

RISD MUSEUM

Presence Through Process, January 15, 2010-June 20, 2010

The photographs in this exhibition evoke bodily presence, either overtly or abstractly, through a range of technical and conceptual processes. While photography often strives for visual objectivity, these artists emphasize personal perception. Suggestive rather than directive, the images demonstrate the fluidity of seeing and being seen.

As a group, the works on view survey recent photographic history, from artists who register experience directly to those who stage images for the camera in order to call attention more self-consciously to social conventions. Every choice made by the artist contributes to the desired interpretation of the subject, from the type of camera, film, or digital file, to the framing or staging of the image, to its exposure, focus, printing technique, and paper. Using these tools, the photographers presented here explore the political, psychological, spiritual, and perceptual body and make evident the limitless fascination the human form holds for the photographic practitioner and viewer alike.

The Museum would like to thank Isaac Wingfield, RISD Graduate Student in Photography and Art History Fellow in the Museum, and Mazie Harris, Brown University Graduate Student in Art History and Museum Proctor, for jointly conceiving of and organizing this exhibition.

CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

William Larson, American, b. 1942

The Human Figure in Motion, from *The Human Figure in Motion*, 1968

Gelatin silver print

Gift of Aaron Siskind 1987.103.8.15



In the late 1960s, William Larson studied at the Institute of Design, where he investigated the relationship between still photography and the moving image. These four photographs come from a portfolio of prints studying the motion of the body. Using a slit camera, which requires that the film be cranked across a narrow opening during the exposure, he captured—in one continuous frame—a new way of seeing and understanding the body.

William Larson, American, b. 1942

The Human Figure in Motion, Portfolio 1, 1968

Gelatin silver print

Gift of Aaron Siskind 1987.103.8.27



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RISD MUSEUM

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William Larson, American, b. 1942
The Human Figure in Motion, Portfolio 1, 1968
Gelatin silver print
Gift of Aaron Siskind 1987.103.8.3



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William Larson, American, b. 1942
The Human Figure in Motion, Portfolio 1, 1968
Gelatin silver print
Gift of Aaron Siskind 1987.103.8.30



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Linda Connor, American, b. 1944, (RISD BFA 1967)
Dots and Hands, Fourteen Window Ruin, Bluff, Utah, 1987
Gold chloride-toned gelatin silver print on printing-out paper
Gift of Aaron Siskind 1990.108.1

The enigmatic allure of Linda Connor's photographs arises from both her subject matter and photographic technique. For more than 25 years, she has traveled to spiritually resonant places and photographed them with a large-format camera that enables her to capture incredible detail. Here, she renders the texture of the rock wall with the same sensitivity she displays in recording pictographs made by ancient Anasazi. Connor's images were contact-printed, a labor intensive process in which the negative was pressed against



RISD MUSEUM

photo-sensitive paper and exposed to direct sunlight in much the same manner as the earliest photographs were printed in the 19th century. The resulting image—gold-toned to enhance the richness of its surface—invites contemplation of the trace of the Anasazi culture.

Yasumasa Morimura, Japanese, b. 1951
Ambiguous Beauty (Aimai-no-bi), 1995
Color photolithograph
Anonymous gift in honor of the Peter Norton Family 1995.091

To question and disrupt long-established gender and cultural boundaries, Yasumasa Morimura photographs himself in the guise of iconic figures from the history of art. Here he quotes Tom Kelley's 1949 calendar pin-up of Marilyn Monroe, first published in the inaugural issue of *Playboy* in December 1953. By presenting the image within the format of a traditional Japanese fan, Morimura highlights the tension between Western and Asian ideals of beauty. Meanwhile, the obvious artificiality of the make-up and prosthetic breasts keep the artist's own male body visually present, thereby subverting the appeal of the original image and Monroe's celebrity persona to a heterosexual audience.



Lubomír Stacho, Slovakian, b. 1953
The Touch, 1997
Gelatin silver print
Gift of the artist 1998.19

Łubo Stacho uses photography as a process to explore inner spiritual realms. In this diptych, he describes the body as both a presence and a void. The blurry hand intimates presence through movement, while the silhouette—created with a long exposure in which he drew the form with light—defines the body through its absence.



Lesley Dill, American, b. 1950
Pyramid Atlantic, publisher
Peter Kruty Editions, printer
The Thrill Came Slowly, 1996
Artist's book with photography, letterpress, and hand stitching on silk paper
Edgar J. Lownes Fund 1998.3

RISD MUSEUM

Vik Muniz, American, b. Brazil, b. 1961

Chicago, after Aaron Siskind, from the series Pictures with Chocolate, 1999

Silver-dye bleach (Ilfochrome) print

Helen M. Danforth Acquisition Fund 2001.36.1

The humor of Vik Muniz's photographs often plays on the viewer's perception and the familiarity of iconic images and commonplace materials. He typically fashions images from everyday substances such as dust, string, or sugar, then photographs the constructions to confound perception of scale and composition. In this sequence, he draws the divers from Aaron Siskind's dynamic series, *Pleasures and Terrors of Levitation* in chocolate sauce. Muniz attends to Siskind's nearly abstract compositions with gestural marks that only appear similar to the graphic tone of the originals due to the sheen of the sauce before it dries.



