



Texas Photographic Society

TPS Portfolio Project 24

Juried by
Alan Thomas, Director
University of Chicago Press

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Juried by
Alan Thomas
Executive Director
University of Chicago Press
2024



Texas Photographic Society

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Catalog design by S. Diane Durant

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TPS Portfolio Project

An Artist Showcase

The TPS Portfolio Project is designed to provide an in-depth showcase of five artists' photographic projects—featuring ten images and a statement from each artist in an online gallery. This catalog has been created in conjunction with the exhibition. In addition to the five artists chosen, the juror has chosen a small number of images by three additional artists as honorable mentions.

Juror's Statement

The winners and honorable mentions of this TPS Portfolio Project tell us that American photography is vibrantly alive, even as the medium stands on the cusp of existential change. Several of these selections show artists renewing photography's traditional role as witness, ranging from a novel use of montage in street photography to an empathetic and revelatory visual journal about a family raising a special-needs child. Elegy is a theme connecting several of these projects as photographers linger on the passing of generations, whether in landscape, portraiture, or the fashioning of new imagery from a family archive. Some of these artists use photography to look inward, others use it to understand their fellow Americans—their ways of making home at the margins of the economy, their histories of labor struggle, their political street theater. All of these photographers, in their different ways, convince us to trust their integrity as image makers. As AI infiltrates the medium, it's an open question how photographers will do so in the future. But for the time being, there is much good work to celebrate. Congratulations to these artists, and thanks to all who submitted work to this year's Portfolio Project.

Alan Thomas is editorial director at the University of Chicago Press and a photographer specializing in urban landscape. As a publisher, Thomas acquires and edits books in the humanities, including books in photography and visual studies. As a photographer, he has work in the Museum of Contemporary Photography's Midwest Photographer's Project and has exhibited at the Process Gallery at Indiana University; Perspective Gallery in Evanston, IL; Catherine Edelman Gallery in Chicago; the Flak Photo Midwest Print Show in Madison, WI; Photo Works Gallery in Glen Echo, MD; and other venues. In 2012, his one-person show at the Seagull Foundation for the Arts, Kolkata, India, surveyed photographs made over two decades in Chicago, Tokyo, and Kolkata. Thomas's book, *55x5*, with an introduction by Kathryn Lofton, was published by Marquand Editions in 2018. For more information, visit www.alan-thomas.com.

Rebekah Alviani

Brevard, North Carolina



Family Photo Album

Most people have unique possessions that carry a personal meaning to them. But what is it that makes these objects so exceptional? Why these objects and not others? Memory resides within them. Memories that speak to us about home and belonging. About loss and grief. About how we will one day be remembered.

My last living grandparent passed away in February 2022. While my grandfather lived a long and full life, I still find myself struggling with the fact that now all my grandparents are gone. During this struggle, I found solace through Object Memory as my family and I emptied my grandparent's home. Object Memory refers to the memories we associate with specific objects, like the paperweight with the

Green family crest claiming "Always Flourishing" as our motto. The numerous objects kept in their home have different meanings for everyone, or sometimes no meaning at all. But for me, merely their existence is a comfort as it allows me to ponder their significance or even imply one.

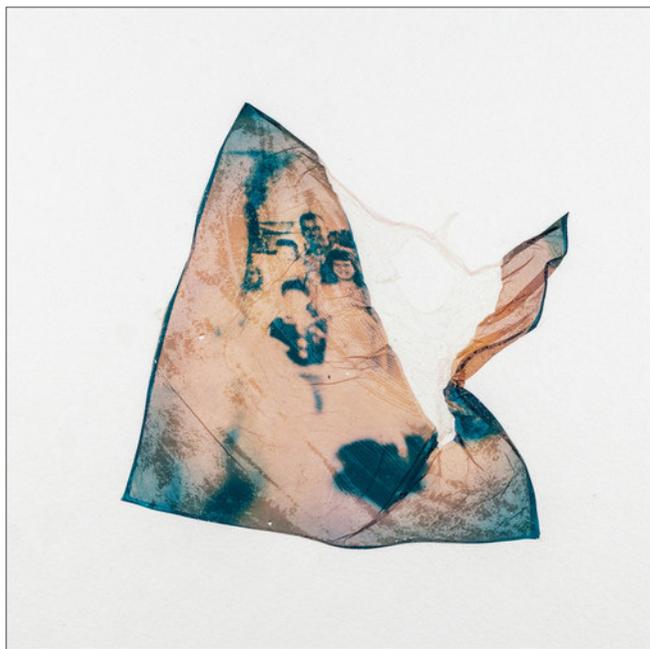
Referencing the many loose polaroids that make up our family albums, this photographic work is my attempt at processing my grief while working to preserve these objects. By documenting these varying items, I also create new memories through their representation while considering their original meaning.



