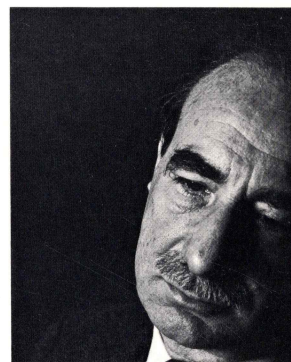
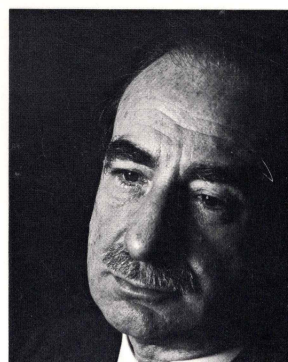
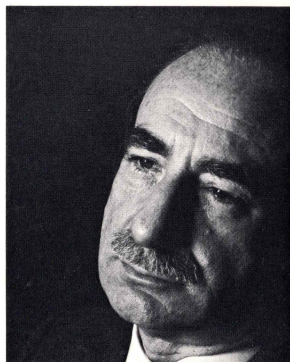
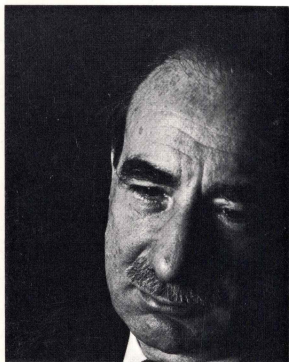
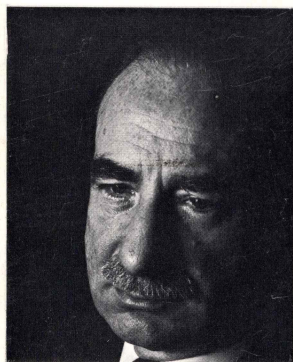
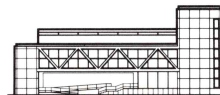

The Portrait Extended



The Portrait Extended

Edited and with an essay by Charles Desmarais



Museum of Contemporary Art
237 East Ontario Chicago IL 60611

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Cover: Mark Berghash, *A Serial Portrait of Charles Lieber*, 1979; starting from back cover, left to right: "Mother," "Father," "First Son," "Second Son," "Third Son," "Daughter," "Self Past," "Self Present," "Self Future."

Introduction

John Hallmark Neff
Director

This is the first exhibition, to my knowledge, which deals specifically with the underlying motive of photography: most cameras are used not to make "Photographs" but to record the images of the people, places, and things which make up our lives. (On an average day it is estimated that in America, amateurs annually make over 19 million snapshots.) "The Portrait Extended," in nonetheless sophisticated works, has been organized not according to the usual formal concern for the visual characteristics of the work, but, like the lowly snapshot, according to what it means. This exhibition does not look or feel like the usual photographic show; it is an exhibition which raises many questions about not only Photography but the conventions which have grown up and about its very presentation in galleries and museums, its identity as art. I am very grateful to Charles Desmarais for proposing and organizing this important exhibition for the Museum of Contemporary Art and for carrying it through in the face of sometimes unexpected circumstances. His essay is well worth reading.

I would also like to thank on behalf of the Museum and our guest curator the following: Jim Alinder and David Featherstone of the Friends of Photography, Carmel, California; and Ellen Carey and Dan Meinwald whose discussions helped to define the ideas in this exhibition. Thanks as well to Janet Borden of the Robert Freidus Gallery, New York; Jim Enyeart and Terry Pitts of the Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona; David Ruttenberg, David Travis, Stuart Wilbur, and the Light Gallery, New York, for their assistance and efforts to obtain and expedite often difficult loans. Patty Carroll added creative suggestions throughout.

At the MCA I would like to acknowledge particularly the ongoing efforts of Lynne Warren, Curatorial Assistant, to coordinate the exhibition. Judith Russi Kirshner, formerly museum Curator, also contributed to the exhibition in its first stages.

We are of course grateful to the lenders who generously shared photographs from their collections and especially thankful for the cooperation of the artists whose work has made the exhibition possible, particularly Meridel Rubenstein, who helped develop the exhibition concept at the beginning.

The exhibition and catalogue have been made possible in part by grants from the Visual Arts Program of the National Endowment for the Arts, a Federal agency, the Illinois Arts Council, a State agency, and Museum operating funds.

Foreword

Charles Desmarais
Guest Curator

For all the articles in *Time* magazine, the essays in the *New Yorker* and the *New York Review of Books*, the record prices brought at auction and the record crowds attending museum exhibitions, photography confounds us still.

On the one hand is the medium's sophisticated technological basis: a labyrinth of f/stops, contrast grades, characteristic curves, and gamma for some, pure magic for others. On the other hand we have the myth of "photography-as-art," a notion only valid within a revised and much-expanded definition of art, though a convenient sales tool for those who think they see an opportunity for quick profit and high return.

The common confusions about photography (at least, the kind of photography made for public display) are often posed as questions which, though answerable, seem to get us no closer to an understanding of the basic issues of photographic practice and meaning. Though they take many forms and vary widely in details, such questions can often be distilled to: How was the photograph made? ("Look at that detail!" "What camera do you use?" "A powerful composition of lines and tone.") Or: How was the value of the photograph determined? ("Why is such an apparently ordinary photograph displayed here?" "Four hundred dollars for a photograph?")

Understanding photographs will remain an almost impossible goal for as long as we continue to ask the wrong questions. Photography equipment advertising pervades the mass media, prompting a fixation on technology. The museumization of photography has too often taken the form of a reductive, point-for-point transposition of (formalist) painting ideas to photographs made with many different motives and a wide variety of purposes. In this exhibition we have attempted an experiment in curatorship based upon what pictures mean, rather than what they look like. The viewer is invited to look at these photographs "not as pictures of," in Robert Heinecken's words, "but as pictures *about*."

Narrative and Context

In one sense, much of what we see in photographs is entirely gratuitous. A photographer cannot control the placement and inclusion of every blade of grass, each crack in the wall, every nuance of gesture. There may be an obvious point of interest—say, a figure standing before a landmark—but how can we know that everything else within the edge of the picture was included by someone who wanted the picture to look exactly as it does? If a boulder seems ready to fall on a car in the corner of the photograph, and the land-

mark is a waterfall which appears to charge toward the figure's right ear, can we deduce that the picture is a statement about nature's revenge on modern man? Surely not, if the picture is a snapshot in someone's pile of disparate photographs, where the only common strain is figures before landmarks. But probably so, if the other pictures in the pile suggest some of the same feelings about nature's ultimate triumph.

With the realization that context must play so important a role in the interpretation of photographs has come recognition of photography's close relationship to literature, film, and video. Just as an otherwise obscure sentence or movie frame becomes specifically meaningful by its position in a novel or film, a photograph acquires specificity when considered with reference to a larger whole. For this reason, the book and the "photo-essay" remain important forums for the presentation of photographs. But the number of photographers has grown faster than their traditional outlets, and current fashion requires that photographs with a public purpose be designed for display on gallery walls. A logical outgrowth has been an attempt by many photographers to preserve the contextual identity of their work, by publishing thematic portfolios, insisting on exhibition of groupings of their photographs (as opposed to the single-image, "artwork" approach), designing installations which must be seen as a unified "piece," self-publishing books and broadsides which may not have a commercial market, mounting and printing photographs together as single units, and other such strategies.

"The Portrait Extended" examines the use of some of these strategies in the construction of visual biography. This essay, though, must first discuss some of the antecedents of this new work: the classic, serial approach to extended portraiture, as represented by the family photo album and by the work of Alfred Stieglitz, Harry Callahan, Richard Avedon, and Emmet Gowin.

The work shown in this exhibition is based on different approaches to similar concerns. The eight photographers included share with the family album photographer a desire to fully describe another individual—usually someone very close. But biography is a narrative activity, as much as it is a descriptive one. Faced with prevailing attitudes which emphasize the painting-world concept of an artwork as an isolated, integrated pictorial statement, these young contemporary photographers have felt a need to re-introduce (or re-emphasize) narrative context in a medium which has narrative at its root.

The Portrait Extended— Serial Portraiture

Photography and portraiture go back together a long way—to the earliest days of the process itself. Though photography's inventors had scientific, technical, and artistic uses in mind for the medium, the public imagination was first stirred by the possibility of owning the likeness of oneself or another person. That fascination is still with us: surely no other category of photographic subject demands more film and paper than the records we make of each other's faces.

And yet, there's something unsatisfying in a single picture of someone we love. It never really looks like him or her, and never conveys the important information. ("He's a doctor in San Francisco. He's in love with a nice girl and he hopes to marry her." "They left town about a year ago, and I hear she got a good job but he's still looking. It's awfully hard on them, and I wouldn't be surprised if it ended in divorce. Too bad about the kids, though.") The possibility of a "total" or "extended" portrait—a "complete image" of an individual formed by combining a whole range of documents of their aspect and personality—has occupied many photographers throughout the short history of the medium. The amateur, of course, has most often and most extensively explored this theme (though perhaps unsystematically, or even unconsciously), and the volumes upon volumes of snapshot albums centered around a single person or a small group—often supplemented by captions and other written documents—attest to a desire in all of us to gain insight into other human beings by picturing them.

Alfred Stieglitz assembled what was probably the first self-consciously "artistic" extended portrait, in his famous series of photographs of Georgia O'Keeffe. He titled this complete series of over 500 photographs, *A Portrait*. He felt, we're told, that a true portrait would record the entire life and death of the subject, and then continue with his or her child. Though the O'Keeffe portrait fell far short of his impossible ideal, the work stands as one of photography's most lovingly persistent attempts to comprehend the significance of another human being in the artist's life.

A Portrait covers a range of Stieglitz's responses to a woman of extremely diverse moods and aspects. Many of the pictures are blatantly erotic—near-abstract idealizations of the powerful sexual attraction this young lover must have held for a man in his mid-50s. But the series also consists of snapshots of O'Keeffe, and large, carefully made platinum prints of her clowning for the camera. Her hands, beautiful in their shape and proportions as well as emblematic of her skill as a painter, appear again and again, both



Southworth and Hawes. A nineteenth century daguerreotype portrait. Courtesy The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Gift of Dr. Edward S. Hawes and Miss Marion Augusta Hawes, 1939.

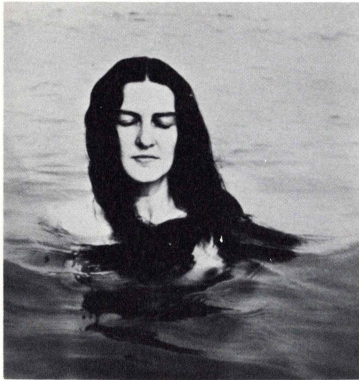
within the full-face portraits and in close-up sexual metaphors of stroking and grasping. In some prints, she glowers from the dark surface of the photograph, suggesting a threat she finally carried out when she left him to live in the desert and paint.

