PRESS COVERAGE

MoCP
Museum of Contemporary Photography

Adi Nes: Photographs

September 27 - December 20, 2002

3. City Life, 11. 7. 2002
4. Sun Times
Adi Nes at The Museum of Contemporary Photography, Columbia College Chicago
Adi Nes: Photographs
at The Museum of Contemporary Photography
Columbia College Chicago

Using hired models, make-up, special lighting and teams of assistants, Israeli photographer Adi Nes (born 1966) dates meticulous, large-scale staged photographs. Working on location, Nes depicts commonplace subjects: the life of young men during compulsory military service, boys in rough-edged housing projects, women and children in documentary-style street dramas. Exploring themes of masculinity, fraternity, and national and cultural identity, Nes’ photographs contain an artifact that subtly questions the identity in the traditionally macho context of the Israeli army. In addition, Nes interprets well known paintings from art history such as Leonardo’s, The Last Supper, as well as widely published minimalist photographs such as those of the American Kent State Massacre. Mixing past and present, fact and fiction, media aesthetics and social commentary, Nes’ images allow him to look for timeless truths in his individual life as a gay Israeli man.

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Cover Image: Untitled, 1998, chromogenic development print, 35 ½ x 35 ½ inches. Courtesy the artist and Dvir Gallery, Israel
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Joan Fellows Morin, Mystical Flower Series, White Lily, Black Nest, oil on canvas, 24 x 30 inches at Fine Arts Building Gallery, Chicago
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MW 15
CITYLIFE

Le Ballet National du Sénégal makes its Chicago debut with "Kunyambu," a swan dive into the sacred forest where the initiation from adolescence into adulthood transpires through music, dance and song, at 8 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 9, at the Chicago Theatre, 1752 N. State St., Chicago. Tickets are $19 to $25. Call TicketMaster, call (312) 920-1500, or see http://www.ticketmaster.com

Don’t Miss
Nov. 7-9
DANCE. The Australian Dance Theatre performs "Birdbrain," a different take on the classic "Swan Lake." 8 p.m. Thursday through Sunday, Nov. 7-9. $20 to $24. The Dance Center of Columbia College, 1306 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago. (312) 344-6500.

Nov. 9-Feb. 2
ART. The Art Institute of Chicago presents "The Medal, Michelangelo, and the Art of Late Renaissance Florence," an exhibition of the unprecedented visibility and richness of paintings, sculpture, drawings, tapestries, and decorative works produced under the Medici, the ruling family of Florence between 1537 and 1631. Open Saturday, Nov. 9, and runs through Feb. 2. Hours: 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Mondays, and Wednesdays through Fridays, 10:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. Tuesdays and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays. Closed Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day. $10, $6 students. Ame, children and seniors. Free day on Tuesday, 111 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago. (312) 443-3600.

Thursday, Nov. 14
LECTURE. The Lyric Opera of Chicago preview Lecture Series presents musical theater composer Stephen Sondheim, who will discuss his life in the theater and his works. 7 to 8 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 14. Call for prices. The Chicago Cultural Center, 78 E. Washington St., Chicago. (312) 333-3244, Ext. 5600.

Highlights
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WT

"Holding Cell," 1999, by Scott Fortino

Patrolman pictures places sans people

By Sara Blumen Staff Writer

Office of Scott Fortino, 50, a patrolman with Chicago's Near North (118th) Police District, is working, his camera stays at home in Burnham Park. On patrol, he says, "I do the job I have to do as a police officer."

But the photographer in him never quite squares down. "I try to make notes of the things I notice. Then I go back later to do photos," he says.

An exhibit of Fortino's work opens Nov. 8 at the Museum of Contemporary Photography in downtown Chicago. What Fortino has noticed, and photographed with some success, are spaces he is out of offices — police-station holding cells and showers. When he shoots photos of these institutional spaces, they are always empty of people. "I record images of the space," he says. "I think I observe a lot of a city, I'm interested in the evidence of use, how these spaces have been used and abused over time."

With their lack of human beings, Fortino's careful "arrangements" of walls, windows, floors and cell bars have an abstract quality that appealed to the museum's curators immediately. "We really loved the way he plays with different planes of color, form and shape. Sometimes it's hard to tell where the foreground ends and the background begins — they blur into each other," says Karen Rice, one of the curators at the museum.

In one of his shots of a holding cell, a watery, blue light suffuses the picture, making the floor, ceiling and wall flow into one another, as if the scene were some sort of deep, spacey chamber.

But Fortino's photographs are more than just intriguing compositions, says Rice. "There is a resonance of the human presence in the details of the pictures, in the things people leave behind. The spaces are void of people, but the decorations in the walls, the bars on the door in the holding cells are still there. You get a sense of the human desire to adornulate their spaces," she says.

So looking carefully at the work, you begin to notice small details — the jagged line of the electrical wires, bits of dirt on

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Cops shoot ... photographs

Not all photography is behind locked doors, or undercover. Cops have some of the best equipment in town. Officer Scott Fortino, a Chicago police officer, has a 35mm camera and a 31.5 megapixel digital camera. He uses both to document the city for his personal projects.

Fortino's work is on display at the Art Institute of Chicago. "Holding Cell," 1999, by Scott Fortino

This photo of man practicing lifesaving techniques by Swiss policeman Arnold Odermatt is on display at the Art Institute of Chicago.

