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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



MoCP

Museum of
Contemporary Photography

COLUMBIA COLLEGE CHICAGO
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Crime Unseen
October 28, 2011 - January 15, 2012

PUBLIC RECEPTION
Thursday, October 27, 5-7 pm

Featuring the work of:
Richard Barnes
Corinne May Botz
Christopher Dawson
Deborah Luster
Christian Patterson
Taryn Simon

Angela Strassheim
Krista Wortendyke
and
***Chicago Daily News* photographs**
from the early 20th century

Chicago – The Museum of Contemporary Photography, Columbia College Chicago, is pleased to announce the group exhibition *Crime Unseen*.

Photography, with its special capacity for identification and implication, allows for unique access to and evidence of dramatic crimes, but almost always after the event has occurred. Nevertheless, photographs allow us voyeuristic access to traumatic events, and play a major role in how they are remembered and recorded. Furthermore, in crime, the notion of truth is imperative, and photographs are used as evidence and in the service of identifying perpetrators, sometimes mistakenly.

All of the artists in *Crime Unseen* grapple with a re-telling of disturbing events, ranging from violent murder to softer crimes. Some of the artists document real places and objects associated with violent murder. Deborah Luster shoots locations in New Orleans where murder has occurred, and prints her black-and-white images as in a circular format reminiscent of an enlarged bullet hole or the experience of looking through a gun sight. Christian Patterson followed the trail of teenage lovers Charles Starkweather and Caril Ann Fugate who in the winter of 1957-58

committed a string of murders in Nebraska and Wyoming. Patterson combines his own photographs with appropriated photographs and objects that stem directly to the crimes, freely mixing factual with fictional elements in order to call into question the photograph as a document and the difference between artifice and reality. Angela Strassheim uses a chemical called “Blue Star” to make the remnants of blood at former crime scenes visible, even if the blood has been cleaned and is currently invisible to the naked eye. Through long exposures Strassheim makes the entire room visible as well as the stains, creating an eerie portrait of an action from the past in a space now transformed into a new home. Taryn Simon retells the stories of people who were wrongly convinced and then exonerated through DNA evidence. These artists works incorporate or reference the techniques of photojournalism, forensic photography, and documentary landscape. On a conceptual level, the work deals with a charged landscape and actively engages with myth and reality as it presents and expands the various facts and theories surrounding the crimes.

In addition to these contemporary works, the museum will present a selection of photographs from the collection of the Chicago History Museum’s Chicago Daily News archive dating from the first few decades of the 20th Century. These will include images of some of Chicago’s most notorious burglars, murderers, gangsters and crime scenes. Contemporary artist Corinne May Botz looks at another crime-related story with roots in Chicago as she photographs the macabre dollhouses built by Chicagoan Frances Glessner Lee in the 1940s that were used to train detectives to search for evidence at crime scenes. In addition to this historical local context, artist Krista Wortendyke will recreate her *Chicago Killing Season* installation in the museum’s print study room, which will chart the number of murders in Chicago during the exhibition dates one year ago. And as a contemporary update to the historical newspaper photographs, Christopher Dawson chronicles the elaborate production required for the televising of crime on 24-hour news channels as he explores our fascination with violent events today.

MoCP SPONSORS

***Crime Unseen* is sponsored by the David C. and Sarajeon Ruttenberg Arts Foundation.**

The exhibitions, presentations, and related programs of the MoCP are sponsored in part by After School Matters; the Terra Foundation for American Art; the Lannan Foundation; the Lloyd A. Fry Foundation; the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency; the National Endowment for the Arts; the David C. and Sarajeon Ruttenberg Arts Foundation, the Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation, American Airlines, the official airline of the MoCP; and our members.

ABOUT MOCP

The Museum of Contemporary Photography (MoCP), a resident organization of Columbia College Chicago, is the only museum in the Midwest with an exclusive commitment to the medium of photography. By presenting projects and exhibitions that embrace a wide range of contemporary aesthetics and technologies, the MoCP strives to communicate the value and significance of photographic images as expressions of human thought, imagination, and creativity.

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IMAGE: Angela Strassheim, *Evidence No. 2*, 2009; Archival pigment print, 48 x 60 inches; Courtesy of the artist