Stieglitz was part of the vanguard of photographers who felt their mission was to bring the medium out of its nineteenth century function as pure record of fact. To do this, he relied on form as a quasi-mystical symbolism for what he hoped were universal emotions and ideas. Yet his personal life, loves, and thoughts about the world remained an important component of the pictures he made. When Harry Callahan began working in the 1940s, the desire to avoid the exclusive identification of a photograph with its nominal subject was especially strong for many photographers. By the time he came to Chicago to teach at the Institute of Design (IIT) in 1946, his work fit well into the doctrine of cool formalism typically fostered by that institution. Yet, amid all the pictures which gain their impact from their transformation of the world into an obvious photographic abstraction, one finds the portraits of Eleanor.

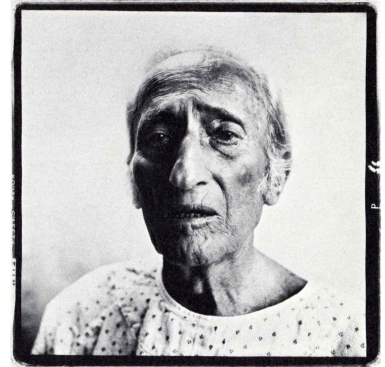
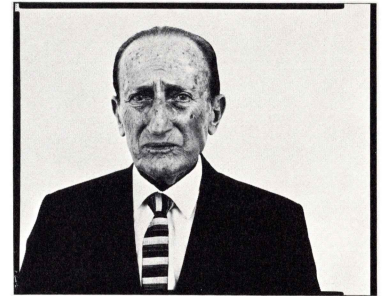
Throughout most of his career, Callahan has photographed his wife, often standing in a tin-soldier snapshot pose—recalling those photo tips for amateurs that advise us to always include a human figure for scale—providing a human center for an exercise in graphic transcription of the environment. Sometimes Eleanor becomes a somewhat more specific metaphor—perhaps a spotlighted island of comfort and stability, softly glowing at the center of a dark room.

In 1958, Callahan made a series of photographs while on sabbatical in France which combine, by double exposure, the image of a nude female torso with natural elements (a tree, a bush, etc.). Only the title of these pictures indicates that the body is Eleanor's, but in the context of Callahan's extended portrait of his wife as an archetypal source of life and comfort, no series of photographs could be a more appropriate summation.

Callahan's portrait of Eleanor seems to have grown in a less directed and conscientious way than did the Stieglitz portrait of O'Keeffe—perhaps more in the way that a collection of snapshots is built by the vernacular photographer. Stieglitz "catalogued" O'Keeffe, in a sense—one can imagine him asking Georgia to sit "just once more," so that some inconsistency in his grand enterprise could be remedied. Richard Avedon's short serial portrait of his father, Jacob Israel Avedon, is even more deliberately constructed.



Harry Callahan, *Eleanor*, Chicago, 1949. Courtesy Light Gallery.



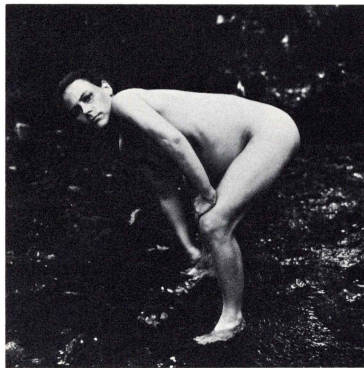
Richard Avedon, *Jacob Israel Avedon, father of photographer*, Sarasota, Fla. Top: 3/27/69; bottom: 12/19/72.

Callahan and Stieglitz—and some of the other photographers who work with the extended portrait idea—seek to describe their subjects in such a way as to leave much to the viewer's interpretation. Avedon chose to be specific. There are no additional levels on which to consider these seven pictures of the photographer's dying father, other than as his personal response to this specific death and to painful death in general. Another artist might have used the serial portrait as a tool to explain some of the subtleties of the event or of his or her response. Avedon hammers together, picture by picture, a foundation of tension for the final, horrid image of an emaciated old man.

Emmet Gowin, though closer in age to the photographers in this exhibition (he was born in 1941), works in a classic style related to the styles of Callahan and Stieglitz. The formal strictness of their work, though, and especially their penchant for abstraction and idealization, are not so apparent in Gowin's work. Gowin's photographs of his wife, Edith, give us the feeling that we know her, in each of her various attitudes. In this sense, they are like the Stieglitz portrait. But Gowin's brand of contemporary romanticism is informed by photography's rediscovery of its ability to convince through verisimilitude. It is thoroughly modern in its idea that the larger-than-life symbol of Woman or Mother is a falsehood from the start. Edith comes off, not as a marble rendition of the Moods of Woman, but as a living presence at the series of epiphanies which, for Gowin, is everyday life.

Against this background of custom and tradition, all contemporary portraits must form their own attempt to understand and communicate. The Extended Portrait is no art movement or school. On the contrary, it is the rare camera owner who hasn't, at one time or another, made a series of photographs of some familiar face or body. But, as in all the arts, the recent history of photography has been one of attention to form and to the manner of construction and presentation of pictures, often at the expense of a proper examination of meaning and content. As a result, modern photographers have tended to avoid the overtly personal, sentimental, or connotative, and career photographers who make forays into such projects often do so only "for themselves" with no thought of including such pictures among those by which they prefer to have themselves known.

Today, as picture-makers in all media move back to content, photographers searching for alternatives to formalism see at least a hope of embrace by the establishment.



The Portrait Extended—
In Search
of a Total Portraiture



Above and opposite: Emmet Gowin,
Edith, Newton, Pa., 1974. Courtesy
Light Gallery.

The Portrait Extended

Aspects of the True Self

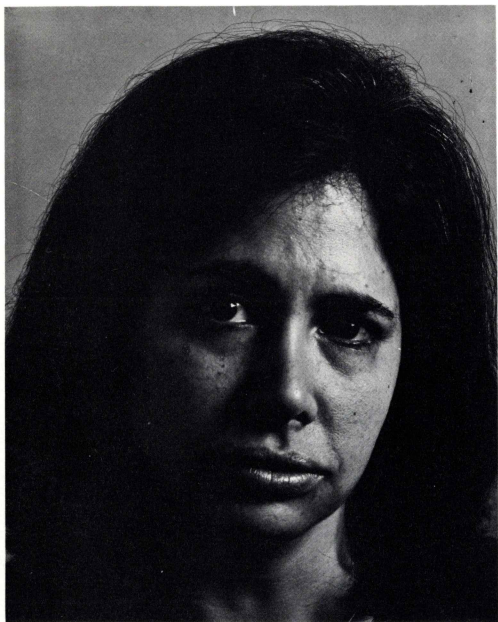
My teacher, Dr. Preston McLean, a psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, said that a person's character is his destiny. Character and values originate and are tied up with what he called the original cast of characters, namely our parents and siblings. In turn our character and values are passed on, in one form or another, to our offspring—the biological as well as the nonbiological ones. This is the main notion behind my portrait taking, and my attempt to record aspects of a person's true and inner self.

The complete portrait is made up of a series of expressions evoked by asking the subject to think about his/her mother, father, siblings, children, self in the past, present, and future.* I give the subject control of the shutter and leave the room. The reason that I leave the subject alone in the room is to allow for a private setting in which the subject can recollect his/her thoughts and feelings without being self-conscious. When the subject feels that the person that I have asked him/her to think about (e.g., mother) is strong in the mind's eye (by a feeling, or a recall of an event, etc.) he/she releases the shutter. I then enter the room, change the film holder, and ask the subject to think about the next person on the list, (father), and so on.

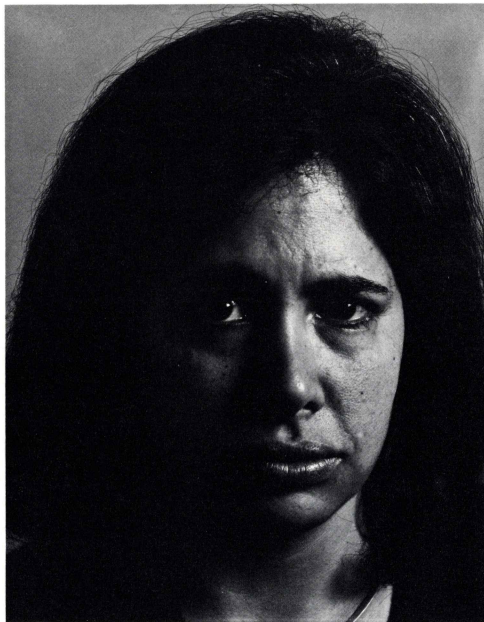
I do the complete series twice, first using the type of lighting and framing as chosen by the subject, and secondly as chosen by me. (My framing is almost always a close up head shot). The finished serial portrait consists of six or more photographs mounted in order side by side. It is important that they are spread out and viewed this way, so that the flow and subtle changes, as well as the obvious ones, can be seen.

Lately I have been following up the photographic sessions with a taped interview in which the subject relates his/her experiences while photographing.

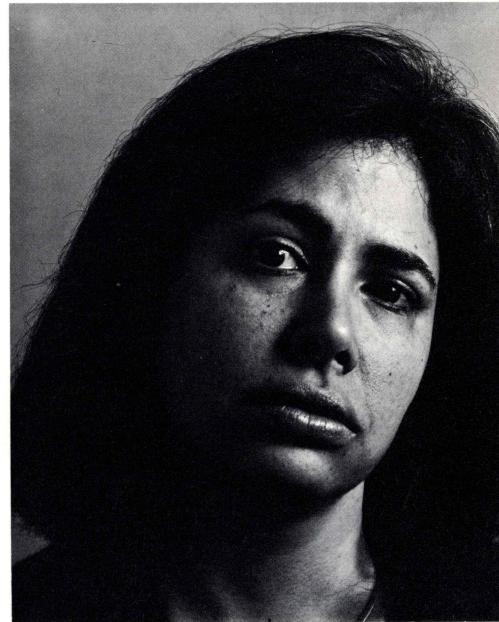
*The earlier portraits did not always include all of these aspects of self.



