

Harvard Art Museums

Fogg Museum
Busch-Reisinger Museum
Arthur M. Sackler Museum

Press Release

Harvard Art Museums present *Analog Culture: Printer's Proofs from the Schneider/Erdman Photography Lab, 1981–2001*

Exhibition explores the photographer/printer collaboration through a recently acquired significant collection that includes work by several well-known artists

Related installation "A.K. Burns: Survivor's Remorse" runs concurrently



John Schabel, *Night Shot 6*, 2001. Gelatin silver print. Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Schneider/Erdman Printer's Proof Collection, partial gift, and partial purchase through the Margaret Fisher Fund, 2016.182. © John Schabel.

Cambridge, MA
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Analog Culture: Printer's Proofs from the Schneider/Erdman Photography Lab, 1981–2001 is now on display at the Harvard Art Museums, running through August 12, 2018. The exhibition takes an unprecedented look at the dynamic collaboration between photographer and printer, through the lens of the museums' recently acquired Schneider/Erdman Printer's Proof Collection, a remarkable group of nearly 450 photographs printed over three decades by Gary Schneider in his Manhattan-based photography lab.

As co-owners of Schneider/Erdman, Inc., Schneider and his partner, John Erdman, adopted the practice of retaining a “printer’s proof”: a print given to them by the artists with whom they worked, often in partial exchange for their services. These prints grew to form an extraordinary collection of photographs taken by the artists, photojournalists, and fashion photographers at the center of New York’s cultural milieu in the 1980s, ’90s, and early 2000s. Living and working in the East Village, a hub of artistic experimentation and activism, Schneider and Erdman built this collection during a momentous 20-year period that saw the onset of the AIDS crisis, its devastating impact on the art world, and the politics of resistance that emerged in response; the culture wars of the 1980s and ’90s; and the transformation of New York between 1980 and 2001, including the effects that September 11 had on the economy and urban landscape. The printer’s proofs bear witness to these histories—and to the role of photography in recording and interpreting our world.

A cross-section of the Schneider/Erdman Printer’s Proof Collection is on public display for the first time—approximately 90 printer’s proofs as well as related archival material and artist’s tools—including visually stunning works by Richard Avedon, James Casebere, Louise Dahl-Wolfe, Louis Faurer, Eric Fischl, Robert Gober, Nan Goldin, Peter Hujar, Gilles Peress, John Schabel, Lorna Simpson, and David Wojnarowicz, among others. In particular, Schneider’s close collaborations with Gober, Goldin, and Hujar are examined.

The exhibition also includes publications for which Schneider served as printer, such as Madonna’s controversial book of Steven Meisel’s photographs, *Sex* (1992), and Schneider’s meticulous reproduction of Czech modernist photographs from the 1920s and ’30s by František Drtikol, Jaromír Funke, Jaroslav Rössler, Hugo Táborský, and Eugen Wiškovský for a portfolio conceived and published in 1994 by curator Jaroslav Anděl.

Archival objects and artist’s tools included in the final gallery demonstrate the collection’s indispensable value for teaching about the materials and methods of photographic printing. A grouping of highlight and contrast masks, a Light Valve Technology negative, and a gelatin silver test print related to a 2008 project for Robert Gober shows the various tools Schneider used in his pursuit of the perfect print. Viewed side by side, four prints on different papers from one negative of Gilles Peress’s *Halloween, Minneapolis* (1985) demonstrate the nuances and subtleties attainable in black and white photography. A large case along one wall uses a selection of printer’s proofs to explain various terms and processes in analog printmaking—the negative, paper choice, developing, and toning—and also shows more recent examples of pigmented ink prints of works by Peter Hujar to shed light on Schneider’s transition to digital processes.

A print publication and a complementary digital resource have been published in conjunction with the exhibition. Both of these publications highlight and share the research prepared for the exhibition and will foster future scholarship on this extraordinary printer’s proof collection.

The book (<http://bit.ly/2wYNmLg>), focused on the work and practice of Schneider/Erdman, Inc., provides an unparalleled behind-the-scenes view of New York’s art community in the late 20th century. It includes essays by curator Jennifer Quick; Robin Kelsey, Dean of Arts and Humanities and the Shirley Carter Burden Professor of Photography in the Department of History of Art and Architecture at Harvard University; and Jessica Williams, a Ph.D. candidate in the history of art and architecture at Harvard University and former Agnes Mongan Curatorial Intern at the Harvard Art Museums. In addition, it features an oral histories section, with reflections by Schneider and Erdman on printing works by Peter Hujar and David Wojnarowicz, and excerpts of interviews with Schneider and with a selection of his clients and collaborators. Hardcover, \$50. Published by Harvard Art Museums; distributed by Yale University Press, New Haven and London.

