



## CAPTURING THE BIG PICTURE

Compelling, engaging, and provocative, the work of these thirteen photographers turns viewing into a participatory experience. By causing us to question assumptions, misconceptions, and expectations, they push us to read images from new perspectives.

COVER: Chris Jordan, *Glass, Seattle* (detail), 2004, ink-jet print, laminated and mounted on Plexiglas, 44 x 56 in., Gift of Allen G. Thomas Jr. in memory of Joseph N. Quinn Jr., © 2004 Chris Jordan

Connect with the artists: [www.ncartmuseum.org](http://www.ncartmuseum.org).

**NORTH CAROLINA**

## Museum of Art

2110 Blue Ridge Road, Raleigh  
(919) 839-NCMA

# the **BIG** picture

March 18–September 2, 2007

Entrance-Level Gallery, Free

*The BIG Picture* presents twenty-three large-scale photographs by a diverse group of thirteen contemporary photographers who are expanding the size and pushing the boundaries of their medium. The installation highlights recent acquisitions from the permanent collection of the North Carolina Museum of Art, along with loans from two private collectors in North Carolina: Allen G. Thomas Jr., of Wilson, and Dr. Carlos Garcia-Velez, of Raleigh.

The featured photographers experiment with the photographic medium in a variety of ways, including subject matter, digital manipulation and printing, inventive uses of historical techniques, and performance-based images. The works on view include portraits, landscapes, cityscapes, and fabricated worlds that explore a wide range of themes, including personal identity, fantastic narratives, environmental issues and consequences, the changing landscape of major cities, systems of power, the passage of time, and pictures of contemporary life.





Anthony Goicolea, *Morning Sleep*, 2004, chromogenic print mounted on aluminum and laminated, 40 x 104 in., Purchased with funds from June Ficklen, © 2004 Anthony Goicolea

## CONSTRUCTING IDENTITY

The construction of identity is a prevalent issue in contemporary photography as artists explore how visual clues and context shape how we read a portrait and make assumptions about the subject. Anthony Goicolea draws upon dreams and fairy tales to explore adolescence in his photographs of imaginary places that are completely peopled by teenage boys. In *Workers Dreaming* elin o'Hara slavick portrays her subjects as people who have identities separate from their jobs, with dreams and wishes that transcend the everyday drudgery of their work. Lorna Simpson's *Vantage Point* juxtaposes a self-portrait with the photograph of an African mask and two labels—"inside" and "out." The simple terms and images are loaded with meaning and implication about public and private, personal and cultural.



elin o'Hara slavick, *Anthony Ruatto, Matthew Trent, Ryan Johnson, Dorian Pierce, Valets, Hollywood Casino, Shreveport, LA*, 2001, chromogenic print, 28 x 29 in., Purchased with funds from the William R. Roberson Jr. and Frances M. Roberson Endowed Fund for North Carolina Art, © 2001 elin o'Hara slavick



Lorna Simpson, *Vantage Point*, 1991, two gelatin-silver prints, two plastic plaques, 50 x 70 in., Purchased with funds from the North Carolina Museum of Art Foundation, Art Trust Fund, © 1991 Lorna Simpson, Courtesy Sean Kelly Gallery, New York

## PERFORMANCE ART

Many contemporary photographers are experimenting with technique and staging as a way to reference a narrative that goes beyond the image caught in the frame. Kerry Skarbakka's self-portraits record performances in which he uses climbing gear to suspend himself in precarious positions. He edits out the staging equipment before he prints the final photograph, so that he appears to be magically levitating. Rosemary Laing's image of an airborne bride also invites the viewer to suspend disbelief. Unlike Skarbakka, she does not manipulate the final image; instead it is a document of a highly orchestrated performance conducted by Laing. Vera Lutter's ghostly image of an airplane is the result of her contemporary appropriation of a historical photographic technique—a pinhole camera or camera obscura.



Kerry Skarbakka, *Pali Lookout*, 2004, chromogenic print, 74 x 62 in., Collection of Allen G. Thomas Jr., © 2004 Kerry Skarbakka



Todd Hido, *Untitled #3277*, 2003, chromogenic print, 38 x 48 in., Collection of Allen G. Thomas Jr., © 2003 Todd Hido, Courtesy Stephen Wirtz Gallery, San Francisco



Sze Tsung Leong, *Siming District, Xiamen*, 2004, chromogenic print, 72 x 87 in., Collection of Allen G. Thomas Jr., © 2004 Sze Tsung Leong, Courtesy Yossi Milo Gallery



Sarah Pickering, *Shellburst Day*, 2005, light-jet print, 32 x 74 in., Collection of Allen G. Thomas Jr., © 2005 Sarah Pickering, Courtesy Daniel Cooney Fine Art

## PICTURES OF CONTEMPORARY LIFE

Numerous photographers provide a window onto contemporary life, gigantic snapshots of everyday places and events, both real and contrived. Paul Shambroom's photographs of town council meetings draw attention to the drama in mundane events. Gregory Crewdson's cinematic photographs are staged in suburban neighborhoods—seemingly normal settings where inexplicable events are taking place. Massimo Vitali's photographs focus on crowds of people in public spaces where the individual becomes an anonymous figure in a larger group.



Massimo Vitali, *Amadores 3*, 2005, Cibachrome, Collection of Dr. Carlos Garcia-Velez, © 2005 Massimo Vitali

## THE CONTEMPORARY LANDSCAPE

Contemporary photographers are also exploring the landscape—examining changing cities, environmental issues, and the intervention of man in the natural world. Chris Jordan offers an alternate view of the American landscape, one seen from salvage yards, scrap heaps, and recycling centers. Shot through a car windshield, Todd Hido's photograph captures the brooding power of natural forces in this drive-by view of a desolate, wind-whipped landscape.

Sze Tsung Leong's *History Images* focus on cities in China that are undergoing dramatic changes, places where historic neighborhoods are being demolished and replaced by generic apartment buildings, with the result that years of history are disappearing in just a few days. Sarah Pickering's photographs document simulated explosions at a military training site and show how easily the line between truth and fiction can be blurred.