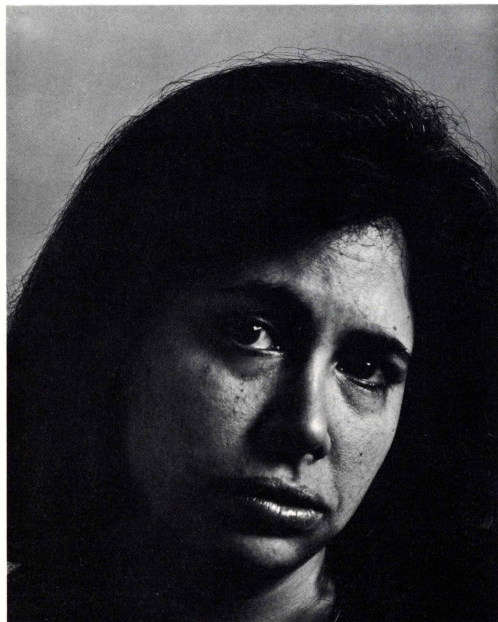
Mother



Father



Brother



Self Past

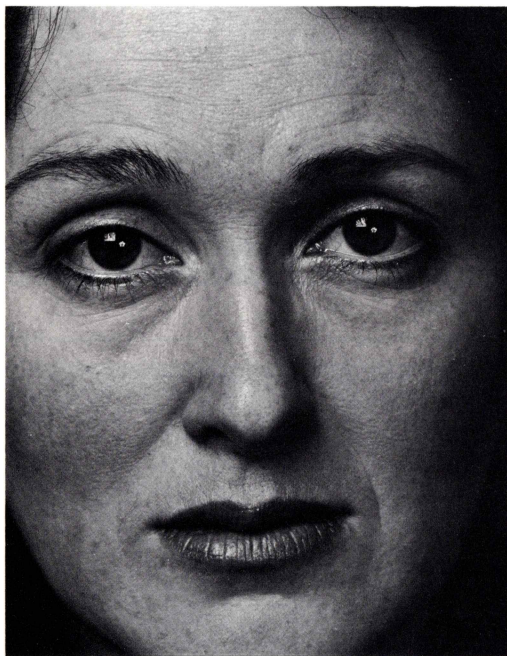


Self Present

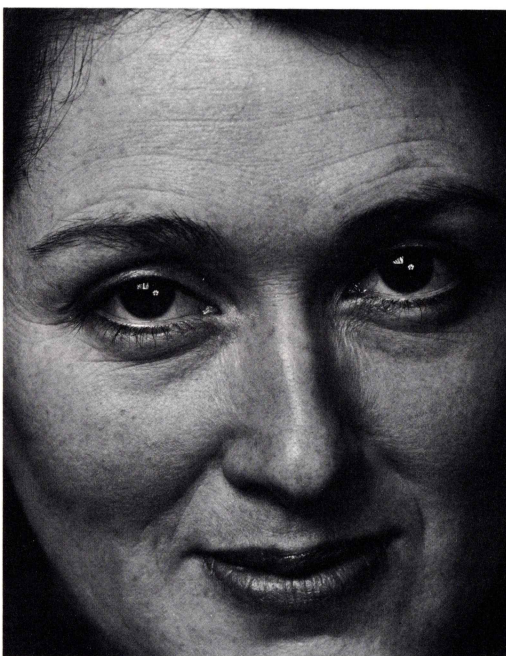


Self Future

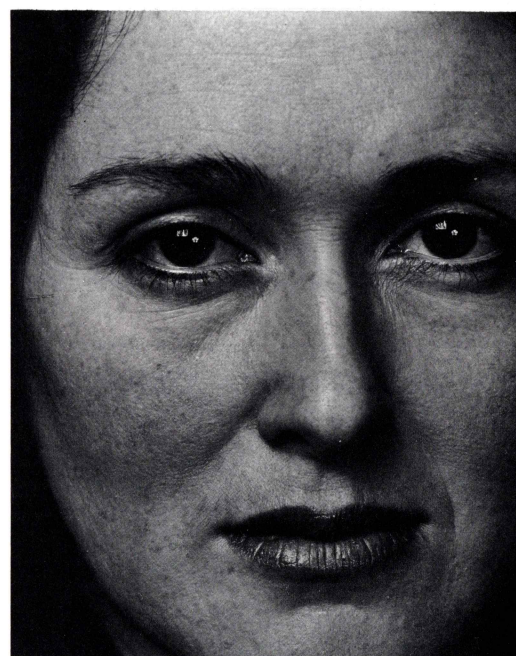
Mark Berghash



Mother



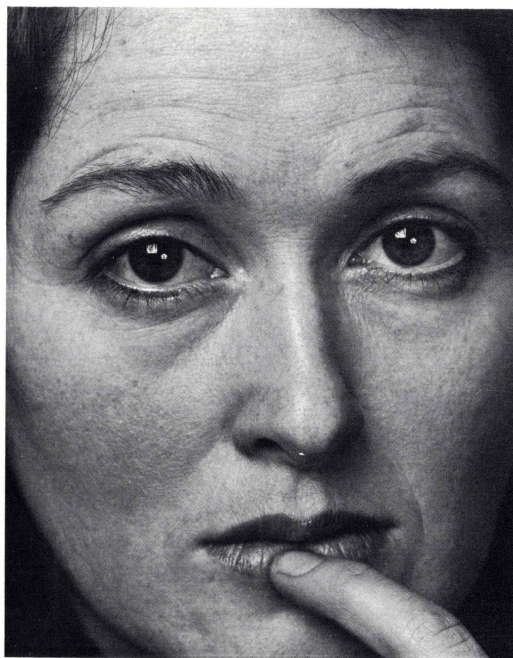
Father



Brother



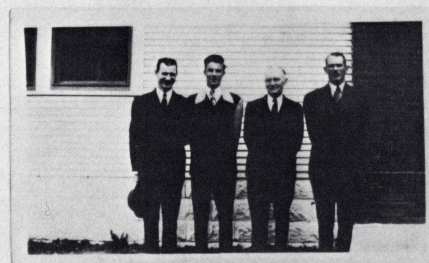
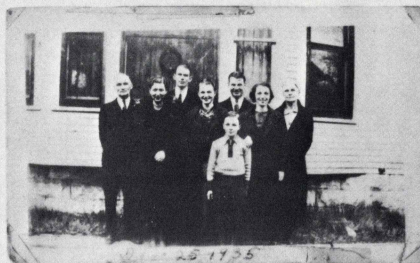
Self Past



Self Present



Self Future



1928 Last year on the farm
 Harold Vernon
 Laurena Myra
 Elbie

Harold born Apr 4 - 1910
 Vernon " Feb 27 - 1912
 Laurena June 1 1917
 Myra Aug 14 1919
 Elbie G Sept 7 1926
 John Guernille M Neil
 born Sept 18 1886
 Leila Muddrell M Neil
 Nov 24 1888
 Eula Mary Oct 4 1913

VERNON, ELBIE, FATHER, HAROLD
 (BOYING)
 c. 1940?
 447.

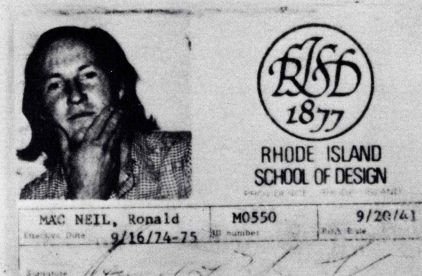
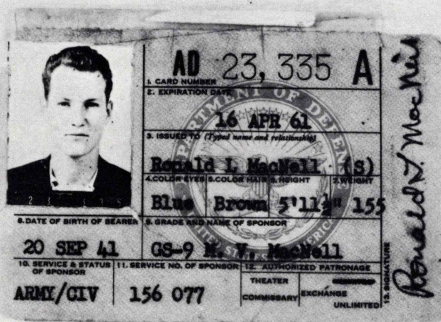
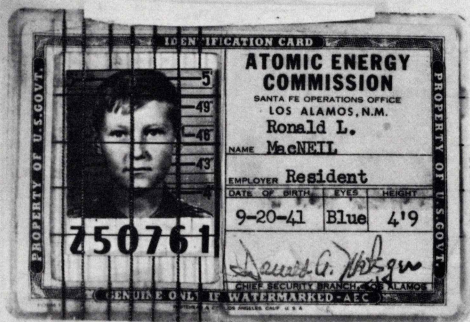


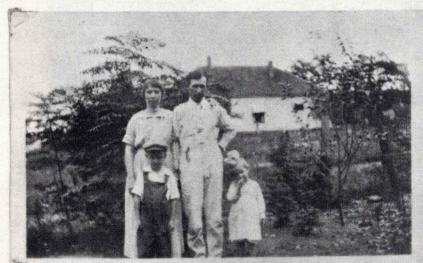
Aug. 31 '32 - Cass L.



April 20, 1930



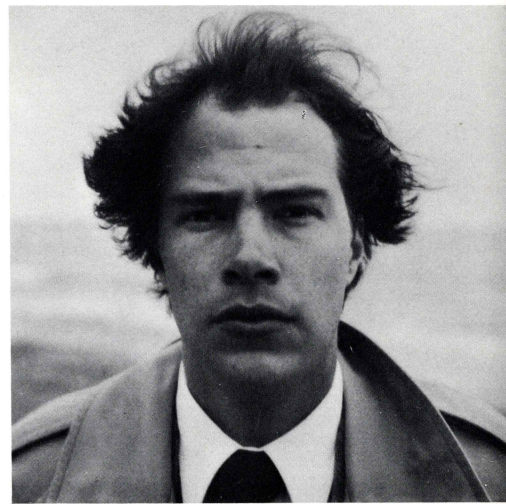
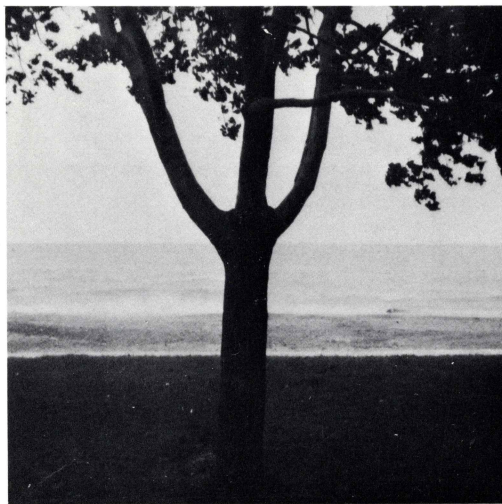
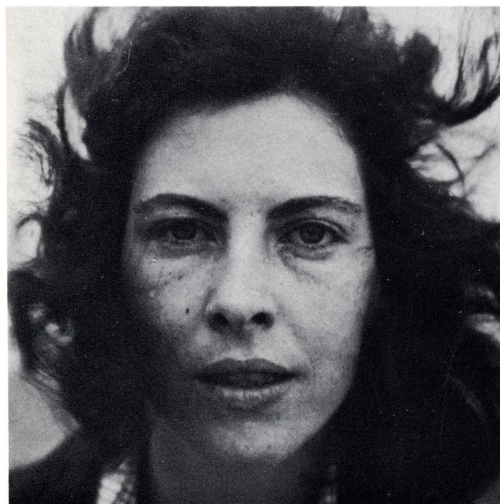


