



ART LIBRARIES SOCIETY OF NORTH AMERICA

**35<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference**  
**Sheraton Colony Square, Atlanta, Georgia, April 26-May 1**

**Session 7: Picturing Place: Perspectives on Photography in the South**  
**Saturday, April 28, 9:00am – 10:30am**

**Moderator:** Robert Lobe, Director, Visual Arts Library, School of Visual Arts, NYC

**Speakers:**

Jeff L. Rosenheim, Associate Curator, Department of Photographs, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, NYC  
"Walker Evans and the South"

Julian Cox, Curator of Photography, The High Museum of Art, Atlanta  
"Road to Freedom: Photographs of the Civil Rights Movement"

Ruth Dusseault, Photographer and Artist-in-Residence, Georgia Institute of Technology, College of Architecture, Atlanta  
"Documenting the Atlanta Steel Redevelopment Project"

**Recorder:** Holly Hatheway, Associate Director, Visual Arts Library, School of Visual Arts, NYC

**Introduction by Robert Lobe:**

"Good morning, and welcome to Session 7 – *Picturing Place: Perspectives on Photography in the South*. My name is Robert Lobe, and I'm director of the Visual Arts Library at the School of Visual Arts in New York. This session was organized by the Photography Librarians Discussion Group. I'd like to thank group members Laura Harris and Peter Blank for their help in developing the concept for this session. Thanks as well to my colleague Holly Hatheway for serving as recorder this morning.

I would especially like to thank David Rhodes, president of the School of Visual Arts, for his generous financial support, which enabled me to assemble this outstanding group of presenters."

**Introduction of first speaker by Robert Lobe:**

"Jeff L. Rosenheim is associate curator in the Department of Photographs at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, where he has worked since the late 1980's. He

has also taught in the Department of Art History and Archaeology at Columbia University.

Mr. Rosenheim has organized and collaborated on many major museum exhibitions with which you will be familiar, most recently *New Orleans after the Flood: Photographs by Robert Polidori*; *Sight Unseen: Selections from the Gilman Collection*; and *Diane Arbus: Revelations*.

He has lectured and participated in symposia around the world, on topics ranging from "early photographs of Egypt" to "film noir" to "the camera's role in contemporary culture."

Jeff Rosenheim has authored or co-authored many important photography books and catalogs. Walker Evans has been a particular focus of Mr. Rosenheim's scholarship. His major contributions to the Walker Evans literature include: *Many Are Called*; *Walker Evans: Polaroids*; and *Unclassified: A Walker Evans Anthology. Selections from the Walker Evans Archive at the Metropolitan Museum of Art*.

On two occasions, Mr. Rosenheim received the prestigious Infinity Award for Best Photography Book of the Year – for *Diane Arbus: Revelations* in 2003, and for *Unclassified: A Walker Evans Anthology* in 2001.

It is my great pleasure to introduce to you Jeff L. Rosenheim, whose topic this morning will be "Walker Evans and the South."

**Summary: "Walker Evans and the South"**  
**Jeff Rosenheim, Associate Curator, Department of Photographs,**  
**The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City**

Mr. Rosenheim offered his thanks to Robert Lobe and SVA for their funding of this session and explained that he would provide an overview of Walker Evans' work that related to Atlanta, its surrounding areas, and other parts of the south. He described Evans as "photographing America with the care of a surgeon and the eye of a poet," and remarked about Evans' impressive writing skills.

Examples shown: *View of Main Street, Saratoga Springs, 1931*  
*Cheap Cafes, 1929*  
*Hidden Camera Poses, NYC Subway, 1938*

Evans' project of photographing cotton farmers in the South during the depression was epitomized, according to Mr. Rosenheim, by the photograph of *Allie Mae Burrows* [1936], which he described as a masterpiece. To Rosenheim, Evans' photographs of this era offer an "encyclopedic visual catalog of the depression era South." He characterized Evans as "not being a journalist or historian, but simply part of America's conscience."

In 1935-36 Evans worked for the Farm Security Administration, part of the New Deal, photographing images of the rural South. In 1938 Evans applied for a Guggenheim Fellowship and ultimately created a visual catalog of his work. Rosenheim described Evans as a photographer who "sees the present as if it was the past" and also as a photographer who originally wanted to be a writer, who brought his descriptive instincts to photography. The aspect of the "vernacular in his work" can be compared to James Agee and Hart Crane. In 1938 Evans had his first retrospective exhibit. He had a notable retrospective in 1971 at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Evans began his career working with glass plate negatives; by the early 1970's he had started to use a Polaroid SX70, which he actually bought in Atlanta in 1973. Walker Evans died in 1975.

