

new mexico

PHOTOGRAPHER

Photo Contest:

Photos of the Winners
and all contestants

The Creative Moment:

Thomas Jefferson Reaume
on abstract photography

Robert Hirsch:

Is questioned about the
future of photo-related art

Mary Girsch:

The computer as an
image-making tool

SUMMER 1999 \$4.95

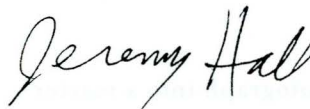
■ Through all the trials and tribulations that we faced, we finally succeeded in completing the 1999 edition of the *New Mexico Photographer* magazine. We were fortunate to have had the magazine designed and printed before the infamous "Y2K bug" had other plans for our production.

Actually, when I came to realize that I had been a part of this publication's production during its last issue of the millennium, I became very excited. Hopefully, you will understand my excitement after reading about the process it took to accomplish this completely student designed publication.

Where do I begin? I guess I should take you back to January when my classmates and I were in the beginning stages of our research on this project. After a few class sessions spent in the library researching various graphic design oriented magazines, we began working on page layouts.

The major problem in designing pages was that we had a lack of real editorial information at that time. We also had to deal with the question of advertising in the magazine; we concluded that it would be very unlikely for us to acquire the appropriate advertising needed for a publication like this one in the course of one semester. We also had budget considerations which limited us in the printing of a full color publication. So, with these specific limitations in mind, the five classmates and myself in the magazine production class divided both artistic and editorial content between us. Some of us continued to design pages, while others began to call, write, and e-mail individuals that we thought would make a beneficial contribution to the magazine. At this time we also enlisted the help of other art students attending Eastern New Mexico University and teachers to help with illustrations, photographs, and editorial content. We then had to wait for the art work and editorial information from our sources.

Around the week of mid-terms, the information for our articles began to pour in. We had to then adjust our page layouts according to the information we received. Problems such as too little or too much text and not the right illustration or photograph we had originally expected arose. Oh, and did I forget to mention that the *New Mexico Photographer* show had not been set up in the gallery yet? We had to wait until the jurying process had taken place in order for us to catalogue the photographs properly. After the show had been photographed, we purchased a photo CD in order to have high quality reproductions of the work in the show. After adjusting the images from the photo CD and making our final proof of the editorial information, the magazine was ready to be printed. I truly believe that through our hard work that we have set the standard for future *New Mexico Photographer* magazines. It was a very good learning experience for me as a future graphic designer, and I hope you will enjoy our effort as much as I do.



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New Mexico Photographer

Founded by Wendel Sloan in 1989

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Table of Contents

FEATURES

04 **The Creative Moment**

Master studio pro Thomas Reaume speaks out on creativity, light, and abstract photography. *By Thomas Reaume*

38 **The Future Of Photography**

The photographic techniques of the past are still alive today, but on the brink of the new millenium, how will digital technology affect darkroom technique? *By Robert Hirsch*

42 **Searching For Something To Look At**

An artist discusses how our culture has debated the roles of the camera and computer in fine art, and her use of both in her own work. *By Mary Girsch*

DEPARTMENTS

02 **Editorial**

Jeremy Hall, our production manager describes the process of designing and printing a student-built-publication in the midst of a class.

03 **Forum**

Eastern New Mexico University's streetwise students provide us with candid views on photography's future.

10 **Annual Photography Contest**

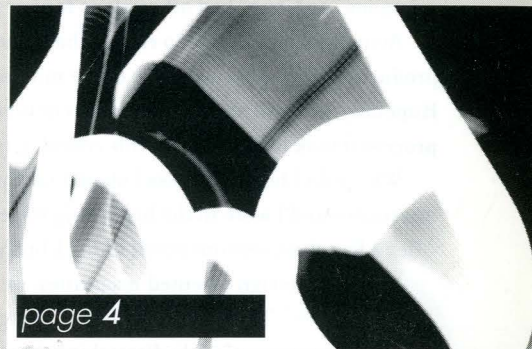
Curator: In his long-awaited sequel, curator James Bryant recalls last year's photo contest, and offers his views on this year's competition and exhibit.

Juror: Professional photographer and educator Patrick Nagatani judges our national photo exhibit and challenges photographic conventions.

41 **Tips!**

Six tips to help make an ordinary photograph into a masterpiece.

Cover Photograph: Thomas Reaume



page 4



page 10



page 42

E.W. Wolfe

This photograph was taken at Eastern State Penitentiary in Philadelphia. The massive castle-like prison was built in the 1820s, the most expensive building in the young United States, and the most famous prison in the world. Eastern State became the model for hundreds of prisons throughout the U.S., Europe, South America, and Asia. The design was based on Quaker ideals for reforming prisoners through strict isolation, Bible study, reflection on one's crime, hard labor, and silence. A regimen so austere that it prompted Charles Dickens to publish an essay condemning it. Eastern State closed in 1977 and today is a lost-world of crumbling cell blocks and empty guardtowers; a silent testament to man's inhumanity to man.