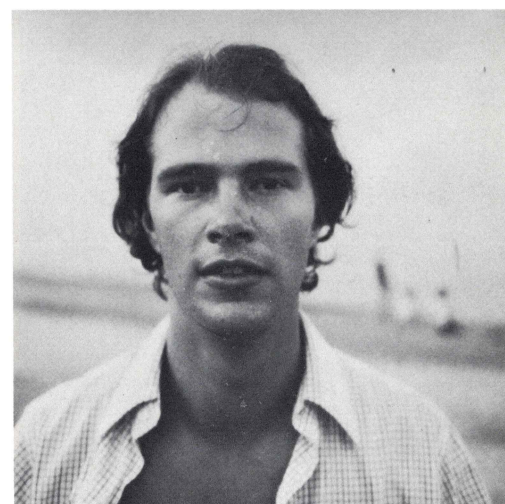
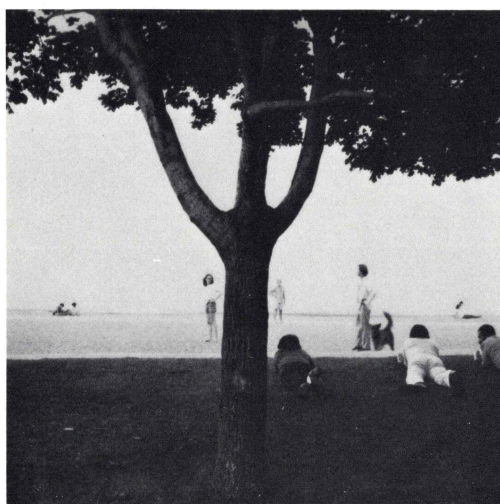
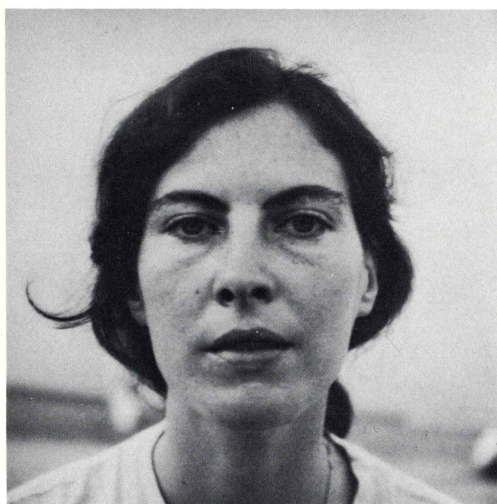


Mrs. Calvins
 Sunday school
 class
 DICKSON - FRONT ROW - LEFT
 DICKSON - FRONT ROW - LEFT

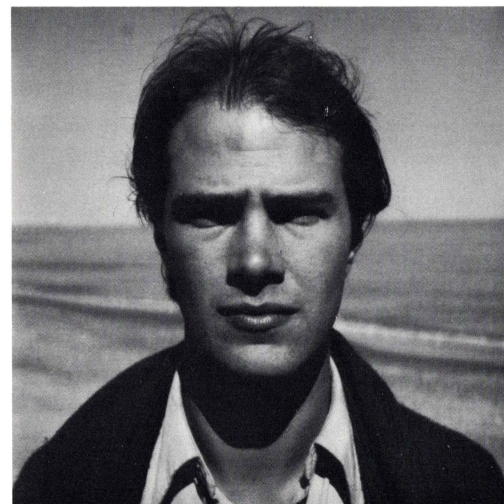
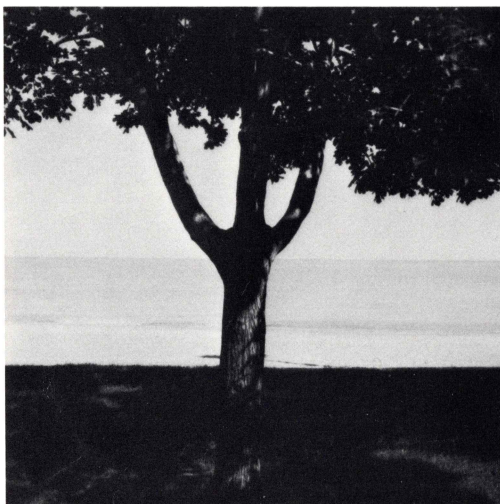
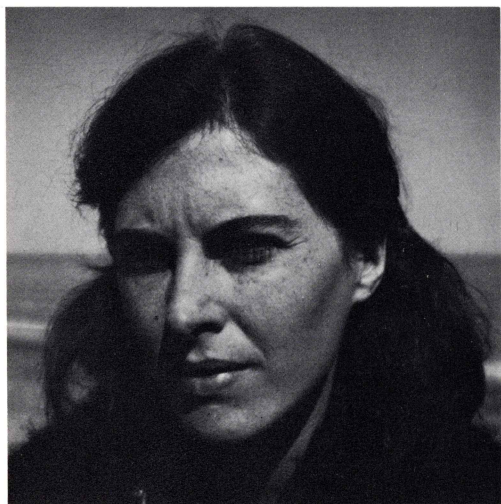
BERNARD'S family
 GIRL, RIGHT FRONT,
 NOT PART OF FAMILY
 NEIGHBORHOOD DOG
 DOG

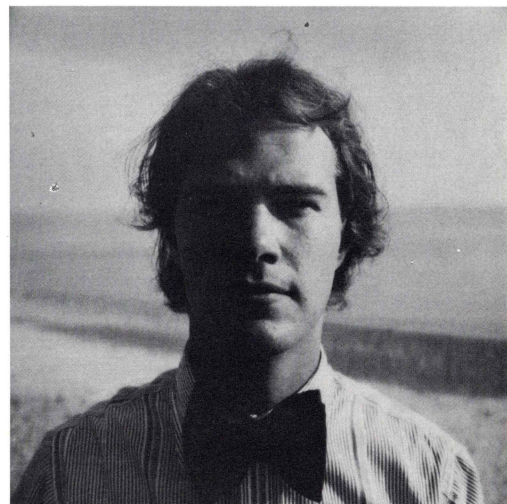
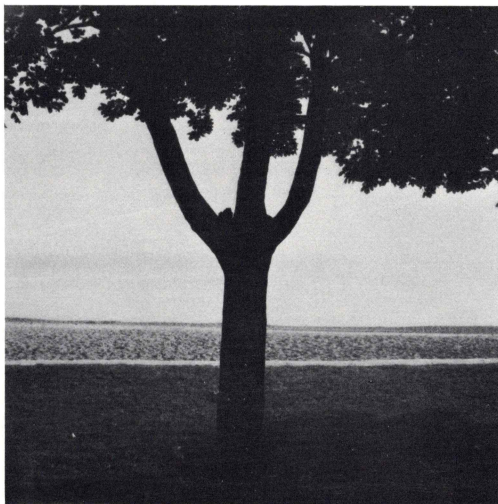
H. & Bowen
 family E



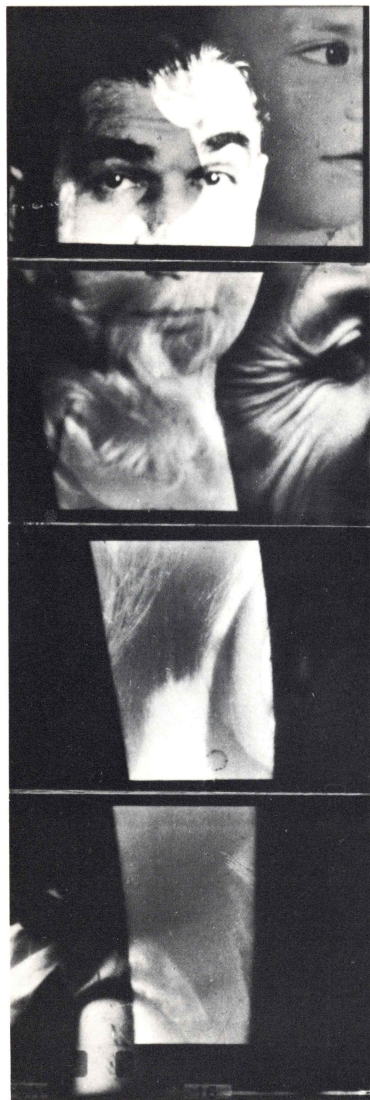


Martha Madigan





Esther Parada



Detail

"Old paint on canvas, as it ages, sometimes becomes transparent. When that happens it is possible, in some pictures, to see the original lines: a tree will show through a woman's dress, a child makes way for a dog, a large boat is no longer on an open sea. That is called *pentimento* because the painter "repented," changed his mind. Perhaps it would be as well to say that the old conception, replaced by a later choice, is a way of seeing and then seeing again.

That is all I mean about the people in this book. The paint has aged now and I wanted to see what was there for me once, what is there for me now."

from *Pentimento* by Lillian Hellman

A small gold-framed photograph of the fifteenth wedding anniversary celebration of my great aunt and uncle (March 23, 1920) is the basis of this 100 frame composite piece which I have titled *Past Recovery*. The original 1920 photograph becomes the matrix for other family photographs (dating from 1910 through 1978) which are layered upon it. My sister's face at age two, for example, is juxtaposed with her own image thirty years later and with that of a great aunt whom we never met, although family legend has it that they were cast in the same mold. Similarly, I see other members of that family gathering through the filter of my own cumulative experience.

The past is woven into the fabric of the present—genetically, psychologically, optically—and is transformed, beyond recovery.



Detail



Esther Parada

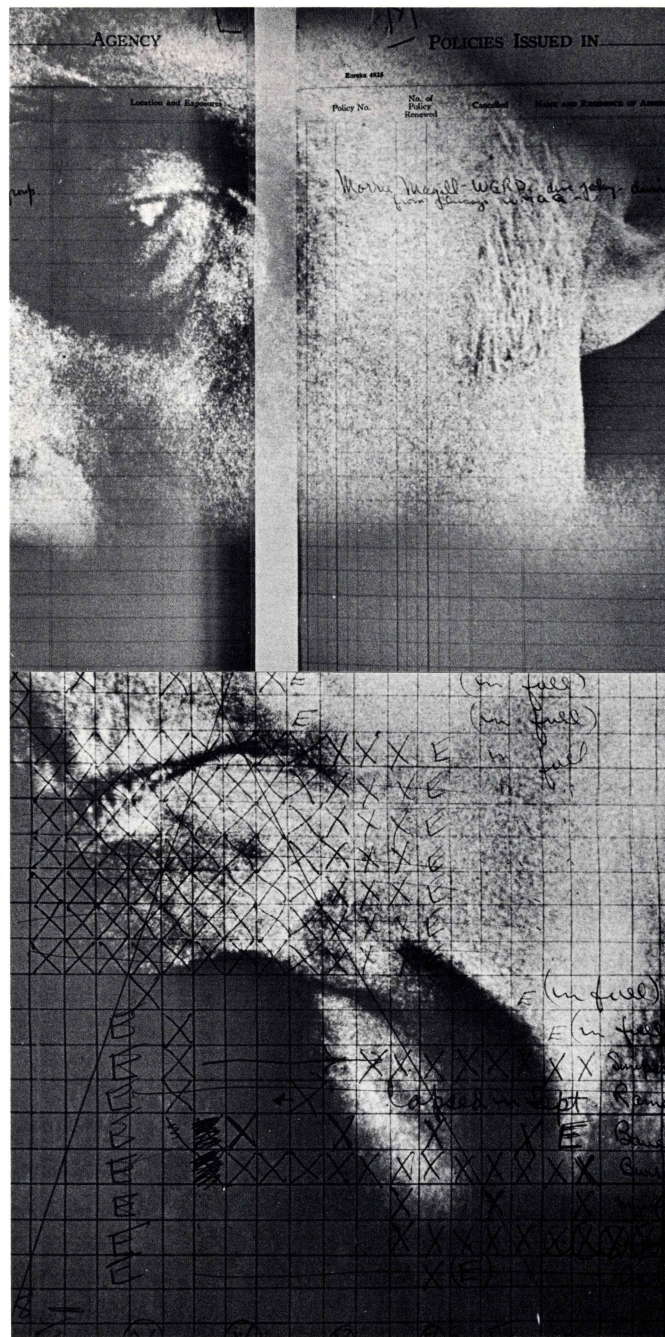
A photograph of my father made in 1972, about a year before his death, is the basis for the *Memory Warp* portrait series.

