

Contemporary Vernacular

November 5-January 23, 2005

The PRC is pleased to present a group show of contemporary responses to vernacular photography in the domestic sphere. Featured artists include

- Yolanda del Amo • Louise Bourque • Nancy Dudley • Susan E. Evans
- Joseph Heidecker • Priya Kambli • David Prifti

Contemporary Vernacular features artists who allude to or incorporate “everyday” images and themes into their work—family, found, and anonymous photographs and objects, representations and creations normally located in the home and outside of the photographic canon. The domestic emerges as the key theme in the exhibition, in terms of using and referencing family imagery as well as imitating and critiquing home display and production. Many of the works incorporate handicraft and are sculptural or installation-based—important elements in the vernacular. Photographs too are used as raw materials, to be cut up, sewn upon, and rearranged and many pieces allude to or incorporate album, scrapbook, and journal pages. The altered substrate also figures in many pieces, a sort of tabula rasa for memory, allowing artists the chance to highlight and recast less than ideal memories instead of what is usually marked and documented. This exhibition is curated by Leslie K. Brown, PRC Curator.



Yolanda del Amo, from the series, “My Little One Comes First,”
2001-2004, Digital C-print, 23 ½ x 20 inches.
Translation of above Spanish text: “There’s a man in my building
who keeps asking for a picture of me, but I don’t give
photoaraphs to some auv who can’t be more than 70.”

The PRC’s gallery and educational offerings are held in conjunction with the Boston University Art Gallery’s exhibition of over 150 vintage vernacular photographic works, *In the Vernacular: Everyday*

Photographs from the Rodger Kingston Collection, November 5-

January 23, 2005, and related interdisciplinary conference, *Vernacular Reframed*, November 5-6, 2004 (see below for more information on the speakers, conference, and registration.) In addition, the BU Sherman Gallery also is hosting a juried show for area art students on the theme of “Keepsake” as well as featuring the gallery debut of found Polaroids from *FOUND MAGAZINE*’s co-founder Jason Bitner. Altogether, these related exhibitions, academic conference, and educational programs, all held on the same street, make for many great reasons to get off at the BU West t-stop (or f-stop as we like to call it).

ABOUT THE ARTISTS IN THE PRC EXHIBITION

Yolanda del Amo (Brooklyn, NY)

Yolanda del Amo mimics pages of a photographic album in her series of mounted digital C-prints, “My Little One Comes First.” Juxtaposing vintage images and vernacular sayings from her Spanish grandmother along with her own contemporary compositions, del Amo creates a true album of the everyday, aptly strewn with troublesome memories and anticlimactic moments. Ultimately, it is, and was, a dialogue between two generations. The sometimes-bitter truth of her grandmother’s observations presented in this album format comment upon what we reveal to family, versus what we display to others in such a setting. Del Amo is a recent MFA graduate from RISD and has exhibited at SoHo20 Gallery in New York, the Danforth Museum of Art, the ASA Gallery in New Mexico, as well as galleries in Argentina and Spain.



Louise Bourque, still from *Self Portrait Post Mortem*, 2002, 35 mm motion picture film, color, sound, 2.5 minutes

Louise Bourque (Malden, MA)

In making her films, Louise Bourque often uses images from her family’s old home movies as well as other “found” footage that she alters through various unorthodox techniques and processes involving the direct manipulation of film’s photographic emulsion (low-tech contact printing, hand-processing and coloring, bleaching, scratching, and even burying). The resulting moving short avant-garde films touch on themes of memory and loss. A French-Canadian filmmaker, Bourque has been teaching cinema in Boston since 1996. She received her BFA in film production from Concordia University in Montreal and her MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Her work has been presented in more than twenty-five countries and broadcast on the Sundance Channel. Her films have screened at The Whitney Museum of American Art, The San Francisco International Film Festival, as well as many international venues.



Nancy Dudley (Essex, MA)

While at a flea market, Nancy Dudley came across an amateur astronomer's notebook, which turned out to be the efforts of a distant relative. Using discarded Polaroid backings or ruined negatives as a substrate, she digitally composites selections from this enigmatic ledger, including diagrams that transform into allegory, along with photographs of her as a child and phrases from old letters. Heightened by their presentation as lush Iris prints, the layered results recall a chalkboard, scrapbook, or journal in aesthetics and principle—a blank slate for personal and constructed memory. Dudley has a diverse background, including a BA in English, studies at Massachusetts College of Art, and a MFA in photography from Rhode Island School of Design. Currently, she works at Historic New England (formerly SPNEA) and teaches at Salem State College.