The online Special Collection (<http://bit.ly/2rOoXmW>) serves as a digital repository for the entire Schneider/Erdman Printer’s Proof Collection and related archives. It includes an overview of the

collection and history of Schneider/Erdman, in-depth studies of the range of techniques and processes that Schneider deployed for each photograph, and audiovisual content (for example, video interviews and archival footage of Schneider at work). Conceived and designed by Ph.D. candidate Jessica Williams, this digital resource provides continued accessibility to the printer's proof collection for both the general public and scholars, ensuring the collection's legacy as an important archive for the appreciation and study of 20th-century photography.

"The *Analog Culture* exhibition, publication, and related online resource explore the history and the making of this extraordinary group of photographs, which Gary and John have always considered to be a teaching collection," said Jennifer Quick, curator of *Analog Culture* and the John R. and Barbara Robinson Family Associate Research Curator in Photography at the Harvard Art Museums. "Each of these photographs tells multiple stories—of Gary and John's work, of the artist who originally captured the image, and of how the photograph bears witness to important issues and questions of the moment. The collection is a rich resource that will be actively studied in the years to come."

In a statement that appears at the beginning of the exhibition as well as in the accompanying publication, Schneider summarizes his approach to photographic printing: "In all my years as a printer, my job has been to honor the intention of the artist. It is to suspend any intervention on my part that would interrupt that intention, even if it means that I do not make the print more beautiful, or more technically elegant, or any other attribute that I might insert as *my* value. With all of the artists I print for, it is my job to locate their intention in order to realize it in the final print. This is my talent as a printer."

The Schneider/Erdman Printer's Proof Collection was acquired by the Harvard Art Museums in two parts, in 2011 and 2016, as a combined gift and purchase through the support of the Margaret Fisher Fund. In addition, Schneider and Erdman gifted a collection of archival material, including photographs, test prints, glass plate negatives, vintage material, and studio records, as well as photographs from their personal art collection, in 2017. Altogether, these acquisitions have reinforced the museums' place as a primary site for the study, research, exhibition, and interpretation of contemporary photography. Learn more about the acquisition, Schneider and Erdman, and the history of the Harvard Art Museums holdings of photographs in a 2017 press release: <http://bit.ly/2k6AFF2>.

"The relationship between photographer and printer, like any collaboration that requires two artists to share time, ideas, and materials, is necessarily built on trust," said Martha Tedeschi, the Elizabeth and John Moors Cabot Director of the Harvard Art Museums. "Over the span of his illustrious career as a photographic printer, Gary Schneider established himself as a master craftsman, earning the trust of artists who handed over their source material to Schneider and divulged their hopes for the print in full confidence that he would enact that vision with sensitivity and technical expertise."

Tedeschi added: "Schneider and his partner, John Erdman, have in turn entrusted the Harvard Art Museums with the preservation, exhibition, and study of 445 photographs. These printer's proofs, together with Schneider and Erdman's additional gifts of archival and technical material from their lab, have truly transformed the museums' photography holdings."

Jennifer Quick and Gary Schneider provide an introduction to the exhibition in a video available on Vimeo (<https://vimeo.com/266596057>) and YouTube (<https://youtu.be/yzeXjuGnEIY>). Learn more about the exhibition and see a slideshow of works on view at harvardartmuseums.org/analogculture.

Related Installation – A.K. Burns: *Survivor's Remorse*

A newly commissioned video installation in the museums' Lightbox Gallery (Level 5), *A.K. Burns: Survivor's Remorse*, is in part a response to the life and art of David Wojnarowicz, one of the artists featured in the *Analog Culture* exhibition. The installation is also on view through August 12, 2018. Burns (American, b. 1975) is a New York-based interdisciplinary artist whose work explores the body

as a contentious domain wherein sociopolitical conditions are negotiated. To read the artist's description of the project, see <http://bit.ly/2r0INtR>.

Related Programming

Programming includes a film series, a seminar in the museums' Art Study Center, and gallery talks throughout the duration of *Analog Culture* and *A.K. Burns: Survivor's Remorse*. All programs held at Harvard Art Museums, 32 Quincy Street, Cambridge, MA. Detailed information about these events is forthcoming at harvardartmuseums.org/visit/calendar.

FILM

Wednesday, June 27, 6–8pm

Transgressions: David Wojnarowicz, Post-Punk Cinema, and Queer Video Activism

A rare look at some of Wojnarowicz's provocative films, followed by a discussion with artist A.K. Burns and curatorial intern Jessica Bardsley.

Wednesday, July 11, 6–7:30pm

Tacita Dean's *Kodak*

Focused on the closing of a motion-picture film factory, *Kodak* considers the diminishing role of analog film in the world of cinema.

