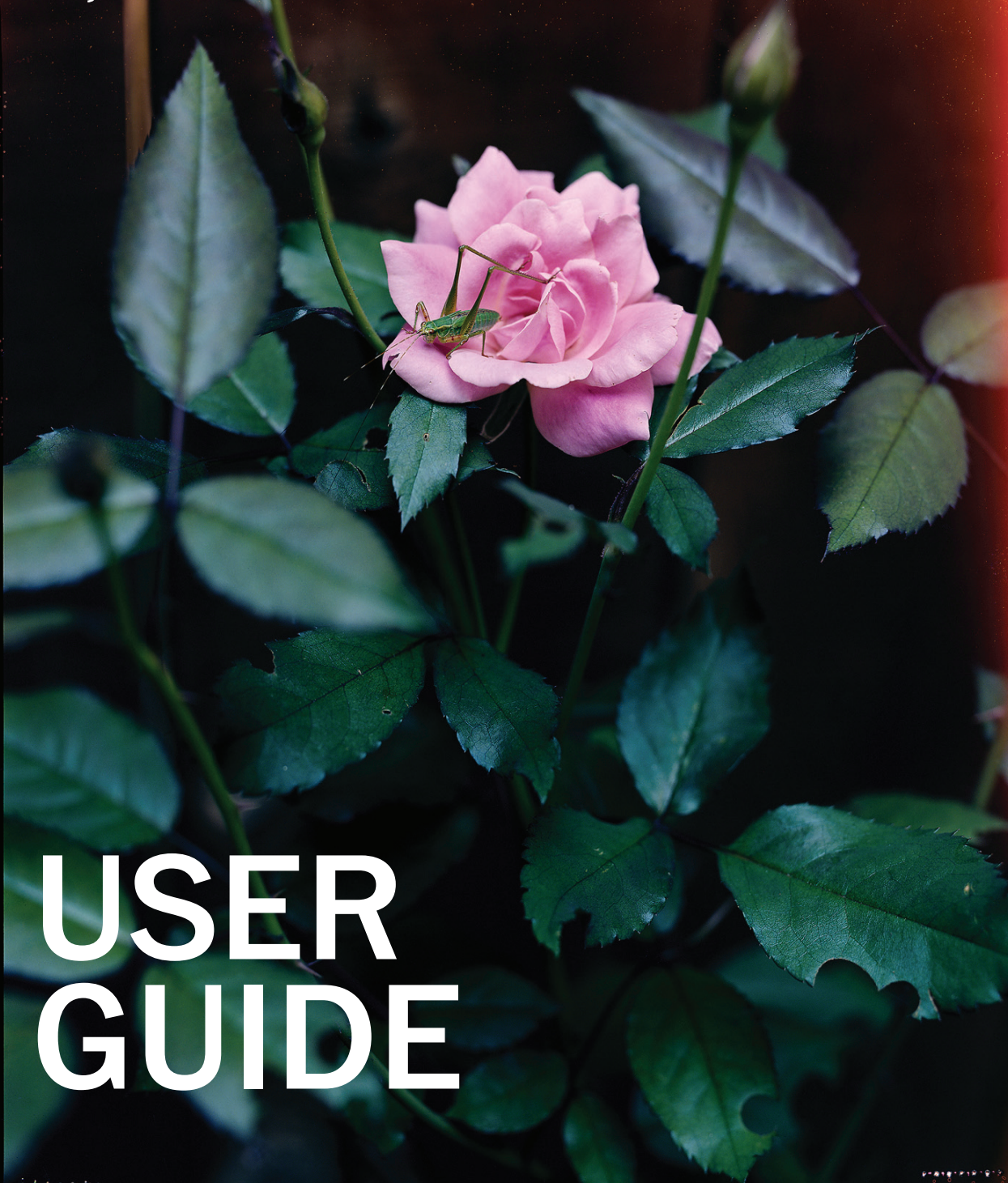


# re:collection

MoCP

Columbia  
COLLEGE CHICAGO

July 13 - Oct 1, 2017



# USER GUIDE



Doug Fogelson, *Ceaseless No. 2*, 2016

## Introduction

# re:collection

An obvious play on words, the exhibition's title *re:collection* speaks to the role of memory in the process of perception. It also signals that this eclectic sampling of photographs has been culled from the vast holdings of the MoCP permanent collection of over 14,000 objects. The prefix re- indicates that the show looks at the museum's collection again, but in a new way. It re-thinks, re-considers, re-assembles the collection, offering new insights and new viewpoints on single works.