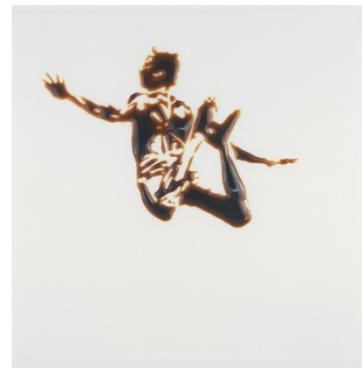
Vik Muniz, American, b. Brazil, b. 1961

Chicago, after Aaron Siskind, from the series Pictures with Chocolate, 1999

Silver-dye bleach (Ilfochrome) print

Helen M. Danforth Acquisition Fund 2001.36.2

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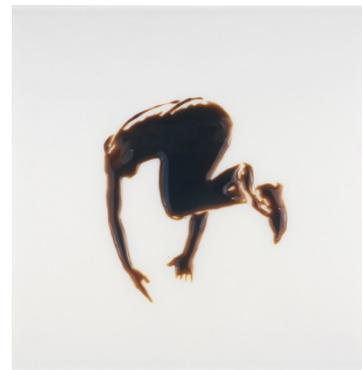
Vik Muniz, American, b. Brazil, b. 1961

Chicago, after Aaron Siskind, from the series Pictures with Chocolate, 1999

Silver-dye bleach (Ilfochrome) print

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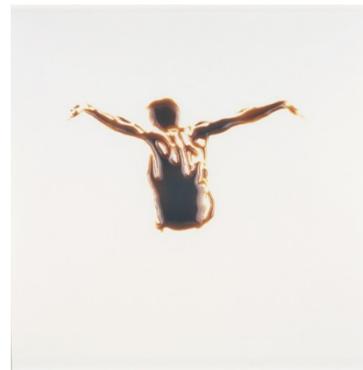
Terrors of Levitation in chocolate sauce. Muniz attends to Siskind's nearly abstract compositions with gestural marks that only appear similar to the graphic tone of the originals due to the sheen of the sauce before it dries.

Vik Muniz, American, b. Brazil, b. 1961
Chicago, after Aaron Siskind, from the series Pictures with Chocolate, 1999
Silver-dye bleach (Ilfochrome) print
Helen M. Danforth Acquisition Fund 2001.36.4

The humor of Vik Muniz's photographs often plays on the viewer's perception and the familiarity of iconic images and commonplace materials. He typically fashions images from everyday substances such as dust, string, or sugar, then photographs the constructions to confound perception of scale and composition. In this sequence, he draws the divers from Aaron Siskind's dynamic series, *Pleasures and Terrors of Levitation* in chocolate sauce. Muniz attends to Siskind's nearly abstract compositions with gestural marks that only appear similar to the graphic tone of the originals due to the sheen of the sauce before it dries.

Vik Muniz, American, b. Brazil, b. 1961
Chicago, after Aaron Siskind, from the series Pictures with Chocolate, 1999
Silver-dye bleach (Ilfochrome) print
Helen M. Danforth Acquisition Fund 2001.36.5

The humor of Vik Muniz's photographs often plays on the viewer's perception and the familiarity of iconic images and commonplace materials. He typically fashions images from everyday substances such as dust, string, or sugar, then photographs the constructions to confound perception of scale and composition. In this sequence, he draws the divers from Aaron Siskind's dynamic series, *Pleasures and Terrors of Levitation* in chocolate sauce. Muniz attends to Siskind's nearly abstract compositions with gestural marks that only appear similar to the graphic tone of the originals due to the sheen of the sauce before it dries.



RISD MUSEUM

Vik Muniz, American, b. Brazil, b. 1961

Chicago, after Aaron Siskind, from the series Pictures with Chocolate, 1999

Silver-dye bleach (Ilfochrome) print

Helen M. Danforth Acquisition Fund 2001.36.6

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Vik Muniz, American, b. Brazil, b. 1961

Chicago, after Aaron Siskind, from the series Pictures with Chocolate, 1999

Silver-dye bleach (Ilfochrome) print

Helen M. Danforth Acquisition Fund 2001.36.7

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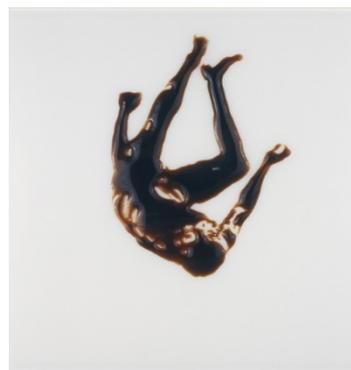
Vik Muniz, American, b. Brazil, b. 1961