Both screenings will take place in the museums' Menschel Hall, Lower Level. Please enter the museums via the entrance on Broadway. Free admission, but seating is limited. Tickets will be distributed beginning at 5:30pm at the museums' Broadway entrance. One ticket per person.

ART STUDY CENTER SEMINAR

Friday, June 29, 2018, 11am–noon

The Story of the Print—Photographs from the Schneider/Erdman Printer's Proof Collection

Gary Schneider, along with curator Jennifer Quick, will reveal the process and thinking behind the prints he made for renowned photographers.

This seminar will take place in the Art Study Center, Level 4. Free admission, but capacity is limited to 15 and registration is recommended. To register, please email am_visitorservices@harvard.edu.

GALLERY TALKS – *Analog Culture* and *A.K. Burns: Survivor's Remorse*

Tuesday: June 19, July 10

Wednesday: August 8

Thursday: June 28

Saturday: July 7 (*A.K. Burns: Survivor's Remorse*, 10:30–11am)

These talks are held at 12:30–1pm on each date listed (with the exception noted above). Free with the price of admission; meet in the museums' Calderwood Courtyard on Level 1.

Credits

Analog Culture: Printer's Proofs from the Schneider/Erdman Photography Lab, 1981–2001 is organized by the Harvard Art Museums, Cambridge, Massachusetts. Curated by Jennifer Quick, John R. and

Barbara Robinson Family Associate Research Curator in Photography, Division of Modern and Contemporary Art, Harvard Art Museums.

The printer's proofs came to the Harvard Art Museums through the generosity of Gary Schneider and John Erdman, who have long understood the value of the photographs as a teaching collection. The acquisition was also made possible in part by the Margaret Fisher Fund. Further support for this project was provided by the Widgeon Point Charitable Foundation; the Harvard Art Museums Mellon Publication Funds, including the Carola B. Terwilliger Fund; the John R. and Barbara Robinson Family Fund for Photography; the Agnes Gund Fund for Modern and Contemporary Art; the M. Victor Leventritt Fund; and the Richard L. Menschel Endowment Fund.

A.K. Burns: Survivor's Remorse is organized by Jennifer Quick, John R. and Barbara Robinson Family Associate Research Curator in Photography, and Chris Molinski, Associate Research Curator for Digital Initiatives, with Jessica Bardsley, Agnes Mongan Curatorial Intern, Harvard Art Museums.

Modern and contemporary art programs at the Harvard Art Museums are made possible in part by generous support from the Emily Rauh Pulitzer and Joseph Pulitzer, Jr., Fund for Modern and Contemporary Art.

About the Harvard Art Museums

The Harvard Art Museums house one of the largest and most renowned art collections in the United States, and are comprised of three museums (the Fogg, Busch-Reisinger, and Arthur M. Sackler Museums) and four research centers (the Straus Center for Conservation and Technical Studies, the Center for the Technical Study of Modern Art, the Harvard Art Museums Archives, and the Archaeological Exploration of Sardis). The Fogg Museum includes Western art from the Middle Ages to the present; the Busch-Reisinger Museum, unique among North American museums, is dedicated to the study of all modes and periods of art from central and northern Europe, with an emphasis on German-speaking countries; and the Arthur M. Sackler Museum is focused on Asian art, Ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern art, and Islamic and later Indian art. Together, the collections include approximately 250,000 objects in all media. The Harvard Art Museums are distinguished by the range and depth of their collections, their groundbreaking exhibitions, and the original research of their staff. Integral to Harvard University and the wider community, the museums and research centers serve as resources for students, scholars, and the public. For more than a century they have been the nation's premier training ground for museum professionals and are renowned for their seminal role in developing the discipline of art history in the United States. The Harvard Art Museums have a rich tradition of considering the history of objects as an integral part of the teaching and study of art history, focusing on conservation and preservation concerns as well as technical studies.

The Harvard Art Museums' 2014 renovation and expansion carried on the legacies of the three museums and united their remarkable collections under one roof for the first time. Renzo Piano Building Workshop preserved the Fogg Museum's landmark 1927 facility, while transforming the space to accommodate 21st-century needs. The museums now feature 40 percent more gallery space, an expanded Art Study Center, conservation labs, and classrooms, and a striking glass roof that bridges the facility's historic and contemporary architecture. The three constituent museums retain their distinct identities in the facility, yet their close proximity provides exciting opportunities to experience works of art in a broader context. harvardartmuseums.org

Hours and Admission

Daily, 10am–5pm. Closed major holidays. Admission: \$15 adults, \$13 seniors (65+), \$10 non-Harvard students (18+). Free for members; youth under 18; Cambridge residents (proof of residency required); and Harvard students, faculty, and staff (plus one guest). On Saturdays, from 10am–noon, Massachusetts residents receive free admission (proof of residency required). For further information about visiting, see harvardartmuseums.org/plan-your-visit.

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