The curators took a collaborative approach to this exhibition. Rather than selecting photographs around one single issue, the process of choosing images was associative. Like a mind map, one sequence of images begins with one piece, drawing connections to the neighboring photograph, and so on. The connections between each photograph can be content-related, touching on topics like war, civil rights, spirituality and landscape; or more subtle, linking images through formal criteria, aesthetics or titles.

In order not to disrupt the flow of images, there is deliberately no wall text in the exhibition. The intention is to avoid declaring connections between the images and to enable viewers to have an open experience. Visitors are invited to make their own associations while they walk through the galleries.

This user guide is provided to help viewers navigate the exhibition. It provides insight on how the exhibition was organized, offers some possible links between images, and gives details on selected works.

## FURTHER RESEARCH

Viewers are encouraged to download the free app, **Smartify**, in order to access additional information on each work in the exhibition.

A full check-list can also be accessed on our website here: <http://www.mocp.org/exhibitions/2017/07/recollection.php>

## QUESTIONS FOR LOOKING

Looking at the entire gallery, what do you immediately notice about the sequence of the photographs on view?

How do neighboring images inform the meaning you take from each individual photograph?

What type of images or information is missing in the gallery? How else can this story be told?

Try to identify the camera-less photographs throughout the exhibition. How were they made? Why were these works chosen to be included in a photography museum and in this exhibition?

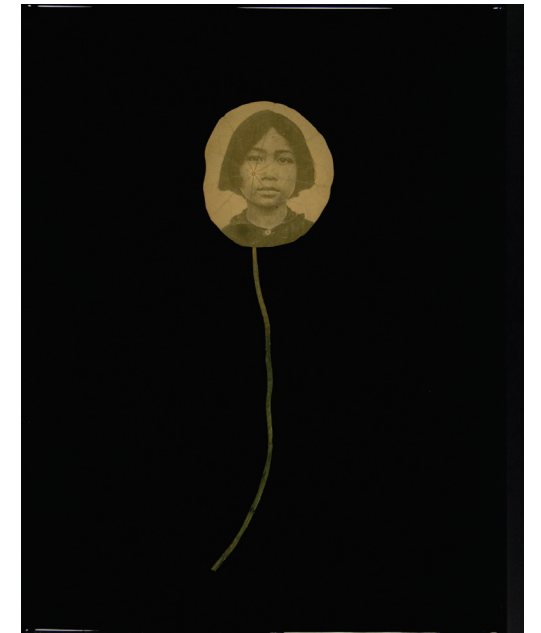


# West Gallery

Christina Seely, *Metropolis 35°00'N135°45'E (Kyoto)*, 2005-2009

**re:collection** begins by highlighting the variety of contemporary photography in MoCP's collection, and looks at the medium's defining element of recorded light. **Kei Ito's** camera-less 180-foot long photogram, *Sungazing Scroll* (2015), hangs boldly in the center of the room. The piece acts as both a record of sunlight and time as well as a meditation on his grandfather's account of the atomic bomb attack on Hiroshima. Moving counter-clockwise, the works continue to illustrate the measurement of light. **Christina Seely's** *Lux* series (2005-2009), for example, examines the disconnect between the immense beauty created by human-made light emanating from the earth's surface and the environmental impact of the world's wealthiest countries. Evidenced as the brightest areas detected on a satellite map, the three regions most visible in NASA images are the United States, Western Europe, and Japan, which together emit approximately 45 percent of the world's CO<sub>2</sub>, and which along with China are the top consumers of electricity and other resources.