1426



Peony for Your Thoughts



The Greens



Matriarch



He Always Had a Camera in His Hands



Little Dutch Kiss



Man of Faith



Family Gatherings



I Love You Bobbie

Sarah Christianson

Oakland, California



Felling the cottonwoods #1, July 30, 2018

Elegy (for you & the cottonwoods)

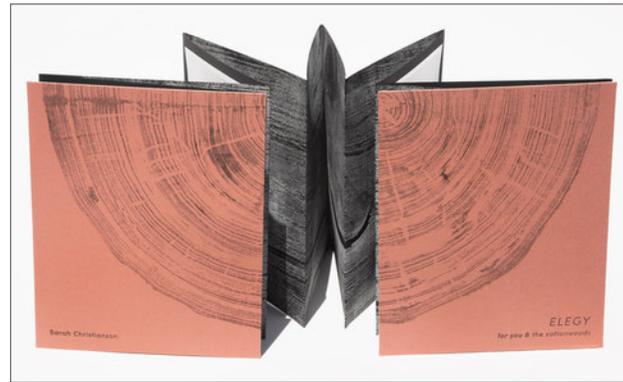
Sometime between 1878 and 1887, when North Dakota was still a territory, the first cottonwood seedlings took root on a particular quarter of land in Traill County. Despite floods and droughts, hailstorms and straight-line winds, the saplings persisted and flourished. They rose steadily higher and higher each year until they towered a hundred feet above the plains below. For 140 years, these giants served as a tree claim, a shelterbelt, and a source of timber for my great-grandparents. The cottonwoods were an indelible feature of the landscape, a commanding landmark for miles around. That 10-acre grove on our land was my forest, my refuge—a beacon amidst the never-ending fields of wheat, sugar beets, and corn.

When my grandmother died in 2017, my parents were released from an unspoken obligation to her: to keep the farm the same. The following year, they had the whole stand of trees cleared to cultivate that spot with crops. In the long run, it would mean less work and

more money for them. Although the trees had lived a long time, like Grandma, their longevity was cold comfort as I grieved for these missing touchstones in my life.

I was unable to be with my grandmother when she died, so I felt as though I could not fail the cottonwoods. I had to be there to witness their passing, to honor their legacy, to wish them farewell. On July 30, 2018, I photographed the final eight trees as they crashed to earth. I promised the cottonwoods that they would be used well—the same pledge that medieval Chinese woodsmen made to trees they harvested.

I used the cottonwoods in multiple ways to create this artist book. The handmade accordion book combines my photographs with relief prints of wood grain, made from pieces that were milled from the cottonwood logs. A 6-foot long slab was used to print the interior pages, while a smaller 2-foot round “cookie” was used to print the tree rings onto the book’s cover.



Elegy (for you and the cottonwoods)