Chicago, after Aaron Siskind, from the series Pictures with Chocolate, 1999

Silver-dye bleach (Ilfochrome) print

Helen M. Danforth Acquisition Fund 2001.36.8

The humor of Vik Muniz's photographs often plays on the viewer's perception and the familiarity of iconic images and commonplace materials. He typically fashions images from everyday substances such as dust, string, or sugar, then photographs the constructions to confound perception of scale and composition. In this sequence, he draws the divers from Aaron Siskind's dynamic series, *Pleasures and*



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Terrors of Levitation in chocolate sauce. Muniz attends to Siskind's nearly abstract compositions with gestural marks that only appear similar to the graphic tone of the originals due to the sheen of the sauce before it dries.

Vik Muniz, American, b. Brazil, b. 1961

Chicago, after Aaron Siskind, from the series *Pictures with Chocolate*, 1999

Silver-dye bleach (Ilfochrome) print

Helen M. Danforth Acquisition Fund 2001.36.9

The humor of Vik Muniz's photographs often plays on the viewer's perception and the familiarity of iconic images and commonplace materials. He typically fashions images from everyday substances such as dust, string, or sugar, then photographs the constructions to confound perception of scale and composition. In this sequence, he draws the divers from Aaron Siskind's dynamic series, *Pleasures and Terrors of Levitation* in chocolate sauce. Muniz attends to Siskind's nearly abstract compositions with gestural marks that only appear similar to the graphic tone of the originals due to the sheen of the sauce before it dries.



Allora & Calzadilla

Jennifer Allora, American, b.1974

Guillermo Calzadilla, American, b.1971

Land Mark, 2001

Color chromogenic print

Helen M. Danforth Acquisition Fund 2005.18.1

An artistic team based in Puerto Rico, Allora & Calzadilla have worked together since 1995 in photography, performance, video, sound, and sculpture. Their efforts transform simple materials into profound metaphors of political encounter. The *Land Mark* series was created with activists in Vieques, Puerto Rico, an island used for bombing practice by the U.S. military. Protesters worked with the artists to design shoes whose soles register images and words of frustration, destruction, and hope. The shoes were then worn during the protest at the site and their marks photographed, capturing a permanent record of an ephemeral community action.



RISD MUSEUM

Allora & Calzadilla

Jennifer Allora, American, b.1974

Guillermo Calzadilla, American, b.1971

Land Mark, 2001

Color chromogenic print

Helen M. Danforth Acquisition Fund 2005.18.2

An artistic team based in Puerto Rico, Allora & Calzadilla have worked together since 1995 in photography, performance, video, sound, and sculpture. Their efforts transform simple materials into profound metaphors of political encounter. The Land Mark series was created with activists in Vieques, Puerto Rico, an island used for bombing practice by the U.S. military. Protesters worked with the artists to design shoes whose soles register images and words of frustration, destruction, and hope. The shoes were then worn during the protest at the site and their marks photographed, capturing a permanent record of an ephemeral community action.



Stephanie Fosnaugh, American, b. 1981

Scene 1 frame 3 from Domestic Landscapes series, Rhode Island School of Design Professional Practice in Photography, Wintersession 2006, 2005

Color chromogenic print

Gift of RISD Photography Department 2006.69.15

Stephanie Fosnaugh, a recent RISD graduate, explores the relationship between people and their environments. The artist staged a scene of banal domestic drudgery—a young woman shaving her legs—in an open landscape. Juxtaposing this daily ritual with untouched nature focuses attention on the woman's manipulation of the natural state of her own body.



Ruth Bernhard, American, b. Germany, 1905-2006

In the Box - Horizontal, 1962

Gelatin silver print

Gift of the Estate of Ruth Bernhard 2007.119

Ruth Bernhard was widely recognized for her transcendent nudes, in which she sculpted the female form with shadow and light to ambiguous ends. In this image she seems to challenge the cultural expectations of the female form by creating a metaphor for the constraints of gender. This model cannot be fully contained by the box, symbolically or literally.



RISD MUSEUM

Arno Rafael Minkkinen, American, b. Finland, b. 1945, (RISD MFA 1974, Photography)

Waiting for the Snake, Jianfengling Nature Preserve, Hianan Island, China, from The PRC Portfolio, 2008

Gelatin silver print

Helen M. Danforth Acquisition Fund 2009.47.12

By inserting himself into the landscape, Arno Minkkinen contorts his body to obscure the divide between human and natural forms. His sensitivity to texture initially makes it easy to overlook his presence, but the unexpected revelation of his body, so carefully merged with its surroundings, implies bodily endurance and our primal relationship to the world.