Moving clockwise from Kei Ito's scroll are more abstract interpretations of the landscape. Similar to Kei Ito's visualization of his grandfather's first-hand account of the bombing of Hiroshima, **Binh Danh** uses the natural world and his own photographic process to contemplate the impact of the Vietnam War on the landscape and on the memories of its survivors. The artist gathers images from archives, military records, and newspapers and prints them directly onto native leaves, using a photographic procedure that employs the plants' natural processes. To create these "chlorophyll prints", as he calls them, Danh presses living leaves between glass plates along with a photographic negative (generated digitally from the source photograph), and exposes them to sunlight over the course of weeks or months. The areas that are blocked by the negative are prevented from producing chlorophyll in the process of photosynthesis, allowing the image to come into view. Danh's work leads into many other interpretations of the landscape by photographers using a variety of mediums and materials.



LEFT TO RIGHT:

**Kei Ito**, *Sungazing Scroll*, 2015, Installation view from Sheila & Richard Riggs Gallery, Maryland Institute College of Art  
**Binh Danh**, *Memory of Tuol Sleng Prison, Child 7*, 2010. *Drifting Souls #4*, 2005

# East Gallery



Rachel Papo, *Dana, a sniper instructor, outside her room, Kibbutz Kfar Hanassi, Israel (#25), 2004*

This gallery touches upon topics of war and violence, its effects on individuals and communities. *Shotgun Blast* (2011) by **Christian Patterson** was created entirely without a camera and is the remnants of the artist shooting a gun at a sheet of matte board usually used to frame photographs. The piece is part of the series *Redheaded Peckerwood*, where Patterson spins a narrative based on a true series of murders by two teenagers in the winter of 1957-58 in Nebraska and Wyoming.



RIGHT: **Christian Patterson**, *Shotgun Blast*, 2011

While Patterson is mining a historical archive and creating a fictional spinoff, **Guillaume Simoneau's** and **Rachel Papo's** works result from a very personal point of view. Papo served in the Israeli army, and Simoneau was in a relationship with a woman serving in the US army right after the 9/11 attacks. Both series function as a bridge between past and present; the artists reflect their own recollections while using photography to make broad observations about the impact of war on people's lives.

Also included in this gallery are works by **An-My Lê** and **Alison Ruttan**, who both focus on war reenactments. Lê photographs military training exercises in preparation for combat. Ruttan examines the blurred distinction between human and animal behavior as she asks humans to reenact scientist Jane Goodall's accounts of violence and war in a Tanzanian Chimpanzee community. Many other images in this room illustrate the presence of guns in ordinary life, and depict some of the ways firearms are used, including hunting, target practice and self-protection.



TOP TO BOTTOM:  
**Guillaume Simoneau**, *Wearing Veteran's Day present, Kennesaw, Georgia, 2008*  
**An-My Lê**, *29 Palms: Rocket-Propelled Grenade Ambush, 2003-2004*  
**Alison Ruttan**, *Outnumbered, 2009*

## QUESTIONS FOR LOOKING

Discuss the similarities and differences between each artist's treatment of similar subject matter.

In what ways does the work in this exhibition raise questions about the "truthfulness" of historical documents of war including news reports and photographs?

In which artists' work is the concept of "memory" important?