Nancy Dudley, *Figure 1* 2004, from the series *Woodbury's Notebook*, Iris print, 20 x 16 inches. Top handwritten script reads: "Showing how these stars are seen by an Observer at O." Typewritten text reads: "Those secondary meanwhile relationships can sometimes show you the way to beauty light and eternal bliss."

Susan E. Evans (Jamesville, NY)

Selections from Susan E. Evans's *Saga* series—a site-specific installation of "a constructed idealized Americana family narrative"—will be featured at the PRC. Each piece or room alludes to a different interior space and consists of numerous photographs depicting only white words on a black background describing an invented scene and narrative. The pictures are then set up, using frames and furniture, to create (and comment upon) an exaggerated domestic tableaux. Evans received her MFA from Cornell University and currently teaches at Syracuse University and Onondaga Community College. She has worked at the Visual Studies Workshop and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Denver. Represented by Ricco/Maresca Gallery, New York, she is included in numerous collections including Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Center for Creative Photography, and the Musée de L'Élysée (Lausanne, Switzerland).



Susan E. Evans, *SAGA (Kid's Shrine)*, 2004, mixed media, variable size, Courtesy of the Ricco/Maresca Gallery, Chelsea, NY. Descriptions/photo example: "Annie and Joev Chopping Wood at the Cabin."

Joseph Heidecker (Brookhaven, NY)

Joseph Heidecker finds vintage portraits at flea markets and estate sales to which he adds a variety of unexpected elements. These once-known persons and treasured objects have lost their identity upon entering the market, and, through a sort of subversive method of handicraft turned on its head, he assigns them a new one. Sometimes sewing on faces or covering them with glue or other substances, they become raw materials and take on a new life as a sort of rude ready-made assemblage. Heidecker is represented by Ricco/Maresca Gallery, New York, where he was recently awarded his first solo show. His work is included in the collection of the George Eastman House and has been published in the *New Yorker* and *Details* magazine.



Joseph Heidecker, *Untitled (Asshole)*, 1999, "Chas. A. Saylor, Reading, PA." 6 1/4 x 4 1/4 inches. Mixed media: 19th-Century Cabinet card with press type; Unique Initialed and dated in pen on verso, Courtesy of the artist and Ricco/Maresca Gallery

Priya Kambli (Kirksville, MO)

When Priya Kambli moved from India to America in 1993, she took only what would fit into one suitcase. Selections from her "Suitcase series" deal with this physical and mental move and the attendant intellectual editing of snapshots, items, and ultimately memory that resulted. Displayed open, each constructed case deals with a different theme and corresponds to a different hue, incorporating objects and photographs with intricate artisanship, often in the form of embroidery, silk, or lace. These memory objects and personal relics reference vintage vernacular objects often produced for the home as well as domestic handicraft. Priya Kambli received her MFA from University of Houston and currently teaches photography at Truman State University, Missouri. She was recently awarded an AIR residency at the Woodstock Center for Photography and a 2004 Fellowship from the Houston Center for Photography.



Priya Kambli, *Black* from the *Suitcase Series*, 2003, mixed media installation, photograph, tin container with red pigment, sindoor, and black silk

David Prifti (Concord, MA)

After his narrative color images of his family were included in Museum of Modern Art's exhibition *Pleasures and Terrors of Domestic Comfort* (1991), David Prifti's work evolved toward mixed media, yet kept the same genealogical focus. Old family photographs now adorn decayed and decrepit found materials through Prifti's use of liquid emulsion. Everyday images become haunting, transformed as such into modern ancestral artifacts and memory talismans. Prifti is represented locally by Gallery NAGA and by Rice/Polak Gallery in Provincetown; he is included in collections such as MoMA and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. He is a recipient of numerous grants, including the NEA and Massachusetts Council on the Arts and Humanities. Prifti received his BFA from Massachusetts College of Art and his MFA from Yale University. He teaches at Concord-Carlisle Regional High School.



David Prifti, *Linked*, 2004, photographic emulsion on wood, Courtesy of the Artist and Gallery NAGA

VERNACULAR HAPPENINGS ON THE BOSTON UNIVERSITY CAMPUS

PRC Educational Programs

- **Roundtable with Regional Artists:** *Thursday, December 2, 6pm, free*
- **Workshop:** *Saturday, December 4, 10am-3pm, "Lost and Found: Photo, Collage & Photocollage" with Jesseca Ferguson, Call for reservations*
- **Curator Gallery talk** by Leslie K. Brown, PRC Curator, *Thursday, December 9, 6 pm, free*

SPECTACULAR VERNACULAR CLOSING WEEK: Press release & possibly another event to follow!

