:30 and an open meeting of the PHSNE Board at 11:00 a.m.

Upcoming meetings:

December 2—Show and Tell—Members present their favorite cameras; holiday refreshments

Driving directions to Americal Center:

I-95 to exit 39, North Ave. toward Reading/Wakefield (right turn on North from the south; left turn from the north). Drive approximately 1.5 miles, then turn left at Main St. Destination is on the left: 467 Main St., Wakefield, MA 01880.

Parking available next door at the school, behind the building, and on Main St.

Public transportation:

The Wakefield station of the Haverhill rail line is within 1/2 mile of the Center, and a bus line stops in front of the building. Details are available at mbta.com.

PHSNE Online

PHSNE’s Web site is online at phsne.org. George Champine is the Webmaster.

Join the PHSNE Forum online discussion moderated by Joe Walters; sign up and log in at phsne.org/forum. For an archive of back issues of *snap shots* and meeting presentations, visit phsne.org/archive.

Address Service
Requested
FIRST CLASS MAIL

Photographic Historical Society of New England
Next Meeting: Sunday, November 4th
Americal Center, 1:30 P.M.
Jim Dow, Storyteller through Photography



West Newton, MA 02465-0189
P.O. Box 650189

PHSNE
phsne.org
**snap
shots**