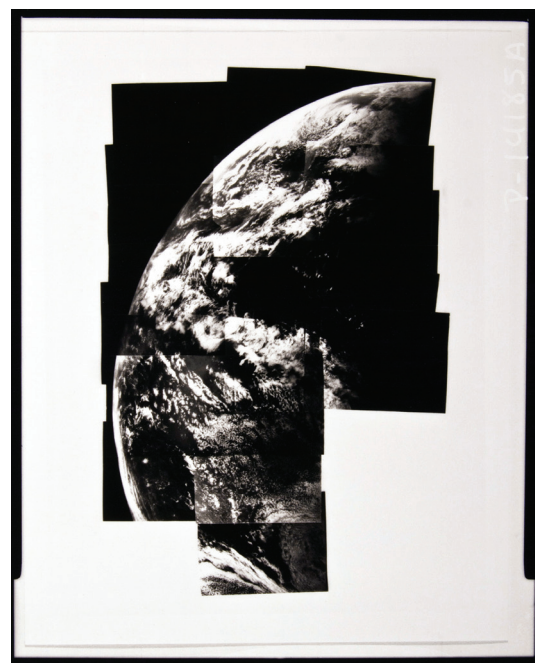
# North Gallery



Evan Baden, *The Baptist*, 2013

The works in this gallery consider various ways individuals connect to their environments or communities on spiritual, religious, or existential levels. Paradoxically, the gallery opens to an image not taken by a human being, but rather by The Mariner 10, a **NASA** operated probe launched in 1974. The probe photographed more than 7,000 images of Venus, Mercury, Earth, and the Moon, moving in incremental stages to create photomontages. The resulting images provide visual evidence of the expansiveness of space beyond our limited eyesight, while also demarking the limits of our fragmented knowledge of the cosmos.

**John Opera's** *Baraboo* (2007) connects earthly conceptions of the universe to the immediate landscape. Opera works in the spirit of transcendentalism: the idea of emphasizing the importance of the individual soul and promoting a form of self-knowledge acquired by experiencing divinity directly through nature. In his self-portrait, the artist sits alone in Baraboo, Wisconsin among some of the oldest above-ground rocks found in North America, dating back 1.5 billion years.



NASA (printed by Alan Cohen)  
*Mariner 10-3 November 1973. Photomosaic of Earth, 1973*

Also in this gallery is an image by **Keith Carter** showing a man in a moment of meditation, prayer, or song. He is similarly engulfed in a moment of other-worldliness, yet firmly standing on the Earth's surface in a communal place of worship.

For his *A Conversação de São Paulo* (2013) series, **Evan Baden** traveled to São Paulo, Brazil and worked with adolescent parishioners from the church, Igreja Agua da Vida, to recreate biblical stories. This image is an interpretation of Jesus's baptism by John the Baptist. Instead of portraying the scene in a river as told in the bible, Baden places his models in a blue swimming pool, wearing present-day clothing to illustrate the relationship between the evangelical church and the rapidly evolving popular culture in São Paulo, both of which hold sway in the lives of young Brazilians today. The country is currently in a state of flux, shifting from its colonial roots in Catholicism to its current global emergence as an economic and industrial powerhouse.



Keith Carter, *New Bethel Missionary Baptist Church*, 1985



John Opera, *Baraboo*, 2007



# Mezzanine

Paul Shambroom, Markle, IN (pop. 1,228) Town Council, 7/21/99, 1999

The stairs to the Mezzanine lead into an installation that confronts ideas on borders, immigration, and political and institutional power. Both documenting the border separating Mexico and the United States, **Simon Norfolk** and **David Taylor** created these photographs between 2006 and 2009, yet the imagery remains especially relevant today. Portraying an impoverished town in Mexico where many of its residents try to find work across the border in the United States, **Marcela Taboada** recounts individual stories of immigration, providing glimpses of personal lives affected by border tensions.



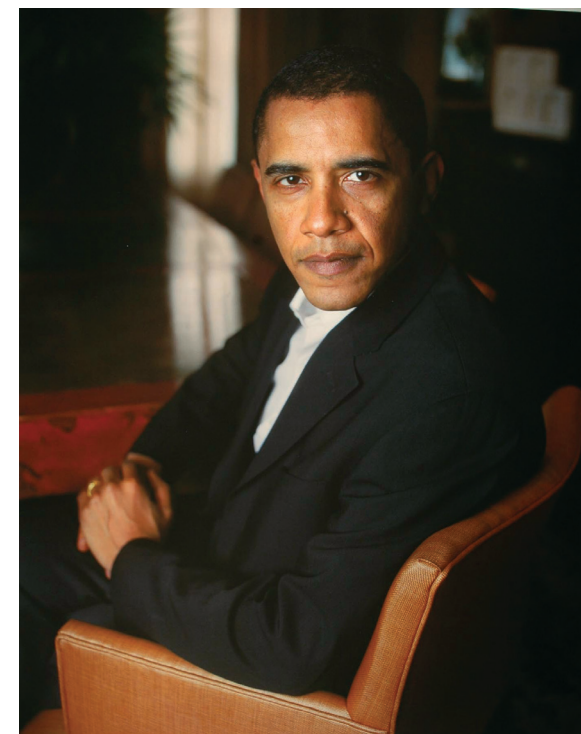
LEFT TO RIGHT:  
**Marcela Taboada**,  
*Emigrantes, Oaxaca, Mexico*, 2001  
**Simon Norfolk**,  
*Mercury Halide: Pa' Una Ciudad Del Norte*, 2006