Officer Scott Fortino (Photo by Waldemar Ratchen)

the floor, or on a range. The chaotic sniffs on the schoolroom floor. All the detritus of habitation. "That's what photography is all about — paying attention and observation," says Fortino. "Essentially, a photographer is saying, 'Look at this.' Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't. Then you (a viewer), spend time with those images, and you hope you get something out of them."

Fortino began getting things out of photographs in the early 1990s, when he was a junior in high school. His brother, then serving in Vietnam, had brought back two 35 mm cameras — and was using them. "He didn't write many letters, but he did send home two or three packages of slides every week or so. He was photographing his experiences there. We weren't big snipers or action shots, just the day-to-day lives of the people he was serving with," Fortino recalls.

Though he knew nothing of the aesthetics of photography, Fortino spent many, fascination hours trying to figure out what was going on with the composition as well as the techniques of the slides. "I just worked up the images and the idea of looking at new places," he says. When his brother re-
Photos
Continued from Page 1

By the time he was in Columbia College, he was already sure he wanted to be a photographer and took as many classes as he could. He continued on in graduate studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago, but never quite finished the degree because he had a job. He did go back and get the master's, completing the work in 2011.

But in 1999, he'd gone with a friend who was taking the Chicago Police Academy entrance exam. "That was just on a whim," he says. Then, when the department called, in 1980, he decided it was a good idea and has been an officer for more than two decades, much of that time in the 18th District.

Being a police officer has helped him in photography. He drives by and goes into places he would never have seen, and he can get into the spaces he wants to photograph. "It's work in a sense that holding still, he simply goes to the station commander for permission."

"My uniform affords that accessibility," he says. His photographs of the rooms in Jenner School (now Jenner Academy) and Byrd School, both of which serve the Chinatown neighborhood. He's also shot rooms in St. Ignatius High School, near 18th, and the now Walter Payton High, on the Near North Side.

Fortino has also shot a series of photographs of public housing, called "The Landscapes of廉." He says that police work and photography have a lot in common. "Both rely on observation, on knowing what to look for," he says. "Tell tale signs may play into how you make a picture." And they may save your life. He used to work the night shift, he explains, and now, "Observation is what it was all about. You'd look around, and if something didn't look right, you probably would." A photograph that doesn't look right isn't right either, and Fortino spends his days off photographing for several projects he's got under way. Though he has some idea of the photograph he's aiming for before he goes to a site, it's way more complicated than point and click.

"It's slow, pondering, methodical," he says. "First of all, you look at the camera on a tripod. That slows you down right away." Then comes all the adjusting of light, camera angle and focus. "The whole process, for one shot, takes about an hour," he says.

Sometimes, Fortino would like to take his cameras abroad, maybe to Italy or Egypt to photograph its ancient ruins. "Consecrated spaces, architecture," he says, are what interest him. "Architecture contains us, and I'm interested in the feeling of means, and how we experience it in different settings."

For now, however, he's photographing ruins here in Chicago — the boarded up windows, decrepit walls and crumbling architectural details he sometimes spots while on patrol. Fortino says he's taken the time to catalog the way he would the nervous shudder in front of a convenience store. At this point in his career, he pretty well knows his job well enough to make sure what he sees through the camera lens is what he gets in the print. It's simple, he says; "I just want my photographs to command your attention."

"Photographs by Scott Fortino," an exhibit at the Museum of Contemporary Photography, Columbia College Chicago, 600 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago, opens with a reception, 5 to 7 p.m. Friday, Nov. 8. Fortino will give a gallery talk at 6 p.m. Regular hours are 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. weekdays (until 8 p.m. Thursdays), noon to 5 p.m. Saturdays, through Dec. 20. All events are free. Call 312/575-5606.
A cop's-eye view of places and spaces

BY LISA LENOR
staff reporter

Chicago Police officer Scott Fortino's work takes a more creative turn through the photographs he takes.

They aren't going shots of crime scenes, but shots of institutional spaces. His purpose: to explore the psychology of confinement and protection.

Fortino's work received maximum exposure in his first solo exhibit at the Museum of Contemporary Photography at Columbia College. With a B.F.A. from Columbia College and an M.A. in photography from the University of Illinois at Chicago, he's been able to show how his life as a police officer influences his fine art photography.

"The overlap and merging of the worlds," says Fortino, who is participating in the Midwest Photographers Project at the museum.

"I realized that what I did was a living social fabric and I did it as a photograph."

His decision to include holding hands in his collaboration speaks to that thought. A certain normness comes through each image in graffiti and features, including toilets and metal hampers, fill the spaces.

Fortino's work is also part of the "胜负 School Holley" is one of photographer/police officer Scott Fortino's favorites. The photog-raphy is known for its photographic studies of institutional spaces focus on color, light and composition.

on VIEW

School's in view. With its well-worn lockers and a door trimmed with plastic and an old box. Regardless of the spaces' charm, Fortino, capable of recognizing skill at making sense and making sense of things, will make the subjects in vacant space. The exploration is also a test of how brightly colored walls and graffiti are worn that become part of their independence and individuality when returned or confined in these rooms.

"They are weeds that are growing inside," he says. "They are beautiful at times and at other times, their purpose has been destroyed by an act of photography."

View Fortino's exhibit through Dec. 28 at the Museum of Contemporary Photography, Columbia College, 601 S. Michigan. Hours vary 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Mon.-Fri.; 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Sat. and Sun.