Although this particular picture is prominent in my memory and in the work, it hardly begins to capture the variety of his life. Therefore I have used the single photograph as a warp, interweaving many fragments from his business ledgers, sheet music, photographs, homilies, newspaper clippings, etc. They are my selection of what he himself chose to collect.

Memory Warp II focuses on my father's strong identity as an insurance salesman. At the same time, it examines both the continuity and contrast of his life with mine. As a parallel with my father's methodical record-keeping, for instance, I have included some of my own diagrams, notes, and exposure data generated during this work. On the other hand, certain quotations from my own collection counterpoint his "Secrets of Success" . . . as do the rhythm, slant and weight of his handwriting and mark-making.

Our family palimpsest is further layered with passages from the Torah and Talmud. These sacred texts formed the psychic core of my grandfathers' generation. Though subsequent generations shifted to largely secular activity, there is kinship with the earlier religious energy expressed through our professional rituals. Perhaps it is not inappropriate to claim a certain Talmudic quality for my work itself, for it is a layering of visual "commentary" on the basic portrait image.

*This project is funded in part by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council



Detail

25

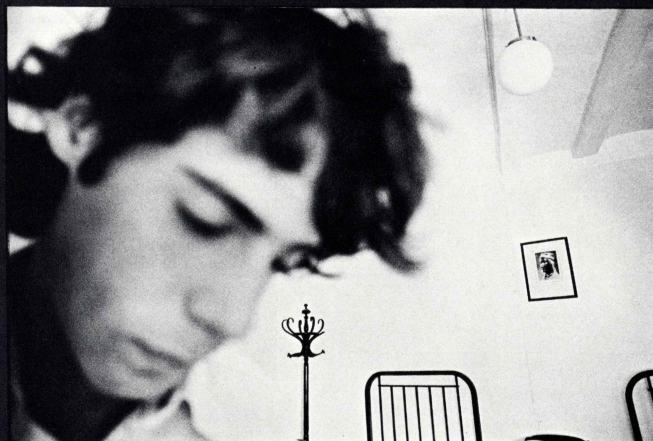
Barbara Jo Revelle

my father is a big game hunter so I grew up surrounded by dead lion and tiger heads, elk horns, bear skins ...
We have a photograph of my brother at about age seven with his first squirrel but I never handled a gun



until I was seventeen. The thing that amazed me then was how natural it felt and how I'd always do better when I didn't aim. Gary Winogrand says you should shoot so fast after the impulse hits that there is no time for your brain or your ego to mess up the picture.

Ira must have known that the situation lacked real tragic stature but he was young then, and a somewhat humorless Jewish romantic. Anyway our Arab "friend" had clearly ripped us off. No two ways about



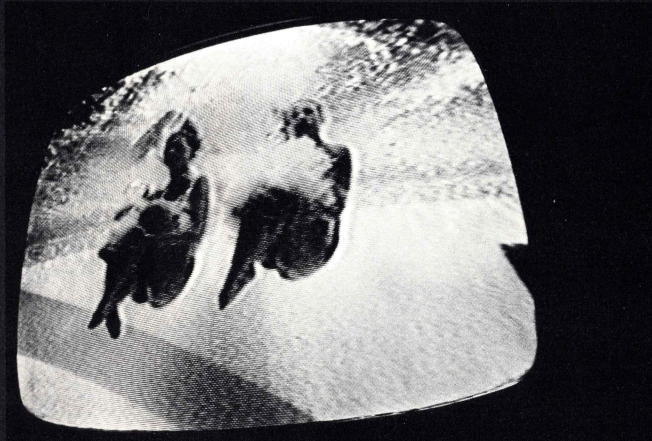
it. And Ira was sick from the boat ride or the pigeon stew - and not a good traveler even when healthy. Actually there wasn't much potential for fun left - but certain art possibilities remained. Looking back I'm sure he sees it. He's grown up so much in four years.

my mother has never been in the desert and it's probably a good thing because she doesn't like hard-
ship. For example, she always complains about the bed on vacations. I can sleep anywhere - the ground,



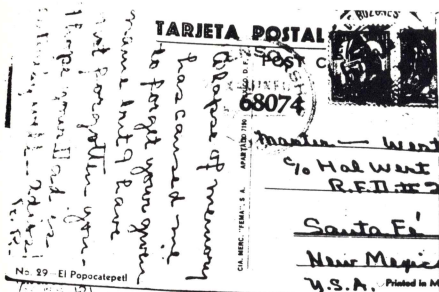
train luggage racks - anywhere. When she was pregnant with me my grandparents took her to Mexico. They
would go into the desert to watch cock fights but Grandma Lowry says my mother would always
stay by the ocean to work on her tan.

Alex says he has a hunger for the infinite and tonight, flying back over that upstate New York Lake in the dark in my parents' little plane - I know just what he means. Light flickers on the water and I think of



the bodies of my two drowned teen-age friends - never recovered. Way before that happened I remember playing I was the queen of the lake on a floating log nearly every day one summer.

A black and white photograph of two women standing in a desert. On the left is an elderly woman with short, light-colored hair, wearing a dark jacket over a patterned button-down shirt. On the right is a younger woman with long, dark hair, wearing a dark turtleneck and a patterned skirt. They are both looking at the camera. The background is a vast, arid landscape with sparse, low-lying vegetation and a distant, rounded hill under a clear sky. The photograph has rounded corners and a white border.



Dear Archie,
do you know this place? Can't remember whether you have been here but you have probably read about it. Love to you all.
Charlie Minton

Post Card
Master Archie
Route 2
Santa Fe
New Mexico

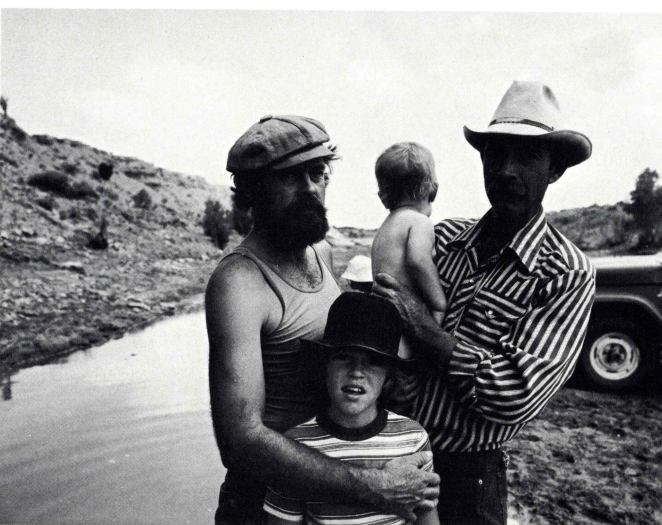
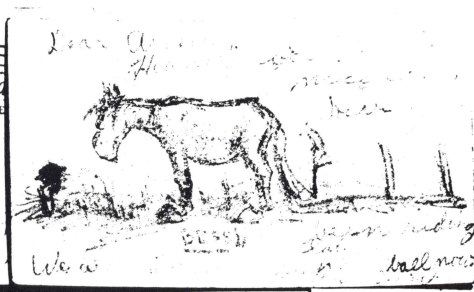
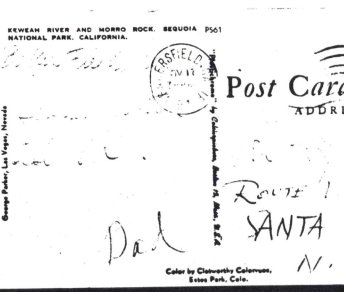
Dear Archie,
I think you could make up a story about this, couldn't you? I haven't seen any photos on this trip, but lots of cattle - and some tiny baby goats. Love from
Charlie Minton

ST. 1942
JUN 7
R 5 PM
N.B.L.

The old West Texas Longhorn, now almost extinct, is a symbol of frontier. Trail herd days when thousands upon thousands of these picturesque half-wild animals dotted the West Texas cattle ranges. Stocky, white-faced, horned Herefords have replaced them.

Oct. 7th, 1942.

Dear son,
I see his boy, and the sometimes let I think he is still like it here, let's hope he is. Love from
Archie West
524 Canyon Road
Santa Fe, New Mexico.



LILY BOND AND BOND STAND.
GARFIELD PARK, CHICAGO

Bond concerts are given here during the summer season. The spacious grounds of the Bond Stand afford ample room for the thousands who attend and enjoy the music.

Saturday night, 11-15
Dear Archie,
Daddy's alone here from some time. I think of you and hope I'll be back before long. They called up tonight and said they had a bed for me at the apartment hospital. I'll be there. Be a good boy. Love to all
Daddy.

Post Card
Master Archie
Route 2 Box 3
Santa Fe
New Mexico

The "Horned Toad" is a species of lizard known to all the arid desert regions of the Southwest - New Mexico, Arizona, California, Texas, and Nevada. It is a very vicious and grotesque in appearance, they are horrid.

Dear Archie,
If you like a horned toad, you would be so funny as could be. There would be a lot to love if you had to look after one. Love from
Charlie Minton

Looking west from Pecos River to seen winding toward Lake Mead. Due to the river gorge and the elevation the river runs on a course of heights of 10,000 feet.