**Robert Frank's** photograph taken at a Chicago political rally in 1956 is part of his famous series *The Americans*, in which Frank presented a nuanced and multi-faceted image of America that stands in contrast to the idealized image that was conveyed by the media in the midst of the Post-World War II era. Frank's photograph leads into an image of a political icon: a portrait of Barack Obama taken by **Dawoud Bey** in early 2007. Obama appears poised shortly before winning the presidency as the first African-American to hold the highest seat of American power. Connecting federal power to a more local level, **Paul Shambroom's** image is from a series where he explored lower levels of governmental authority on numerous road trips through the US, photographing leadership at town council meetings.



Robert Frank, Political Rally, Chicago, 1956



LEFT TO RIGHT:  
**Dawoud Bey**, *Barack Obama*, 2006  
**David Taylor**, *Camera Room, New Mexico*, 2009



# Stairwell



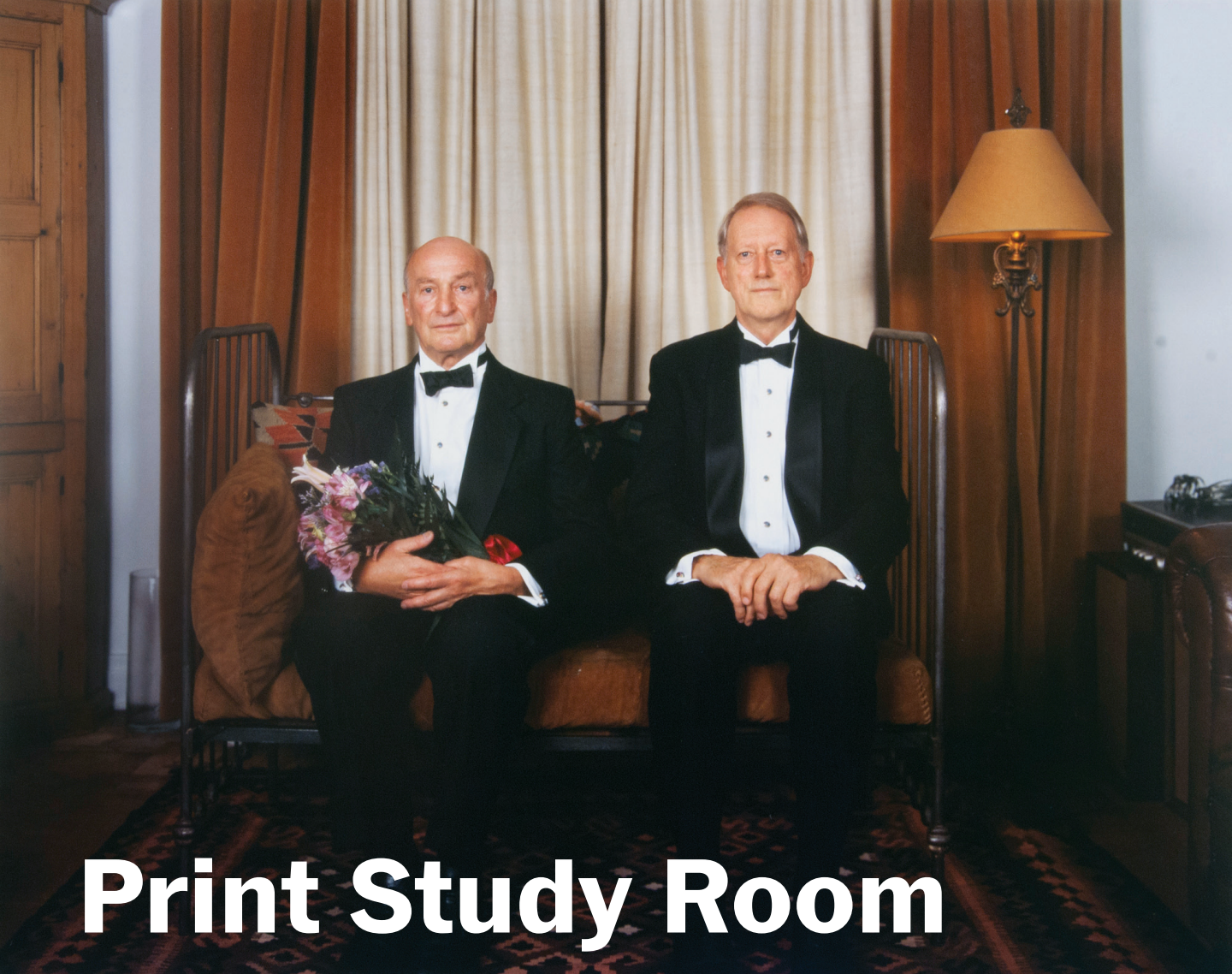
Dawoud Bey, *Don Sledge and Moses Austin*, from *The Birmingham Project*, 2012