Cell Interior
silver gelatin print
12.75 X 19"



Integrity Exposure Meter

A meter which measures the amount of light coming from a scene during exposure; all other meters measure the amount of light received at any instant and, if the amount of light varies, the meter varies with it. Integrating meters can only be used for making long exposures, therefore they are not often used by the ordinary photographer. They are employed principally in process work where exposure times often run into minutes and where arc lamp illumination may vary considerably during exposure.

Robert Hirsch:

The Future of

Being given the opportunity to do an article on nearly anyone or anything, it was without hesitation that I chose to interview the photographer and very busy Executive Director and Chief Curator of the *Center for Exploratory and Perceptual Art* (CEPA Gallery) in Buffalo, NY. Fortunately he was willing to take time out from his hectic schedule to grant us insight into his view of photography and his vision of the future of photography.

Kenneth A. Curtis interviews Robert Hirsch

KAC: What are you trying to express with your art?

RH: I think I can best answer that question by discussing the specifics of my current body of work: *The Architecture of Landscape*.

Despite the postmodern critique of representation and originality that has been central to art making and criticism for the last generation, the condition of "looking for something" to commemorate, remains the essence of my photographic practice. How this act of looking is organized—its particular routines, uncertainties, and astonishments, is what makes my photographs unique.

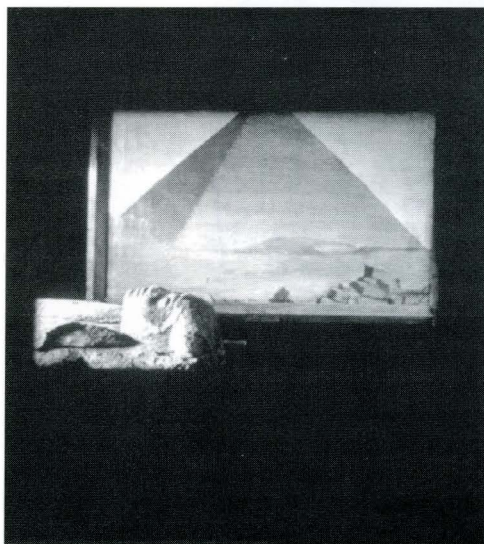
This series visually extends the concepts of the transcendental landscape by exploring the dichotomies between our cultural and natural environments. The project mediates on how the construct of the landscape, from notions of the picturesque and the sublime to the technological architecture of commerce and industry, shapes identity and our surroundings. The images concentrate on the marks of human

civilization—labor, leisure, and production—as an active force of the transformative nature of the world.

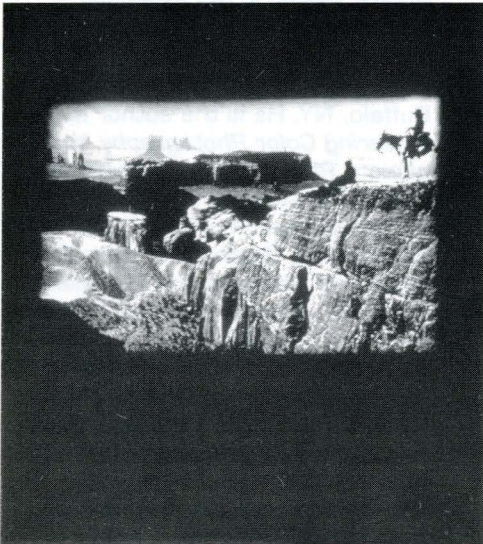
The work contemplates the process of making pictures, the necessity to stop time so that a scene can be thoughtfully comprehended. The camera is used to

manipulate relationships of scale and space between subjects, and operation reinforced by the presentation—a tiny luminous picture floating in a black void that reinforces the experience of what it is like to look through a camera's viewfinder. The smallness of the image titillates viewers to step up and focus closely on what may, at first glance, appear mundane. The experience invokes viewing movies in a darkened theater, where we are lured between the play of light and dark.

The project also communicates visual experiences that remain adamantly defiant to words. Words have the power to name the unnameable, but words also hold within them the disclosure of a consciousness beyond language. The image conveys the sensation and emotional weight of the subject without being bound by its physical content. The quickly glimpsed, the half-remembered, and the partially understood tap into our memory and emotions, holding up for examination that which attracts us for often indescribable reasons.



Photography



KAC: Other than photography, what other materials do you use to create your work?

RH: Anything that is necessary. The current series also has a companion piece that is made up of some 200 recycled 4 X 5 inch test prints. These images have been altered with spray paint and have had holes punched in the corners of the print so that they could be secured together with plastic fasteners and suspended in rows from a 12 foot metal pole. I have done other works that utilize collage, paint, drawing, and negative etching. Previously, I have combined three-dimensional objects like full-sized refrigerators, and tumble weed with photographic images.