Dear Archie,
I hope you are well. Love from
Charlie Minton

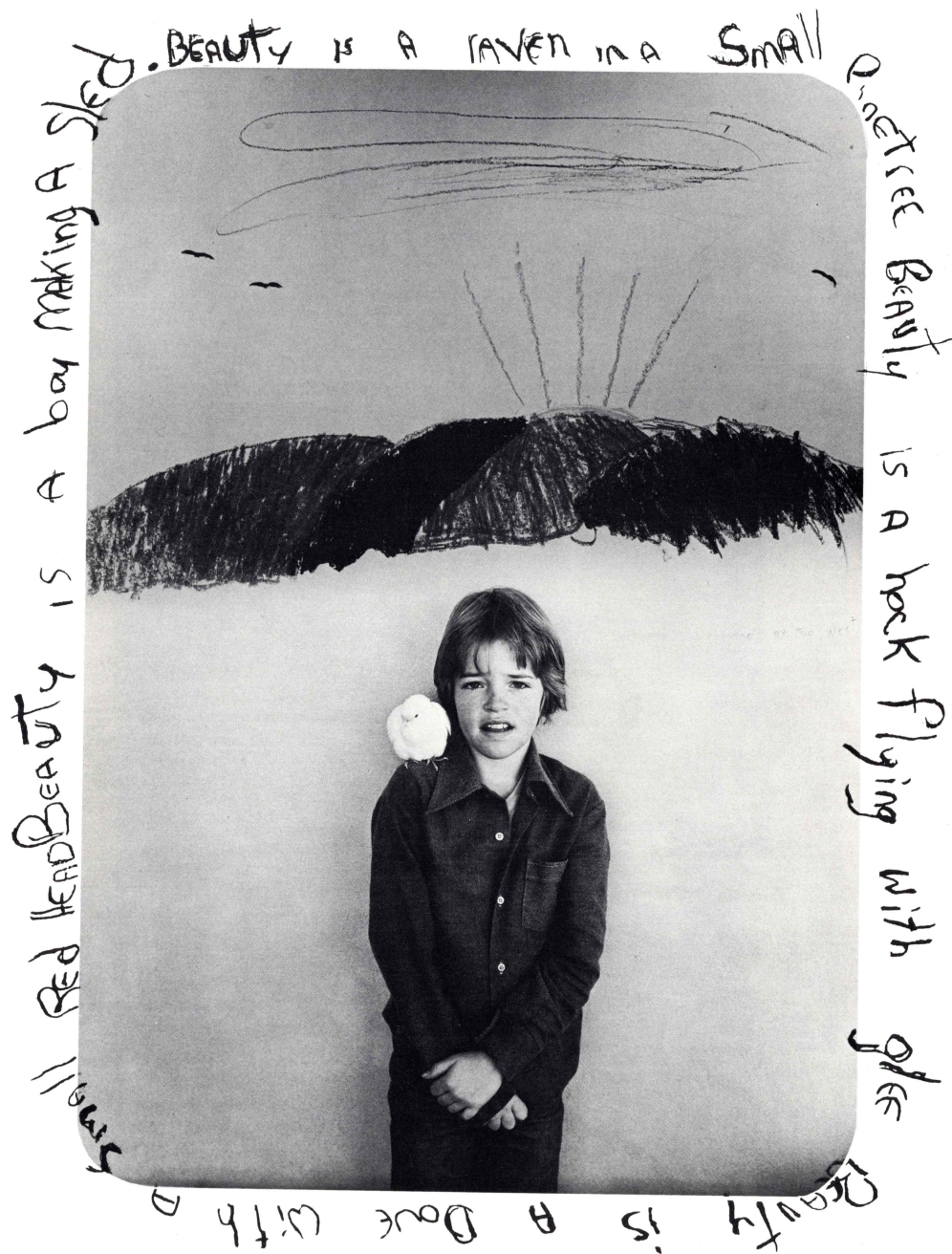
Archie West
P.O. Box 301
Santa Fe
N. Mex.

POST CARD
Jack West
40 Mr. Hal West
Route 2
Santa Fe, N.M.

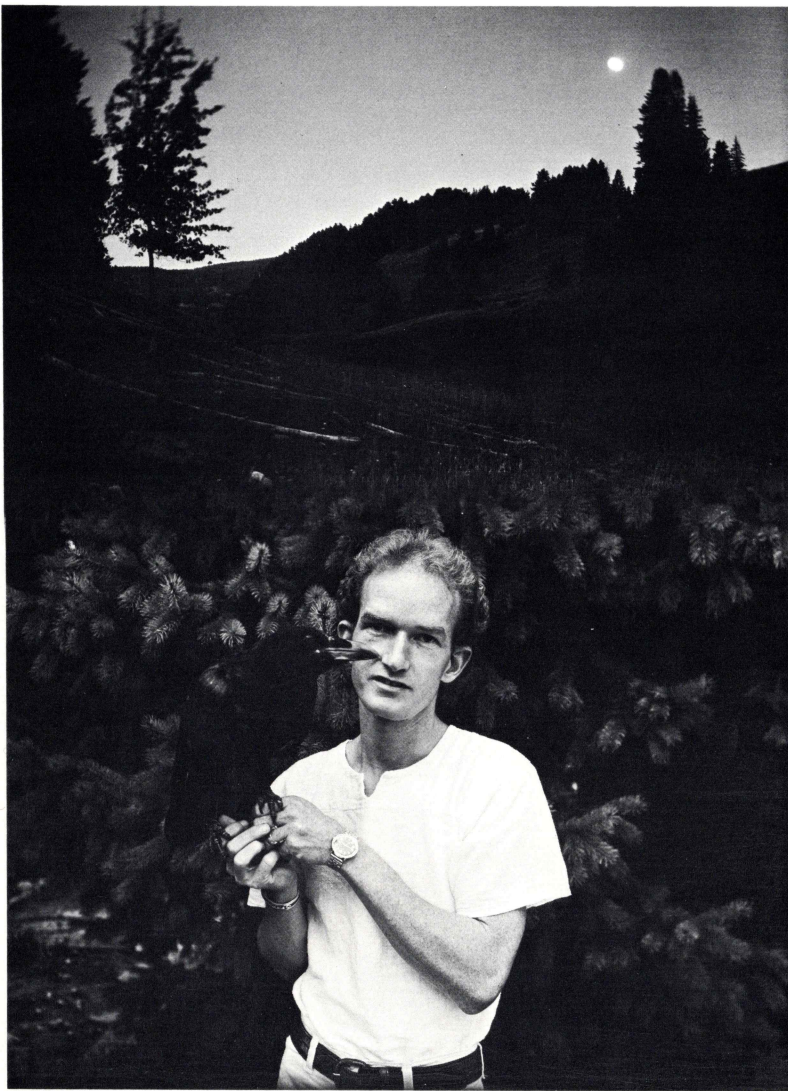
Dear Jack,
Windy over here in the Panhandle neighborhood, but quieting down today. I'll be down Roswell way tomorrow. Hope everybody is fine. Love from
Charlie Minton

Post Card
Archie West
Route 2, Box 301
Santa Fe
New Mexico

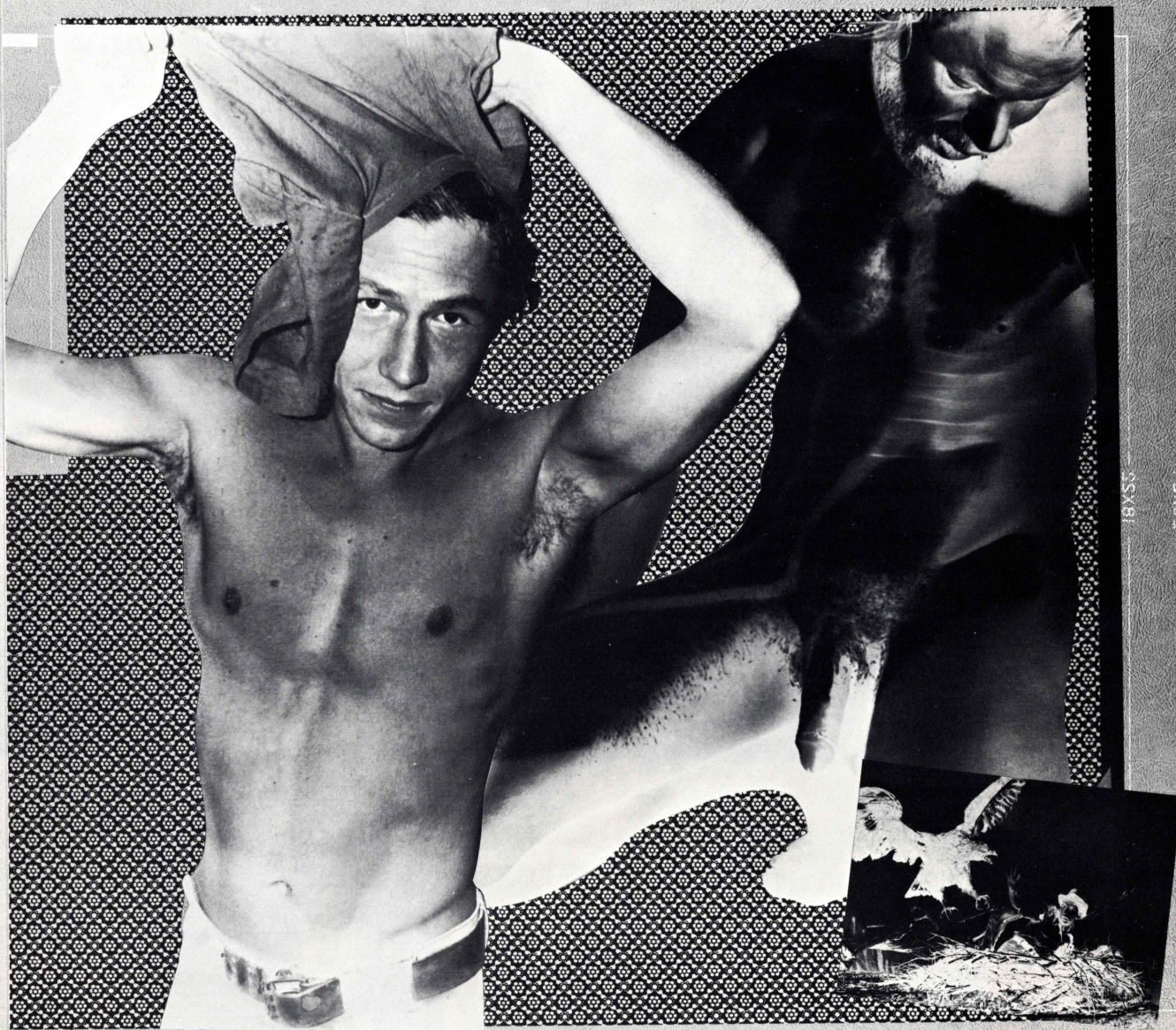
Dear Archie,
Chicago and Detroit keep on getting bigger and bigger every year, just like you. But they aren't as much fun to know as you are. Hope all of you are well. Love from
Charlie



OUT AND BROKE IT AGAIN - MORE TAPE, LONGER TIME. NOW I ALWAYS WATCH.
 AT DAWN JOINED TWO OTHER RAVENS TO RETURN TO THE WILD - I'VE SEEN HER
 SINCE. WE CALLED HER HOP-ALONG BECAUSE OF HER WALK... hop. SHE BROKE HER WING AND WE TAPED IT UP FOR TWO WEEKS, HAD A HEAL
 RAVEN. IT WAS AMUSING TO STUFF CHEEP CONNED OF FOOD DOWN HER THROAT, AND EVEN MORE SO WATCHING HER CHASE MY CAT
 OF A TIME GETTING THE TAPE OFF AGAIN. SHE WENT RIGHT
 AROUND THE YARD! AND A HAPPY DAY WHEN SHE, EARLY







Keith

12 April 1980.





Philip and Joel

Keith

20 April 1980.

I remember your telling of how you grew up:
Taking wood from old buildings which were being
torn down because your family was too poor to
buy coal. Fighting because you had to because
you were a Jew. Going to high school at night
because the family needed you to work during
the day. You wanted to be a lawyer, but were forced
to drop your classes at Columbia and work two jobs.