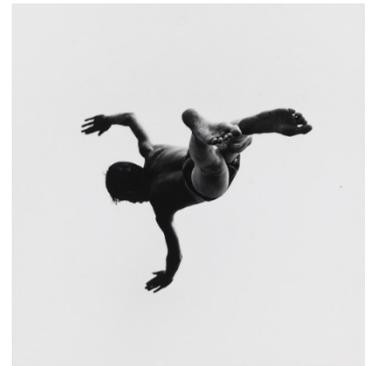


Aaron Siskind, American, 1903-1991, (RISD Faculty 1971-1976, Photography)

Pleasures and Terrors of Levitation 37, from the portfolio Pleasures and Terrors of Levitation, 1953

Gelatin silver print

Gift of Aaron Siskind 73.011.1

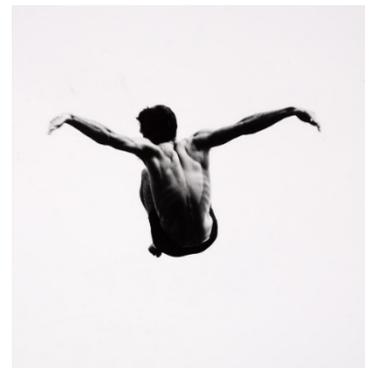


Aaron Siskind, American, 1903-1991, (RISD Faculty 1971-1976, Photography)

Pleasures and Terrors of Levitation 94, from the portfolio Pleasures and Terrors of Levitation, 1961

Gelatin silver print

Gift of Aaron Siskind 73.011.9



RISD MUSEUM

Ralph Gibson, American, b. 1939
Man Under Water, from the portfolio *Deja-vu*, 1972
Gelatin silver print
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Marshall N. Fulton 74.097.3

Ralph Gibson's photographs have a dreamlike, disorienting quality which he reveals through his unique vision and printing style. This work, from the portfolio *Déjà-vu*, can be understood as a frame from a mysterious narrative sequence. Technically, he exploits the graininess that can result when 35mm negatives are enlarged, a technique also used by his mentor, Robert Frank. His framing deliberately obscures the face and leaves the body incomplete, while the use of light refracted through water further fragments the figure.



Ray Krueger Metzker, American, 1931-2014
Untitled, 1968
Gelatin silver print
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Gilman Angier 78.073

Ray Metzker studied at the Institute of Design in Chicago from 1956 to 1959, a time when the program encouraged photography students to explore unconventional modes of cropping, framing, and printing. This is one of a series of images Metzker made near the boardwalk in Atlantic City between 1968 and 1977, which he originally printed as provocative couplets. Captivated by the abstract gestures of entangled shadows and unselfconscious postures on the beach, the pairing implies a narrative, but one that is unresolved. Metzker refers to the scenes as “delicate moments—unadorned and unglamorous, yet tender and exquisite.”



Joseph David Jachna, American, 1935 - 2016
Iceland, South Coast (facing Ljomagnupur), 1976
Gelatin silver print
Museum purchase with funds from the National Endowment for the Arts 78.133

Originally from Chicago, Joseph Jachna studied there with Harry Callahan, Aaron Siskind, and Frederick Sommer at the Institute of Design. His signature style emerged in 1969, when he began obstructing the camera's view to warp and transform space. Here a hint of the Icelandic landscape appears in the background, but it is obscured by Jachna's own hand, emphasizing his control over what the viewer sees. He holds a mirror through which the reflection of the sky cuts diagonally across the image to further distort the view.



RISD MUSEUM

Susan Eve Jahoda, American, b. 1952

Untitled, 1980

Gelatin silver print with hand coloring

Gift of Aaron Siskind 84.186.18

Susan Jahoda's work focuses on relationships between physical bodies and abstract social principles. In this print she layers a photographic enlargement of an empty room with a contact print of an X-ray depicting a ribcage. The hollow space of the body cavity echoes the barren architectural interior, implying a sense of abandonment or neglect.

Wendy Snyder MacNeil, American, 1943-2016, (RISD Faculty 1976-2007, Photography; Professor Emerita)

My Grandmother's Hand, 1983-1984

Platinum palladium print on tracing vellum

Gift in memory of Allan Ostrow by his friends Mr. and Mrs. Julius Bloom Photographic Fund and funds in honor of Frederick Kenner 85.095

In much of her work, Wendy MacNeil questions the adequacy of photography to document personalities or relationships. She often incorporates portraits from family albums or identification cards alongside texts by or about the subject of the work to reveal the limitations of conventional portraiture. In this image she addresses the desire for connection through photography by emphasizing the sense of touch with a closely cropped view of her grandmother's hand. The warm tonality of platinum palladium printing and the texture of vellum evoke the delicacy of her grandmother's skin.