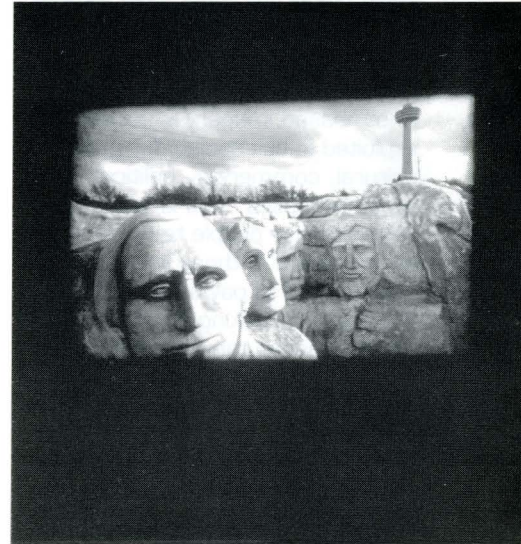
KAC: Are you using computers now in your work?

RH: Not at the moment, but I have the means to do so and would not hesitate if I thought that would make my work stronger. Digital imaging is new, exciting, glamorous and relatively easy to learn. This leads some people to believe that becoming accomplished in technological procedures will make them artists. Mastering any skill can make you a fine mechanic, but it doesn't guarantee that you will have anything worthwhile to say.

The rush to embrace new technology as a panacea is indicative of the larger conceptual problem surrounding digital imaging—that of artists' attempts to discover a native digital syntax. This issue has been one that I have been examining for the past few years through dialogues with artists, critics, and scholars. The results of these findings will be presented this fall as a CEPA Gallery exhibition: *Images in the Post-Photographic Age*. The project presents art that exploits digitally constructed realities and cultural issues of empirical truth, difference, gender, identity, sexuality, and representation. The exhibit examines how new technologies have led artists to explore hybrids of traditional media.

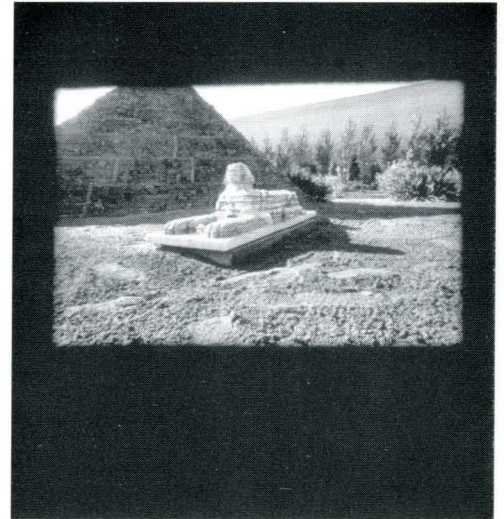
KAC: What is CEPA?

RH: CEPA is an artist-run, not-for-profit arts center in Buffalo, New York devoted to the education, creation, and presentation of



photography and the digital arts. Since 1974 CEPA has provided a context for understanding the aesthetic, cultural, and political intersections of photo-related art as it is produced in our diverse society. CEPA's galleries, public art sites, and imaging facility function as public research and education centers for the exploration of new ideas and technologies in the visual arts. CEPA presents works by emergent and established visual artists, and is committed to supporting projects that have been traditionally under represented in cultural spaces. To learn more about it's activities, I encourage you to visit the CEPA website: <http://cepa.buffnet.net>

"Digital imaging has transformed the major role of photographer from a taker of reality-based images to that of a fabricator of images."



KAC: What influence does photography (video, digital imagery) have on modern society?

RH: We are a society of images. Photo-based imagery is actively exploited in our society for numerous cultural, commercial, political, and social purposes. This is why it is important for people to be informed about nature of these images. The people need to pay attention to what it is they are looking at and not just accept images they are looking at without thinking. We should ask ourselves questions like: how are these images made; who is making them; why they are making them; how is their meaning manipulated; how do they circulate in society; and how is their meaning derived?

KAC: Does the advent of new digital technologies lessen photography's role in society?

RH: Digital imaging has transformed the major role of photographer from a taker of reality-based images to that of a fabricator of images. At the same time, it has wreaked havoc with the power we have granted photography as a provider of visual truth.

KAC: With technology affecting visual truth, what is left to believe?

RH: Since belief is not predicated on factual information, we are in a situation when there is either not much, or everything, to believe in. This can be extremely freeing, in that digital technology has exposed many false assumptions about how a photograph functions, thereby allowing new possibilities to emerge. Education should not be confused with belief. Part of education should involve the process of questioning the current assumptions of truth, keeping what still is deemed to be authentic and discarding that which is not.

KAC: Where do you see your personal style heading?

RH: Staring into the big blank of the future, I would like to achieve closure on the current visual project and then explore the topography of face and the body as a landscape.

Robert Hirsch is the Executive Director and Chief Curator of the Center for Exploratory and Perceptual Art (CEPA Gallery), in Buffalo, NY. He is the author of *Exploring Color Photography*, third edition; *Photographic Possibilities; The Expressive Use of Ideas, Materials, and Processes*; and the forthcoming *Seizing the Light: A History of Photography*. His latest work has recently been exhibited at the Visual Studies Workshop, Rochester, NY and the Burchfield-Penney Arts Center, Buffalo, NY. This summer he is scheduled to teach one week landscape courses at the Photographic Formulary Workshop in Condon, MT, and at the Visual Studies Workshop Summer Institute, Rochester, NY.