Felling the cottonwoods #2, July 30, 2018



Felling the cottonwoods #3, July 30, 2018



Felling the cottonwoods #4, July 30, 2018



Felling the cottonwoods #5, July 30, 2018



Felling the cottonwoods #6, July 30, 2018



Felling the cottonwoods #7, July 30, 2018



Felling the cottonwoods #8, July 30, 2018



Felling the cottonwoods #9, July 30, 2018

Casey Jackson

New Waverly, Texas



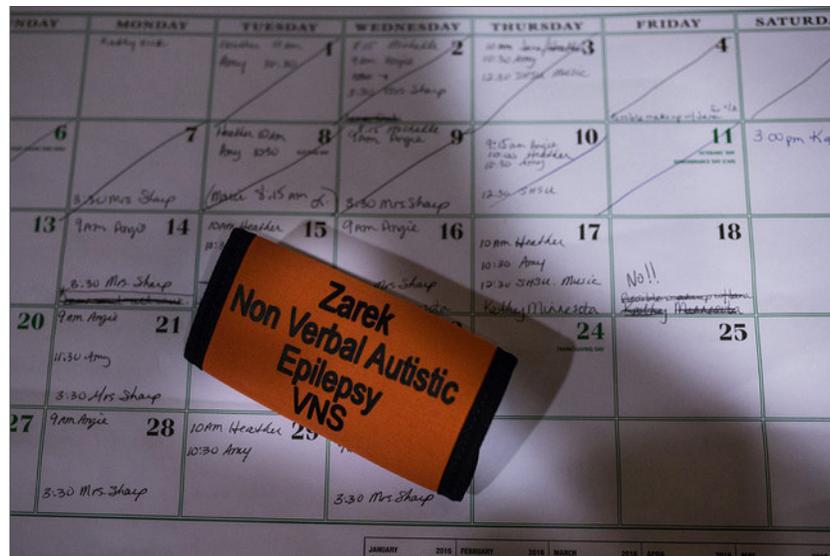
Zarek

Zarek: *A Family's Journey*, is a long-term documentary about raising my youngest brother Zarek, who has battled numerous medical and behavioral conditions since birth. Diagnosed with autism, epilepsy, cerebral palsy, and severe allergies, his life has been nothing but easy, and new challenges present themselves every day. He is completely dependent on others. These challenges threw my family into a world of constant struggle, stress, and devastation forever altering the structure of our family for better and worse. This project is a look at the daily life of Zarek and our family.

I was ten when Zarek was born and had little understanding of what lay ahead. As I grew older and found photography, I found myself photographing Zarek. I had no reason for it; I just did. It became a way to escape the scary and emotional things I was witnessing that I had no way of coping with or understanding. Then one day my mom broke down: she was exhausted and crying in the living room. She was at rock bottom. Zarek went into a seizure and instantly

she pulled herself up to be there for him. Singing, comforting, and praying to him as he seized and lost all control of his body. This moment showed me the beauty, love, and willpower of a parent and inspired me to show the world what I was seeing. The ugly and beautiful sides of it.

This project has opened my eyes to so many things. The simple and beautiful moments of human compassion. The unconditional love a parent or family member can harbor within them. How stress and turmoil can strengthen the human connection. The growth of my family in ways words cannot describe. There are many more chapters ahead, and many obstacles for Zarek and my family to overcome for the rest of our lives. These images are a very small sample of the overall project that continues to grow and change as we go through life. My overall goal is to give people a glimpse into the world of raising a child with special needs and inspire those who are going through it.



Therapy



Doctor



Seizure



Brothers



Struggle



Best Man



Frustration



Prom



Graduation

Stephen Marc

Chicago, Illinois



Untitled (Baltimore, MD, Wildwood, NJ, and Brooklyn, NY)



Untitled (Phoenix, AZ)

As a documentary/street photographer and digital montage artist, my ongoing project explores American identity and sense of place with a focus on public space gatherings, from everyday rituals to special events, where American character is revealed. How we shape our environment, define ourselves and recognize each other as Americans is racially and culturally diverse, socio-politically charged, historically layered, and constantly in flux. I'm searching for the ways we connect to place and interact with each other, while navigating the conundrums of coexistence.

As a black photographer, I felt that it was important during this

transitionally complex and polarized time in this country to address who we are collectively as Americans. While often crossing the lines that divide this country, my work is an homage, update, and critical response to the seminal American documentary overviews, where I bring a different cultural background perspective.

As a photographer, I am interested in the photograph as an interpretative document; and as a digital montage artist, these "street story" montages explore the strategies and objectives for combining photographs to extend the visual narrative, bearing in mind the constructive nature of memory as an informed witness.



Untitled (Boston, MA)



Untitled (Washington, DC)



Untitled (Phoenix, AZ)



Untitled (Phoenix, AZ)



Untitled (Phoenix, AZ)



Untitled (Chicago, IL)



Untitled (Phoenix, AZ)



Untitled (Saint Louis, MO)

Kathleen Tunnell Handel

New York, New York



Down the Street - California #09, 2017

As the availability of affordable housing implodes, with evictions and financial instability surpassing crisis levels, my ongoing project, *Where the Heart Is: Portraits from American Trailer and Mobile Home Parks*, investigates this deeply impacted, primarily American housing form and its residents. This multi-media collaboration challenges the ingrained stereotyping of the estimated 22 million Americans who live in communities of manufactured homes (as stigmatized trailer and mobile homes are being rebranded), revealing and archiving what's being lost in their communities while amplifying residents' and advocates' voices.

Expanding gentrification has increased the vulnerability of these essential workers, young families, veterans, immigrants, and retiree residents, who rely on this largest, non-subsidized form of low-income

housing. A lack of or weak regulations make parks the target of private equity investors, leading to the loss of affordability for the leased site under residents' self-owned homes, with subsequent harassment, eviction, and displacement or homelessness.

Where the Heart Is was begun in 2017 with travels photographing, to date, within communities in nine states throughout the United States. Video interviews and ensuing quotes with residents from a number of these plus eleven additional states are integral components of the project.

Extensive research, collaboration with academics and professionals, and affiliation with the housing advocacy non-profit, MHAction, further deepens the exploration and potential impact for advocacy.