Examples shown: *Street Signs* [early 1970's]

Rosenheim stated that Walker Evans' personal archive has been acquired by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, where it has been fully catalogued and preserved. Mr. Rosenheim announced to a very interested audience that the Met would offer free online public access to the Evans archive via the museum's website by Fall 2007.

The Walker Evans archive at the Metropolitan Museum of Art is a collection of the artists' photographs and writing, and constitutes a "rich record of the creative process." The collection begins with the photographer's early work in Brooklyn, NY; continues with the projects in the depression era South; the hidden NYC Subway photos; images of Havana, Cuba during the Machado regime; and examples of work from the 20+ year relationship Evans had with *Fortune* magazine. The most celebrated works are the images of the South, especially those made in several southern states as part of a Farm Security Administration project. The archive also includes many of Evans' diaries (both published and unpublished) and all the "shooting scripts" from the FSA project. These detailed scripts include a full account of each image's location, a short description, as well as the specific camera settings used. Rosenheim described this information on exposure and other technical details as "invaluable" to the history of photography. Scholars will now have easy access to this information online.

The remainder of the presentation focused on new materials unique to the archive. Rosenheim presented a full, uncut roll of 37 images. This processed roll was found in a metal canister dated February, 1935 and labeled "Macon." That date was seven months prior to the start of the New Deal project. The roll of film included the following sequence of images: it began with advertising signs; images of a plantation home followed; then men on the street; whitewashed houses; a street scene; and concluded with a plantation home in Millersville. Rosenheim revealed that this trip to the South, in advance of the New Deal project, was commissioned and financed by Gifford Cochran who hired Evans to record Greek Revival Architecture in the South. The images in this uncut roll of film showed that Evans was instead mostly interested in documenting the native vernacular architecture as well as scenes from daily life. Cochran's book was never published. Another roll of uncut film in the Metropolitan Museum's Evans archive began with "boring revival

architecture" and ended up being a record of older rural churches, certainly subject matter more attuned to the photographer's actual interest. Rosenheim also described Evans' "superb writing" and the wonderful "poetic descriptions" in his reflections about out-of-the-way churches from this series.

In closing Rosenheim discussed the image *African American Barber Shop*, a photograph taken in Atlanta. He emphasized the empty chairs and how they were an important early example of the way Evans focused carefully on the setting, which was to become one of the dominant characteristics of much of his work.

Rosenheim invited audience members to be sure to visit the Walker Evans' personal archive once it went live on the Metropolitan Museum of Art website sometime this coming fall.

### **Introduction of 2<sup>nd</sup> speaker by Robert Lobe:**

Julian Cox is Curator of Photography at the High Museum of Art here in Atlanta. He previously worked at the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles, where he was an associate curator in the Department of Photographs.

Mr. Cox's books include two Getty publications: *Julia Margaret Cameron: the Complete Photographs* and *Spirit into Matter: the Photographs of Edmund Teske*. Later this year, Steidl will publish *Harry Callahan: Eleanor* in conjunction with an exhibition Mr. Cox is organizing that's scheduled to open at the High Museum this September.

Many believed that Julian Cox's arrival in Atlanta in 2005 signaled a new commitment by the Museum to raise the profile of its impressive photography holdings. In fact, under Mr. Cox's leadership, photographs are now on view in both the old and new buildings. Mr. Cox has made it a point to be involved with the local photography community, exhibiting prominent Atlanta photographers and showcasing important collectors in the city, including Elton John. He is also eager to bring popular photography shows to Atlanta – next month *Annie Leibovitz: A Photographer's Life* will open here.

Some of you may have seen the profile of Julian Cox that appeared just a month ago in a special "Museums" section of the New York Times. In it, Mr. Cox remarked that developing the High's photography collection was a top priority. He also noted that a special focus for departmental acquisitions was the purchase of photographs related to the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950's and 60's.

Next year this nation and the world will mark the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King's assassination. In June 2008 the High Museum will commemorate that occasion with an exhibition that Julian Cox is in the process of organizing, entitled "*Road to Freedom: Photographs of the Civil Rights Movement, 1956-1968.*" We are delighted that this morning Mr. Cox will be sharing with us some results from his research.