Letter #7.

12/50

Ch. July 1976.



So many times we made the long subway trip from the Village to the Bronx to visit Grandma and Uncle Milton. I remember the delicious, steaming platefuls of food she made and which I devoured hungrily. Uncle Milton played marbles with me or catch. I even loved to hear all of you speaking Hungarian.



As time passed, the old neighborhood ran down and Uncle Milton moved to Queens. He takes his walks peacefully there and in the summer sits in the park reading his newspaper. The day we moved here was a happy event. Aunt Gladys, with the help of a little whiskey, did a dance with me around his new apartment.

Letter #8.

13/50

Ch. Fuchs 1966.



One night, when I was still living with my mother, she told me that it was time for me to go to bed. That she had a surprise to give me when she came to tuck me in. I waited eagerly for my surprise. When she came in and I asked for it, she bent over and kissed me and said, "I Love you".

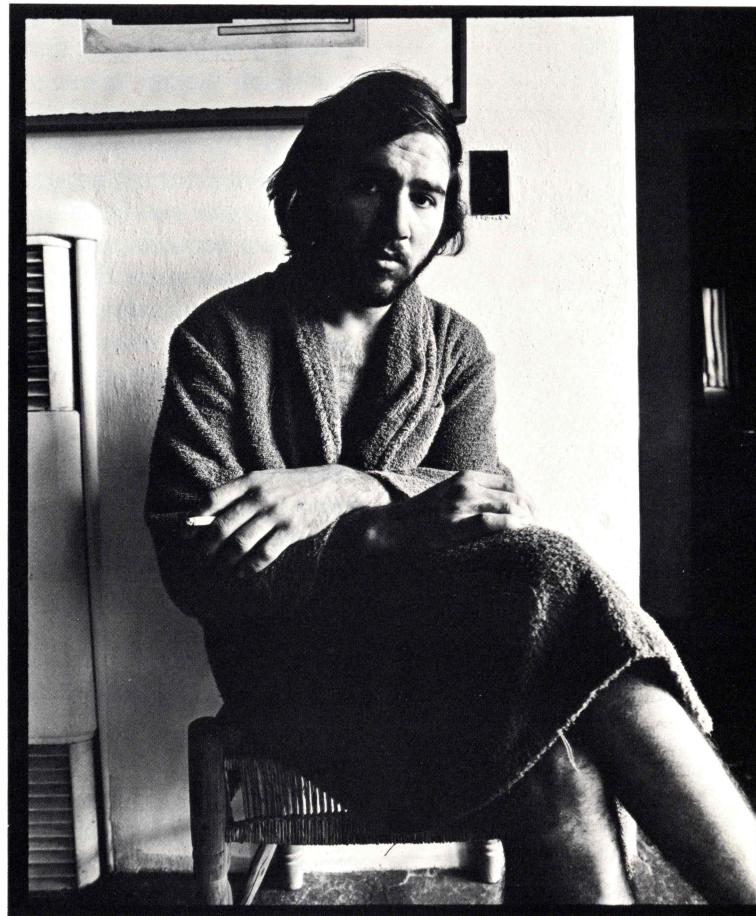
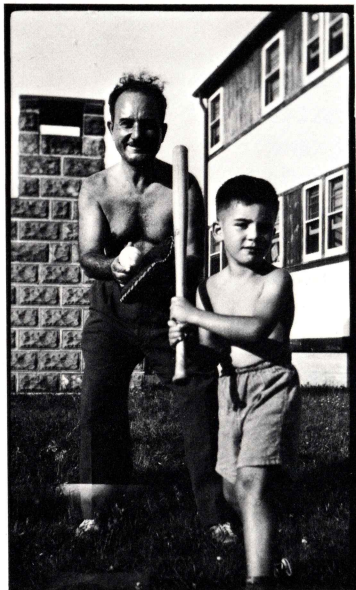
I wonder if my disappointment was because I couldn't make myself believe her?

Letter #4.

13/50

24 July 1976.

*To many memories of you speak to me when
I least expect them. They follow me and
fill my dreams as night turns into
morning. And I awake, as I always do,
with my heart swollen and with vague
traces of tears in the corners of my eyes.
For a moment the dream's aura lingers.
And then slips away once again.*



Letter #10.

'3/50

By July 1926.

Perhaps no one really thinks that the world is a shallow diorama of basic oppositions—a thinly screened shadow box wherein beauty confronts ugliness, people are either smart or they're stupid, and the pure is by nature preferable to the alloy. But it seems inevitable that there will always be art which describes life in that way. Photography especially, because of its instantaneous and fragmentary nature, has the problem of achieving clarity of meaning without resort to didacticism.

In their attempt to expand our notion of the photographic portrait, the photographers represented here have but one common method. For each of them, the *subtleties*, the counterbalancing (even contradictory) aspects of personality, are the essentials they would extract from their subjects. Esther Parada, for instance, sees her father as having many "selves." For *Memory Warp* she made four portraits, each the same basic head shot montaged with other biographical documents. Each face—each self—appears to be pieced together from these relics of the deceased man's life.

Mark Berghash's portraits depict subjects who appear almost identical in each frame of a series. A tilt of the head or minute changes in facial expression, however, are all that are needed to peel the cover from secrets even the sitter himself may not have known. Keith Smith injects sexual innuendo into otherwise perfectly ordinary pictures; Barbara Jo Revelle combines photographic glimpses with words that may describe an event, make a political point, and tell us volumes about a lover—all in two or three sentences. Wendy MacNeil and Martha Madigan introduce, each in her own way, the element of time into portraiture; Meridel Rubenstein and Alex Traube make pieces which are poetic tributes to the many-faceted people who are a part of their lives.

It is this ability to see and accept the variety and richness of another individual, this desire to scratch and scrape away at the facade ordinarily presented to the camera lens, which sets these photographers apart from more traditional portraitists. Or shall we say that these photographers *set themselves apart*, and at no little risk.

It's one thing to use dramatic lighting (as, say, Yousuf Karsh does) or to make environmental portraiture in the manner of Arnold Newman, leaving it to viewers to infer "character" or "personality." It's quite another to attempt to spell out the unspecific. Many viewers—including critics, curators, and collectors—are unsettled by such an approach. We have been trained to accept certain conventions as carriers of meaning in a photograph. A shot

up from a low angle suggests power; "Rembrandt" lighting means strength of character; a room full of paintings and antiques symbolizes culture and breeding. Such clues are combined, in most well-known photographic portraits, with our previous knowledge of the public persona of the sitter: this is a famous person who has already been described to us (whether accurately or not) many times before. These eight photographers eschew symbols and conventions for exposition, grand notions of character for more vulgar attributes, and the rich and famous for people they love.

Of course, beyond these confluences of idea and method there are many individual differences and similarities among the photographers exhibited. For example, while all of them may deal with relationships—the subject in reference to the picture maker and to others—Parada, MacNeil, Berghash, and Traube share a special fascination with the idea of intersection and influence. Parada's *Past Recovery* is exactly what one sense of its title says it is: a reclaiming of family history for the family that exists today. Traube's *Letters to My Father* were written after the elder Traube's death as an attempt to describe (or discover) the connections between the two men's lives. Berghash explores psychological connections between the portrait subject and his/her family, past, and future. MacNeil's investigations are both physiognomic—in an almost nineteenth century, quasi-scientific comparison of parent to child—and suggestive of the basic immutability of the individual's personhood.

It is no coincidence that MacNeil, Berghash, and Madigan make work which looks somewhat alike. The three do not know each other, but each has developed a kind of system by which they have predetermined many of their solutions to artistic problems. MacNeil's plan is to relate her own pictures of a sitter to old snapshots, identification photos, and commercial portraits of the sitter's parents or of the sitter at an earlier age. The others have even more structured blueprints: Berghash leaves the room while the sitter makes his or her own exposure in response to the photographer's formula; Madigan recorded the same three subjects every morning for a year.

By working within these self-created boundaries, Madigan, MacNeil, and Berghash purport to shore up the old and crumbling foundation of photographic veracity; their pictures seem more believable because their objective systems control many of the variables. (And in our effort to believe, we neglect to remember that it was they who set the systems up in the first place.) Of

course, the face-by-face-in-series presentation also allows closer scrutiny of the variations and consistencies which are essential to the meaning of the work.

Barbara Jo Revelle also works according to a plan of sorts, though one which is intended to *encourage* intuitive and emotional judgments along the way. Where Berghash and MacNeil concentrate on the faces of their subjects, Revelle might not even show us the real subject of a piece, as, for example, in the "portrait" of her father reproduced in this catalogue. The quadrants of her photographic pieces describe an idea or experience in terms of at least two separate events, her intention being, she says, "to clarify the new experience by reaching into the past for an analogue." In this way she indicates the continuity of history and the wholeness of her life and her responses.

Esther Parada's system grows out of her ideas for a particular piece. She showed me a set of diagrams for *Memory Warp* which interpret the formal aspects of the work as related to weaving, music, and cartography.

Meridel Rubenstein's absorption with her adopted New Mexico home led her to undertake a bicentennial documentary project there, under grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and state arts foundations. When she realized that the portraits she was making told only half the story—to her, the people seemed inseparable from the land—she experimented with ways to combine portrait and landscape. Out of this new awareness of the connection between the environment and its inhabitants came the more personal work displayed here: portraits of members of Jerry West's family, montaged with symbols of their inner selves. (It is noteworthy that only one other person in this show—Martha Madigan—points to a correspondence between the individual and the natural environment.)

Rubenstein's attention to craft (her technique is classic view camera, despite her manipulation of the final print) is rivalled only by Keith Smith's obsession with technical excellence. But technique is far from an end in itself. One gets the idea that the extreme decoration in Smith's work is the nearest a photograph ever came to a caress. Smith openly acknowledges that the photographs are a substitute for actual physical contact. They are poems of unrequited love.