- **New England Premier: Screening of Documentary "Other People's Pictures," and Discussion with the Filmmakers Lorca Shepperd and Cabot Philbrick, Monday, January 17, 7-9 pm, Coolidge Corner Theater,** 290 Harvard Street, Brookline, MA, \$6 members/\$9 non-members, Co-Sponsored by the PRC and the Coolidge
Other People's Pictures is a documentary about people who share an unlikely obsession—snapshots that have been abandoned or lost by their original owners and are now for sale. The film is set at New York City's Chelsea Flea Market where, every weekend, dozens of collectors sift doggedly through piles, boxes and bins of cast-off photos. Since completing the film with a grant from the Jerome Foundation and a month-long artists' retreat at the New York Mills Regional Cultural Center, "Other People's Pictures" has been screened nationally and awarded *Best Documentary*, New Orleans Film Festival, 2004 and *Best Documentary Short*, Coney Island Film Festival, 2004. The film has also been featured on NPR's *All Things Considered* in June 2004. Please visit coolidge.org and other-peoples-pictures.com.

BOSTON UNIVERSITY ART GALLERY

(855 Commonwealth Avenue)

- **Exhibition: In the Vernacular: Everyday Photographs from the Rodger Kingston Collection (November 5-January 23, 2005)**
- **Conference: Vernacular Reframed (November 5-6, 2004)**

The Boston University Art Gallery will present a two-day academic conference on vernacular photography and elaborating on the themes explored in the exhibition *In the Vernacular: Everyday Photographs from the Rodger Kingston Collection* being held concurrently in their galleries. Nationally-renowned photohistorians, curators, and collectors will re-examine the social practices within which such photographs have been produced and consumed through a variety of interdisciplinary topics. For more details on the exhibition and conference, please visit www.bu.edu/art.

BOSTON UNIVERSITY SHERMAN UNION GALLERY

(775 Commonwealth Avenue)

- **Exhibition: Juried Student Show: "Keepsake" (November 2-December 17, 2004)**
- **Gallery Debut of 400 Found Polaroids: Installed & curated by Jason Bitner, Co-Founder, FOUND MAGAZINE**
- **OPEN-MIC FOUND EVENT: Hosted by Jason Binter, Wednesday, November 3, 7-9pm, Paradise Lounge, free**

This exhibition, juried by PRC Curator Leslie K. Brown, features 39 pieces by 31 students from area art programs. Selections were chosen from an open call for work that uses or is inspired by found photographs/ images/text and address the idea of "keepsake" in some way. Complementing the student show will be the gallery debut of close to 400 found Polaroids from FOUND MAGAZINE'S collection. This component will be curated and installed by *FOUND MAGAZINE*, Co-Founder, Jason Bitner. A special FOUND "open mic" event will occur November 3, 7-9pm at the Paradise Lounge, 969 Commonwealth Avenue (thedise.com). Bring your own found photographs and ephemera to share that night, add to the gallery, and for possible inclusion in the zine! Visit www.foundmagazine.com to explore this fascinating magazine and cultural phenomenon. The exhibitions will be held at the Sherman Gallery, located on the second floor of the George Sherman Union building on the BU campus, 775 Commonwealth Avenue, with an opening reception Thursday, November 4, 5-7:30pm. For more information, contact Lynne Cooney, Exhibitions Coordinator, School of Visual Arts at lcooney@bu.edu, 617-358-0200.

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND IMAGES CONTACT:

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Press images can be provided digitally, via email or cd to meet specifications.

PLEASE NOTE, HOLIDAY CLOSINGS:

The PRC will be closed the following dates due to campus holidays, November 24-28 and December 23-January 3.

Who and where we are: The Photographic Resource Center is an independent non-profit organization that exists to facilitate the study and dissemination of information related to photography. Operating from the campus of Boston University, it provides a highly acclaimed gallery exhibition program, a bi-monthly newsletter, lectures, workshops, special events, and a 4,000-volume resource library to our members and the general public. It is supported by grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Massachusetts Cultural Council, the Boston Cultural Council, numerous private foundations, and the ongoing generosity of its members. The PRC is located at 832 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, MA, 02215. Public transportation: Green B Line, outbound, BU West stop. Hours are Tuesday through Friday from 10 to 6pm, Thursdays from 10 to 8pm, Saturday and Sunday 12-5pm. Admission is \$3/general public, \$2/students and seniors and free to all on Thursdays and on the last weekend of every month. The PRC is always free to members, Institutional Plus member schools, children under 18, BU students, faculty, and staff, as well as all school groups with appointments. For more information visit our website at www.prcboston.org. The PRC is accessible.