**Summary: "Road to Freedom: Photographs of the Civil Rights Movement"  
Julian Cox, Curator of Photography High Museum of Art, Atlanta.**

Julian Cox thanked the crowd and expressed how pleased he was to follow Jeff Rosenheim, who has such a deep knowledge of American photography. Mr. Cox encouraged the audience to visit the Atlanta History Center to see an exhibition of Martin Luther King Jr's personal papers, which were purchased from Sotheby's by Morehouse College.

Mr. Cox explained that he had lived in California for many years and knew very little about the Civil Rights Movement in the United States. Next year [2008] is an important anniversary year of Martin Luther King Jr's death and there will be an exhibition of photography and ephemera from the era at the High Museum, which will then travel to other venues. Many of these photographers are still alive and were available to comment on their legacy.

Example shown: By Danny Lyons: a Morehouse College student is lead by Julian Bond of the NAACP in this image. Mr. Cox noted that Lyons is still active and will have an exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art next year. Lyons befriended Congressman John Lewis, who was also part of SNCC (Students Non-Violent Coordinating Committee)—a group of pioneers in the non-violence movement from Fisk College. Lewis and Lyons shared an apartment in Atlanta during the time, and attended many marches together. Lyon's archive is rich in both photos and ephemera of the time.

It has been two decades since a large exhibition of this material has been on view.

Example shown: By James Karalas—images of activism training. Cox explains that participants were committed to non-violence and studied Gandi's methods.

Example shown: "Rosa Parks" – this 1956 AP photo is an example of the anonymous press photos of activists being arrested. Other items that will complement this photo in the High Museum's exhibition will be a diagram of the bus in which Rosa Parks refused to move from her seat, and her fingerprints after her arrest.

Example shown: "Martin Luther King, Jr. on a Bus" by Ernest Withers, of Memphis, who was a successful commercial photographer in the African-American community.

Examples shown: Image taken by Bob Adelman.

Photo by Marvin Roth of "Fanny Lou Hamer," who was a grass roots activist. She is shown in Roth's photo at a 1964 Democratic conference speech.

Example shown: "Jesse Jackson, 1968", taken by Constantine Manos just after Martin Luther King, Jr.'s death. Julian Cox mentioned that Manos, a Magnum

photographer originally from South Carolina, had donated all his personal items from this era to the High Museum.

Example shown: An image by photographer Leonard Freed (who died in 2006) of Martin Luther King, Jr. Julian Cox suggested that it showed how accessible Dr. King was and his "openheartedness."

Example shown: "Water Hosing in Birmingham, 1963" by Charles Moore, a photographer with the Birmingham/Photo News. Moore was very interested in journalistic photographs which captured the narrative of events. There will be a series of other photographs of this particular incident in the High Museum traveling exhibit.

Example shown: View of Birmingham in 1963 showing demonstrators being arrested, by Bruce Davidson. Many of Davidson's images from these years are shots of "real time" events as they occurred.

Examples shown: Several images of the 1965 march to Montgomery by Matt Herron and Charles Moore. Many of the leaders depicted in these photos are still active. Some have donated materials to the High Museum, and have helped Mr. Cox identify other people in the photographs.

Examples shown: Images from 1965 of the protest and march in Selma, Alabama. These are by Declan Haun, who was not as well known as the other photographers. He worked for the Charlotte Observer, which was part of the Black Star Agency.

Examples shown: UPI image of state troopers in Selma, Alabama in 1965. Images of "Bloody Sunday", March 7, 1965. Some of these images of Selma appeared at the time in *Jet* magazine, with Martin Luther King, Jr. on the cover. Image of Monroe, Alabama (1961) by Declan Haun.. Leonard Freed's 1963 image of a CORE sit-in in Brooklyn.

Mr. Cox's final image to be shown was of Coretta Scott King at her husband's funeral in 1968.

Julian Cox encouraged everyone in the audience to visit the "Road to Freedom" exhibition, which will run from June to October, 2008 at The High Museum. The exhibit will then travel around the United States (venues are still in the process of being finalized). The exhibition will partner with the new National Museum of African-American Culture in Washington, D.C., as well as New York's International Center of Photography.

### **Introduction of the 3rd and final speaker by Robert Lobe:**

Ruth Dusseault is Artist-in-Residence at Georgia Tech's College of Architecture here in Atlanta. Her various projects explore the relationship between architecture and utopianism.

Ms. Dusseault has written several reviews and features for *Art Papers*, and she has curated touring exhibitions which combine ideas from art and architecture. These include *Terrain Vague: Photography and Architecture in the Post-Industrial Landscape*, which was exhibited at the Atlanta Contemporary Art Center and at the Carnegie Museum of Art.