Because Smith makes his portraits in only loosely-connected series (he left the final choices of prints and sequence to curatorial discretion), he seems at first glance to be the least appropriate

inclusion in an exhibit of extended portraiture. But in re-shaping the camera-imaged portrait by adding his own personal symbols, he more accurately conveys his responses to another's sexuality. It is as though the drawing and hand-coloring represent Smith's fantasy—the ephemeral, psychological obverse of the more apparently “real” (that is, photographic) physicality of the subject.

The point is that the “extension” on which we have focused is neither a technical exercise nor a formal device. It is an attempt to bring the photographic portrait away from its traditional role as simple topographical description, and towards the person it is meant to describe.

Exhibition Checklist

Mark W. Berghash

Born March 8, 1935, Buffalo, NY. Lives New York, NY. University of Buffalo, 1952-55; University of Vienna, Austria, 1955-56; Art Students League of New York, 1957-60; The New School/Parsons Department of Photography, 1976-78. Solo exhibition: Capricorn Gallery, New York, 1967 (paintings and drawings). Collection: Franklin Furnace Archive.

- *A *Serial Portrait of Thomasina Webb*, 1980, six silver prints, each 14x11 in. (pp. 12-13)
 - A *Serial Portrait of Lucia Moffett*, 1980, nine silver prints, each 5x4 in.
 - A *Serial Portrait of Charles Lieber*, 1979, nine silver prints, each 14x11 in.
 - A *Serial Portrait of Charles Lieber, Book Publisher (first version)*, 1979, nine silver prints, each 5x4 in.
 - A *Serial Portrait of Jonathan Brand, Writer/Photographer*, 1978, ten silver prints, each 14x11 in.
 - A *Serial Portrait of Jenny Brand*, 1980, six silver prints, each 5x4 in.
 - A *Serial Portrait of Anna Ng*, 1978, eight silver prints, each 14x11 in.
 - *A *Serial Portrait of Diane Levenberg, Poet*, 1978, six silver prints, each 5x4 in. (p. 11)
- All works from the series, "Aspects of the True Self."

Wendy MacNeil

Born 1943, Boston, MA. Lives Lincoln, MA. Fellowships: Guggenheim, 1973-74; National Endowment for the Arts, 1974-75 and 1978-79; Mass. Arts and Humanities Council, 1975-76. Solo exhibitions: Carl Siembab Gallery, Boston; Half Moon Gallery, London; Baldwin Street Gallery, Toronto; numerous others. Publications: *Haymarket* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1970); *Aperture* (Nov. 1974); *Massachusetts Review* (Fall 1974); numerous others.

Shane Crabtree (Mother) and Mary Townsend (Daughter), 1979.
Jim Lemkin with Father and Grandparents, 1976/80.
Marie Baratte, 1978/80.
Katee Montana, 1977/80.
Fred Stone and Father, 1977/80.
Vicky Bell, 1978/80.
 **Barbara MacNeil*, 1978/80. (p. 17)
 **Vernon MacNeil*, 1978/80. (p. 14)
 **Ronald MacNeil*, 1978/80. (p. 16)
 **Dina Rubenstein and her daughter, Meridel*, 1978/80. (p. 15)
 All works are platinum/palladium prints, 19x24 in.

Martha Madigan

Born August 17, 1950, Milwaukee, WI. Lives Philadelphia, PA. University of Wisconsin, Madison, BS, 1972; Arizona State University, 1972-73; Visual Studies Workshop, 1976; School of the Art Institute of Chicago, MFA, 1978. Fellowships: National Endowment for the Arts, 1980. Solo exhibitions: Philadelphia College of Art, 1979; Metro State College, Denver, 1979; Botanic Garden, Glencoe, IL, 1978. Publications: *Invented Landscape* (New York: New Museum, 1979); *Afterimage*; *New Art Examiner*. Collections: Detroit Institute of Arts, Art Institute of Chicago, Illinois State Museum, Milwaukee Art Center.

- **Eastlake Tree/Portrait*, 1978 (assisted by Jeffrey Fuller), approximately 360 Polaroid SX-70 color prints, each 3½x3½ in. (pp. 18-21)

Esther Parada

Born 1938, Grand Rapids, MI. Lives Oak Park, IL. Swarthmore College, BA, 1960; Pratt Institute, MFA, 1962; Institute of Design (IIT), MS, 1971. Fellowships: Chicago Circle Research Board, 1978; Ford Foundation Study Fellowship, 1967-68; Sarah Lippincott Fellowship, 1961. Solo exhibitions: Artemisia Gallery, Chicago, 1979; MoMing, Chicago, 1976; Grand Rapids Art Museum, 1970. Publications: *Portraiture in New Photography* (Morgan and Morgan, 1979); *Chicago: The City and its Artists, 1945-78* (The University of Michigan Museum of Art, 1978); *Catalog/Catacomb* (Rochester, NY: Visual Studies Workshop, 1978). Collections: Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago Parent Child Centers, Lower West Side Neighborhood Health Center (Mural).

- **Past Recovery*, 1979, 100 hand toned silver prints, each 9½x14 in. (total size 8x12 feet). Courtesy Visual Studies Workshop Gallery, Rochester, NY. (pp. 22-23)
- Memory Warp I*, 1980, twenty-five silver prints, each 6x6 in. (total size 30x30 in.).
- **Memory Warp II*, 1980 (size and media as above). (pp. 24-25)
- Memory Warp III*, 1980 (size and media as above).

Biographical sketches are much abbreviated, and include only selected information. An asterisk (*) indicates works illustrated in this catalogue.

Barbara Jo Revelle

Born June 10, 1946, Chicago, IL. Lives Chicago. University of Colorado, BA, 1969; MFA, 1973; State University of New York at Buffalo, PhD candidate. Fellowships: National Endowment for the Arts, 1978-79; New York State Council on the Arts (CAPS), 1974 and 1977; Illinois State Council on the Arts, 1979 and 1980. Solo exhibitions: Chicago Center for Contemporary Photography, 1979; San Francisco Art Institute, 1979; Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art, 1979. Publications: *Artforum* (April 1976); *Afterimage* (March 1978); *New Art Examiner* (December 1979). Collections: Bibliotheque National (Paris), Center for Creative Photography (Tucson), Franklin Furnace.

Ten untitled works, each composed of four photographs with handwritten text, each 20x24 in. total size. Four are selenium toned silver prints, made in 1978; the remaining six are composed of color photographs made in 1980. (pp. 26-29)

Recovering, 1979-80 (with Alex Sweetman), commercially processed color prints, Polaroid SX-70 color prints, and mixed media, total size about 8x12 feet.

Meridel Rubenstein

Born March 26, 1948, Detroit, MI. Lives Santa Fe, NM. Sarah Lawrence College, BA, 1970; Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1972-73; University of New Mexico, MA, 1974; MFA, 1977. Fellowships: Ferguson Grant, 1977; National Endowment for the Arts/New Mexico Bicentennial Commission, 1976. Solo exhibitions: Fine Arts Museum, University of New Mexico, 1975; Museum of Fine Arts, Santa Fe, NM, 1977; Amon Carter Museum, 1977; Hill's Gallery, Santa Fe, 1978. Publications: *La Gente de la Luz* (Albuquerque: Museum of Fine Arts, 1977); *The Great West: Real/Ideal* (Boulder, CO: University of Colorado, 1977); *Untitled*. Collections: Fine Arts Museum (University of New Mexico), Museum of New Mexico, University of Colorado.

**Joe West*, 1978, 20x16 in. (p. 32)

**First Grandchild (Mildred and Anita West)*, 1978, 20x16 in. (p. 30)

**Tom Martin*, 1978, 20x16 in. Courtesy Barbara Jo Revelle. (p. 33)

**Postcards/Fathers and Sons*, 1978, 16x20 in. (p. 31)

Brothers (Archie and Jerry West), 1978, 20x16 in.

Uncle Don West, 1978, 20x16 in.

Nestora Was 101, 1978, 20x16 in.

Archie West (for Wendy MacNeil), 1978, 20x16 in.

Father and Daughters, 1978, 20x16 in.
I Am Molly, 1978, 16x20 in.

All works are ammonium sulfide-toned silver prints.

Keith Smith

Born 1938, Tipton, IN. Lives Rochester, NY. School of the Art Institute of Chicago, BAE, 1967; Institute of Design (IIT), MS, 1968. Fellowships: Guggenheim, 1972 and 1979; National Endowment for the Arts, 1979. Solo exhibitions: George Eastman House, Art Institute of Chicago, Light Gallery, numerous others. Publications: *When I was Two* (Rochester, NY: Visual Studies Workshop, 1979); *Masturbation Meditation* (Rochester, NY: Visual Studies Workshop, 1976); *Vision and Expression* (New York: Horizon Press, 1969). Collections: National Gallery of Canada, Museum of Modern Art, International Museum of Photography at George Eastman House, Fogg Museum, numerous others.

**Joel and Fritz*, April 12, 1980, hand colored silver print, 7x9 in. (p. 35)

Joel, April 20, 1980, silver print/collage, 16x9 in.

Joel, January 24, 1976, hand colored silver print, 20x16 in.

**Joel*, April 20, 1980, collage, 14x11 in. (p. 36)

**Joel*, n.d., silver print with drawing, 14x11 in. (p. 34)

Untitled (with Phillip Lange), 1980, silver print with drawing, 18x12 in.

**Phillip and Joel* (with Phillip Lange), April 20, 1980, silver print, 16x12 in. (p. 37)

Untitled (with Phillip Lange), April 1980, collage, 20x12 in.

Untitled (with Phillip Lange), April 1980, hand colored silver print, 18x12 in.

Lexington Nocturne (with Phillip Lange), March 15, 1980, silver print.

Untitled (with Phillip Lange), May 1980, collage (Xerox transfers to quilted fabric), 79x55 in.

Untitled (with Phillip Lange), 1980, oak dressing screen with hand colored silver prints, five panels each 86x20 in.

All works courtesy Stuart Wilbur, Inc.

Alex Traube

Born 1946, New York, NY. Lives New York. American University, BA, 1968; Ohio University, MA, 1970. Fellowship: National Endowment for the Arts, 1976. Solo exhibitions: Rosewell Museum and Art Center, New Mexico, 1978; Cronin Gallery, Houston, TX, 1978; Robert Freidus Gallery, New York, 1977 and 1979; Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, TX 1976. Publications: *Aesthetics of Graffiti* (San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1978); *American Narrative/Story Art* (Houston: Contemporary Arts Museum, 1978); *Artspace* (September 1976). Collections: Center for Creative Photography, Cincinnati Art Museum, International Museum of Photography at George Eastman House, J.B. Speed Art Museum, numerous others.

**Letters to My Father*, 1976, portfolio of ten silver prints with hand written texts each 14x11 in. total size. Courtesy Robert Freidus Gallery. (pp. 38-41)

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