



JRB ART AT THE ELMS

2810 N. Walker Avenue
405.528.6336

Oklahoma City, OK 73103
www.jrbartgallery.com

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Contact: Joy Reed Belt

405.528.6336

gallery@jrbartgallery.com

www.jrbartgallery.com

JRB Art at The Elms Presents

Photography and Place: Fragments of The World

Oklahoma City—Beginning on July 3, 2020, JRB Art at The Elms will host the show “Photography and Place: Fragments of the World,” organized by New York Based Curator, Julie Maguire, Director of the Brett Weston Archives.

This show will feature the work of Brett Weston, Catherine Adams, Christa Blackwood and Allen Birnbach. The exhibition will be on display at the gallery during July and August and will also be available to view online at www.jrbartgallery.com.

While there won't be an opening on First Friday, the gallery is now open Tue-Sat from 11am-5pm and by appointment - call us at (405) 528-6336, or send us an e-mail or Facebook message. All of our inventory can be found on our website. We encourage you to see our wonderful July exhibitions!

Since the inception of photography in the first half of the nineteenth century, there has been the perception that photographs are a faithful record of their subject matter. This idea seems to be even more deeply seeded when it is a place. When people are involved, there is an instinctive knowledge that they could be acting or “putting on a face” for the camera. Photographs have shaped our perception of the world. There are places we will know only through photographic representation; places we will never see with our own eyes. We then rely on the photographer's eye and their experience of the place they are documenting. The time of day a photographer shoots a specific place, the scene they choose to photograph, whether the intent is to show an abstraction of a particular spot, these all factors into what the viewer sees as a specific place.

The four artists included in this exhibition have all photographed places. Some with figures, some without. They all bring their unique perspective to their work and frame it through their eyes.

Brett Weston (1911-1993) spent over sixty years photographing all over the world and yet in most of his photographs it is hard to tell where he was located. He cropped his photographs while taking them, doing very little to alter a particular view in the dark room.

No photographer in the history of the medium has been as involved with the natural landscape over as long a period as Brett Weston. From earliest examples of his photography, beginning in the mid-1920s, and ending with the last photographs he made in 1993, it is evident that Brett Weston's vision was unique and consistent. During his life, he photographed throughout the United States, Canada, and Mexico, as well as in Europe and Japan. He was honored with over one hundred exhibitions of his work. His photographs found in museums and private collections all over the world. In 1947 he was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship and in 1973 a grant from The National Endowment for the Humanities for a photograph in Alaska. Throughout his 70-year career, Weston challenged the boundaries of black and white photography through experimentation with abstraction and recognizable subject matter.

Catherine Michele Adams photographed Old Havana and Central Havana in 2017, just as the country was beginning to open up to the United States. Since then, there has been a devastating hurricane and a reversal in US policy. Time has also now stamped its mark on these photographs, even beyond the artist's eye.

Born in Germany in 1972, Catherine Adams is a photographer, writer, and traveler. In-between acquiring a master's degree in art history and pursuing Ph.D. studies (University of Iowa, USA), Catherine spent a year traveling through the entirety of India researching sari production, interviewing weavers, and then cataloging pieces in the National Handlooms Museum. This ignited a passion for exploring the ways cultures and people meet the needs of today and negotiate their pasts. Leaving behind the academic path of an art historian in 2005, she has built a successful manuscript editing and print design business (Inkslinger Editing) helping artists and writers craft and present the written word. Since 2005, she has exhibited photography in group and solo shows in the Midwest and along the East Coast. Since 2011, she has been represented by Joy Reed Belt (JRB Art at the Elms) in Oklahoma City. Her work has appeared in *Black and White Photography Magazine*, *InDigest*, & *F-Stop Photographic Magazine*.

Having lived in widely different places around the world, including Paris, Berlin, San Francisco, and New Delhi, she now seeks the nomadic life as she pursues questions of civilization, ruins, aesthetics, and national identity through both photography and writing. In 2018, she inaugurated a Peregrination Project, an exploration of places and

communities lesser known or understood within the U.S. for historical, religious, or political reasons, such as Lebanon in Middle East or the once-Soviet bloc countries in Eurasia and Central Asia. Traveling solo for months at a time, she examined communities and nations in the process of shaping their narratives and visual identities as they transition out of war, old overlords, and corruption. Out of these experiences come imagery that are part documentary of contemporary life, part lyric meditation on civilization, and part light-paintings of awe.

The series, *naked lady: a dot red*, shown by **Christa Blackwood** uses historical methods to contrast a male dominated landscape photography field with a feminist layering of a red dot. Christa Blackwood is a photo, text and installation artist working with themes related to identity, gender, history, and popular culture. Her visual voice was developed while a student at New York University, when she began producing street art such as the poster, *Butcherknives* (1991), a work that addressed issues of sexual violence. A chilling juxtaposition of billboard-like close-ups and text from poet Michelle Kotler, *Butcherknives*, was plastered all over the streets of New York City on the evening the William Kennedy Smith verdict was announced. The posters timely and provocative appearance resulted in heightened critical attention for Blackwood, including an invitation to join the Women's Action Coalition (WAC) from renowned artists and scholars, Kiki Smith and Lucy Lippard.

Her works employ multiple techniques and methods, fusing traditional, historical, and alternative photographic processes with contemporary practices, street art and clandestine installations at cultural institutions. Blackwood received her Master's in Studio Art from New York University and Bachelors in Classics from The University of Oklahoma. She has exhibited in galleries and museums throughout the U.S. and abroad her work has been featured in several publications including *The New York Times*, *ArtDesk Magazine*, *The Austin American Statesman*, *The Austin Chronicle*, *New York Newsday*, *The Village Voice* and *The Chicago Sun Times*.

Allen Birnbach has focused his love of the majesty of landscape on the dwindling rural landscape and ranching in the west.

Allen Birnbach's career has spanned the worlds of commercial and fine art photography for over forty years. Client assignments have taken him to over twenty countries, driven by his enthusiasm for working on large-scale productions and collaborating with unique individuals at every station of life.

His personal work is fueled by a love of the human spirit and the power and majesty of this planet. Allen's images been exhibited in galleries around the world, and are represented in numerous private and corporate collections. His work has been celebrated by *Communication Arts*, *Photo District News*, *Photo Design*, *DoubleTake*, the *Black and White Spider Awards*, and appeared in numerous books and calendars, including "The World's Greatest Black and White Photography, No.1."

Allen has taught photography for University of California Los Angeles Extension, The Panasonic Digital Photo Academy, University of Denver, The Santa Fe Workshops, Focus on Nature (Iceland), and through private workshops and mentorships.

Looking at a photograph is the merging of the eyes of the viewer and the photographer as they try to cobble together fragments of the world.

These works will be available to view at the gallery from July 3 – August 31, 2020.

You can read JRB's interview with Curator Julie Maguire online at [Interview with July Maguire](#) for more insights into her career and perspective as an art curator.

About JRB Art at the Elms

JRB Art at The Elms presents a diverse roster of emerging, established, and internationally exhibited artists who create in a wide range of media including paintings, drawings, sculpture, ceramics, glass, fine crafts, functional objects, fiber art and photographs. This 8,000-square-foot award-winning gallery in Oklahoma City's Paseo Arts District changes its exhibits bi-monthly in a gracious environment that fosters a dialogue between the arts and the larger community while providing quality art for first time buyers as well as individual, corporate and museum collections.

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