Ruth Dusseault has been the recipient of over a dozen artist grants and awards, including a 2006 Design grant from the NEA to photograph older Florida tourist attractions which are based on nature. She was a finalist for the 2006 Louis Comfort Tiffany award, and she was awarded the 2003 Forward Arts Foundation Emerging Artist Award.

Ruth Dusseault is represented in Atlanta by the Fay Gold Gallery. Her photographs have been exhibited internationally, and are included in the collections of the High Museum of Art, the Southeast Contemporary Art Museum, Tulane University, and the Lucinda Bunn Collection.

Since 1999, Ruth Dusseault has tracked the transformation of an historic industrial site in midtown Atlanta in her *Atlantic Steel Redevelopment Project*. This work, which was exhibited at the High Museum of Art in 2006, will be the subject of the photographer's talk this morning. In documenting this transformation, the artist has sought to avoid representing history as simply consisting of "before" and "after" imagery. Rather, she hopes her photographs "sustain a living memory of change by instigating a dialog about the nature of urban development, about the memory of place, about the postmodern city and the idea of progress."

Please welcome photographer Ruth Dusseault.

**Summary: "Documenting the Atlanta Steel Redevelopment Project"  
Ruth Dusseault, Photographer and Artist-in-Residence, Georgia Institute of Technology, College of Architecture, Atlanta.**

Ruth Dusseault introduces her work by describing utopian constructs in architecture and the concept of creating a whole world from scratch in the middle of nowhere. She describes modernists as "wanting to start with a clean slate." She discusses Norman Bel Geddes' design of the interstate highway system in the United States and how it was inspired by industrialism. Walt Disney's monorail and his Epcot (Experimental Prototype City of Tomorrow - now a theme park) were hot topics in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Today, "Celebration, Florida," a planned community based on a pre-industrial town, has created much controversy.

Dusseault describes herself as being raised in Florida by parents from Boston and Chicago. During her childhood she explored suburban Atlanta's "edge cities" that formed around shopping malls.

Example shown: Image of a steel mill tower, which was later installed in an apartment complex (Ms. Dusseault noted that it was removed just recently and was now in storage.)

Ruth Dusseault then introduced images of her project to document a steel mill's destruction, and the subsequent development of condominiums and commercial real estate on the site.

Examples shown:

Images of the steel mill before demolition

Documentation of the transformation of the property

Images of the land swept clean

Views of the new city, now called "Atlantic Station" (located close to the conference hotel).

At the peak of the mill's operation, there were 5,000 employees of mixed race who participated in what was a dangerous industry. Later, women were employed. Most of the workers lived nearby in a close-knit community.

The transformation that Ms. Dusseault documented took place from 1999 to 2006.

Examples shown:

Image of the substructure of mill. Developers took over the site when the above-ground structures were removed. Dusseault stated that her images are not just "before and after" photos. They offer a "gaze" at ideas about progress and the desire to design whole places and entire cities.

Examples shown:

Image of exposed old sewers. These had to be removed, and a 40 foot pit dug, in order to begin construction of a parking structure.

Image of a GPS surveyor

The first straight line in the new city

Image of a new storm water system

The construction of a sewer pond

A series of images of the parking deck

These images are inspired by flat plans without decoration and relate to industrial plans around the world. The last part of the series reveals how the area changed into its final form.

Ms. Dusseault then provided some facts about the city of Atlanta. Atlanta is the United States leader in population gain. It is the nation's number one city in terms of job growth, and has experienced a huge influx of 25 to 34 year-olds. Atlanta also has the largest black urban middle class population in the country.

The kind of documentary photography with which Ruth Dusseault is engaged does relate to the tradition of Walker Evans' recording of the depression-era South. However, the "new South" of her photographs is urban and suburban middle class;

all the farming that remains is agri-business. Most of the folk artists have died away. And a high percentage of the youth population consists of despondent teens.

The new space is composed of mediocre condominiums which lack a circadian rhythm, relating only to the tick of an industrial clock. This is a place of boredom, of addiction, which has no connection to nature or history. The new buildings "have no memory" to them.

In Ruth Dusseault's closing image, an historical statue of "Peace and Justice" is being brought into the new mall area on a vintage cart. It will be placed on the mall alongside a newly minted "neoclassical" arch. Such a juxtaposition creates a kind of 21<sup>st</sup> century gallery space.

Moderator Robert Lobe thanked the speakers for a very rich and stimulating session, after which the presenters had time to answer a few questions from the audience. The session concluded at 10:35 am.