Artists **Dawoud Bey** and **Danny Lyon** employ different approaches to picturing the same event: the 1963 Klu Klux Klan bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama. Bey's diptych from *The Birmingham Project* (2012) features a portrait of a child at the exact age of one killed in 1963, paired with a portrait of an adult at the age the child would be in 2013 - the 50th anniversary of the tragedy. Along the wall is a small, yet poignant image by Danny Lyon of men gathering in the aftermath of the same bombing. Lyon, then the staff photographer for Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), was present at nearly every crucial moment of the Civil Rights Movement and is defined by his gritty photographer-as-participant approach.

LEFT:

**Danny Lyon**

*Jimmy Hicks, Julian Bond, John Lewis, and Jeremiah X stand across the street from the bombed church, 1963*



# Print Study Room

Hrvoje Slovinc, *Don Price and Wilkie T. Pretorius, New York, NY, 2006*

A portrait by **Hrvoje Slovinc** anchors the first wall of the Print Study Room. The image depicts a couple posed to mimic late nineteenth-century wedding portraiture, leading to themes of identity, individuality, and doubling that are explored throughout the gallery. A single model plays two roles in **Kelli Connell's** *Double Life* (2002-ongoing) series. Connell uses moments from private relationships she has experienced or witnessed in others to inspire these intimate scenes. The result is a multi-faceted questioning of duality: of masculine and feminine, exterior and interior, static and evolving.

**Hannah Starkey's** quiet, contemplative photograph explores the physical and psychological connections between the individual and her everyday urban surroundings, a theme also investigated in **Clarissa Bonet's** work *Perpetual Shadow* (2014). Bonet photographs figures isolated from the city's never-ending crowds and activity. The experiences of anonymous individuals unfold within the stark contrast of light and shadow cast by the city's looming architecture.



Looming Chicago architecture is emphasized in **Vera Lutter's** *333 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL, October 16, 2001* (2001). For this unique depiction of Michigan Avenue, Lutter made use of camera obscura, the optical principle where light passes through a small aperture into a darkened chamber and an inverted image appears on the wall opposite the hole. Utilizing an empty office building to create this image, Lutter's exposure was held for several minutes in order to keep the image in focus with such a small aperture, as evident in the absence of a distinct time on the clock. Lutter's piece welcomes viewers back to the city after taking a journey through highlights of the MoCP's collection.

CLOCKWISE FROM RIGHT:

**Vera Lutter**, *333 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL, October 16, 2001*, 2001

**Clarissa Bonet**, *Perpetual Shadow*, 2014

**Kelli Connell**, *Inquire Within*, 2002





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