Typology Grid - Arizona #02, 2019



Kim and Jake, 2024



Typology Portrait - Texas #01, 2017



Angela, 2024



Typology Grid - Arizona #02, 2019



In Between - New Jersey #01, 2017



Typology Grid - California #05, 2018



Warning - Oregon #01, 2019



Absence - California #02, 2018

Chuck Avery

Minneapolis, Minnesota



Pixley, California - October 10, 1933
The cotton pickers strike of 1933 was marked by caravans of armed cotton growers attacking any strikers refusing to return to work. Farm workers meeting to protest the violence here at the site of the union hall were ambushed by forty growers, who shot and killed two and wounded at least eight.

1934 California Farm Workers Strike - Pixley, CA

Blood on the Streets looks at how our culture chooses to acknowledge the events that have shaped the American labor movement. It's not a pretty history, and its public landmarks can be hard to find.

I have traveled across the country to sites where significant events in labor history have occurred, documenting the landscapes to examine how they convey their historical memory. The recognition is almost always slight—in Pittsburgh you can find a small historical marker (if you look hard enough) in the middle of an intersection noting the killing of over forty workers on strike against the railroads.

Often the landscape can't be bothered to deal with its past—a street in Milwaukee where unarmed strikers were shot dead by state militia gives no clue about the events that transpired there in 1886. There are stories embedded in these landscapes that delve into the ongoing struggle of capital versus labor that continue to define our society and influence our lives today. History is a pattern, and my aim is to highlight the repeated violent and bloody patterns of American labor history that have been relegated to the back pages of our nation's story.



1913 Ludlow Massacre - Ludlow, CO



1927 Columbine Massacre - Serene, CO

Sharon Joines

Wharton, Texas



New Hope Christian Center/Donut Shop, Boling, TX 2014/2022

Since September of 2021 I have been working on a project that involves going back through my Wharton County, Texas archives, beginning with the oldest images, rephotographing some of them, and displaying the pairs as diptychs. My archives date back to 2004, and most of the new images have been made in 2021-2023. Some differences are subtle, and some are more noticeable, but all reveal the effects of time, weather, and/or human interaction. There are 122 diptychs so far.

Wharton is currently showing signs of real growth after a long period of not progressing. Highway 59 was rerouted around town in the mid-1970s (think of the movie *Cars*). Once bustling businesses

on the old Hwy. 59 suffered greatly when highway traffic was moved outside of town.

US59 is transforming into I69, a major interstate highway that will end in Laredo, Texas, the largest port in the USA. Over 10,000 trucks/day haul manufactured goods from Mexico through Laredo and onward northbound.

Wharton is an excellent location for warehousing, truck stops, and other trucking-related businesses. New businesses hire employees who will need housing, food, clothing, etc. Wharton folks are optimistic. Growth can be a good thing. Future diptychs will illustrate this evolution.



Cotton Mural, Wharton, TX 2005/2021



Apple BottumX/CUFN Trail Ride, Wharton, TX 2009/2016

Ania Moussawel

Miami, Florida



The Days are Long

The Days are Long is my interpretation of motherhood. The title comes from the parenting adage “the days are long, but the years are short.” When my daughter was born, I struggled with my new identity, mother and artist. I reflected on the complex relationship between mothers and daughters in my family, which left an imprint on the work that followed. The photographs center around my grandmother, mother, daughter, and myself. They show different generations as they grow and age, and the life that continues after

the loss of a family member. Emotion, whether it is loving, or tense is consistent through the images. Using the homes of my mother and grandmother as the setting, the aesthetic and palette are a reminder of my family’s immigrant past. The women in my Cuban and Lebanese families have responsibilities that are intrinsic to their roles as mothers including providing, caregiving, and upholding traditions from their countries. Although our experiences have changed over time, the way these responsibilities have shaped our identity has remained.



I Still Need You



You Are Still With Us

MISSION

The Texas Photographic Society (TPS), founded in 1984, is a nonprofit organization of amateur and professional photographers whose purpose is to support contemporary photography as a means for creative expression and cultural insight. TPS focuses on furthering the educational and artistic development of its members while involving the community at large by sponsoring exhibitions, publications, workshops, and outreach programs.

MEMBERSHIP

TPS is delighted to celebrate 40 years of providing programs and services for photographers and their audiences across the country. TPS is backed by a hard-working Board of Directors as well as a dynamic President's Council and Advisory Council, which include professional artists, educators, authors, curators, collectors and industry leaders in the field of photography. And while "Texas" is in the name, TPS sustains an active international following with members from 5 countries and 37 states. TPS is funded by members' dues, contributions from individuals, corporations, and the Texas Commission on the Arts.

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