

snap shots

Volume 16 Number 8

April 2011

Jessica Ferguson's Handmade Photography Americal Center, Wakefield, MA, April 3, 2011



Photo by Stephanie Plourde-Simard

Jessica Ferguson

Working as a pinhole photographer, Jessica Ferguson has said, "While some might consider me a photographer, I feel I am really more of an assembler of images and tableaux, which then come to exist as pinhole photographs of an interior landscape. The poetic aspects

of pinhole photography are what draw me to it."

She started printing with antiquarian photographic processes in 1990 and made her first pinhole camera in 1991. She usually works in her own studio, where she sets up arrangements of images and objects

Photo by Robert Souther



Ferguson constructing a tableau

culled from what she refers to as her "museum of memory" - her personal collection of books, objects, and artifacts.

Because Ferguson uses only natural light, her pinhole

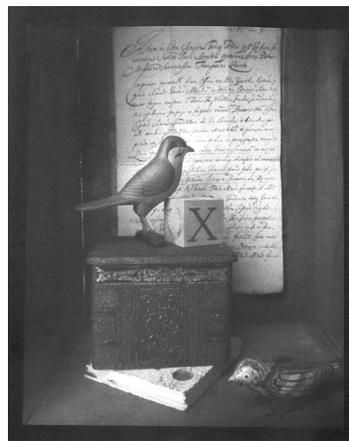
exposures may take several hours, depending on the weather, the time of day, the season, and the speed of the film. Typically she works

with large format black and white sheet film ranging from 4x5 to 8x10 (occasionally 11x14 or 12x16). She hand develops her negatives

Photo by Stephanie Plourde-Simard



in her own darkroom, and contact prints the images on artist's paper, using hand-applied 19th century



Two Birds
Photo by Peter Harris

photographic techniques, such as cyanotype. As these antiquarian processes require ultra-violet light to print the image, she uses a UV exposure unit rather than relying of the New England sun.

Ferguson's talk at the April PHSNE meeting will include a virtual tour of her studio and darkroom, and will provide an overview of her working methods. Ad-

ditionally she will speak about her cultural exchanges with pinhole photographers from Poland.

Currently 35 of her pinhole photographs and photo collages are on view through June 26, 2011 at the Fox Talbot Mu-

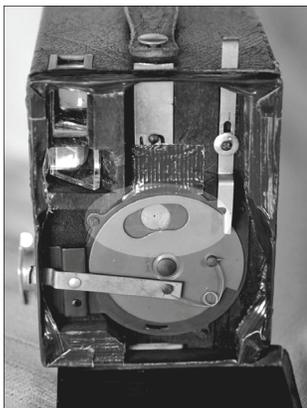
Photo by Stephanie Plourde-Simard



seum, Lacock Abbey, Chippenham, England. This spring her work will be included in two group shows in Boston: "What is Contained" at Gallery 360

at Northeastern University (March/April) and "Discoveries" at Panopticon Gallery (May). For further information, visit Jessica's website museumofmemory.com.

Pinhole Camera Project Earns 2010 PHSNE Award



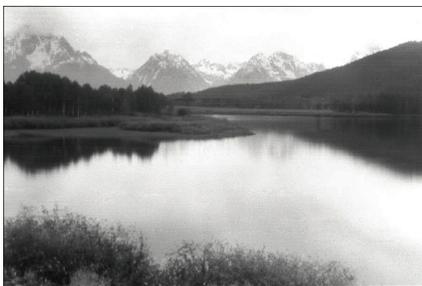
Modified box camera

PHSNE has awarded its 2010 student grant to Karen Torres of Bow, NH. The award, which carries a \$1,000 cash grant, is to a New England student working in photo processes, camera modification, or photo history.

Torres, a senior at the NH Institute of Art, submitted a project in the camera modification category which consisted of twelve matted pinhole images made using a modified

1924 Kodak Brownie, No. 2/model F.

The project began when she purchased a Brownie box camera at the PHSNE Spring 2010 Photographica Show and transformed it into a pinhole camera. Torres used a design program at pinhole.cz to calculate the optimum size of the pinhole for the focal length of the Brownie box. This website also allowed her to print out exposure tables—including reciprocity corrections—for Kodak T-Max 100, 120 medium format film.



To modify the camera, Torres replaced the viewfinder mirrors, removed the existing glass lens and pushed it out

of the camera. She then made a pinhole lens from a 2" x 2" square of sheet copper and drilled a .02 inch hole. This lens size corresponds to a 5.117 inch focal length. She sanded the inside of the hole to eliminate any roughness to the lens opening. Torres placed the lens on the outside of the camera, but behind the camera's spring shutter mechanism, and this worked well while allowing her to use the exposure slide as a bulb setting to time exposures.

While she was developing early images, Torres noticed light leaks on the film. These occurred because she shot her pinhole images with the front cover off the camera, and the seal it normally made with the body of the camera had been removed. To recreate the seal of the original front cover, she used duct tape around the edges of the outside and the inside of the camera box. This low tech modification solved the light leak problem.

Once the camera was ready to travel, Torres took it on several trips to shoot photographs in a variety of situations. She used T-Max 100 film due to its light sensitivity and shorter exposure time. Her "smooshed up" backpack stabilized the boxy camera. Additionally, Torres employed a Gossen light meter at f/22 setting and converted the time necessary for the f/238 setting that she got from the .02 inch lens opening. She used the chart from pinhole.cz to make the conversion for required exposure times.



Torres developed her film with F76+ developer in a 1:9 dilution for 7 minutes, then scanned the negatives with an Epson V700 scanner, edited them in Photoshop CS4, and printed them with an Epson 9800 printer on Epson premium glossy photo paper. The resulting images are 4" x 6."

While working on this pinhole project, Torres says, "I learned a lot about modifying a camera and the basics of photography. I learned that beautiful soft images can be made from a box with a hole in it and a timing chart. I also took a digital camera on these photography trips, and in several cases, I like the aesthetic of the pinhole images better. Sometimes changes in technology are not really advances at all."

A retired Air Force pilot, Torres is working towards a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree at the New Hampshire Institute of Art. Check out her complete pinhole portfolio at her website kmtorres.com.

PHSNE Membership

PHSNE membership is \$15 for students, \$35 for individuals and institutions, \$40 for a family, and \$45 for foreign membership. Join or renew online at phsne.org/paypal or send a check in U.S. dollars, drawn on a U.S. bank or dollar denominated international money order.

Send payments, changes of address, and other contact information to Joe Walters Jr, PHSNE Membership Chair, P.O. Box 650189, West Newton, MA 02465, email: membership@phsne.org; or use the Web form at phsne.org/contacts.

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How Old is that Old Camera?

Have you ever come across an interesting looking camera at a yard sale and wondered about its age? These eight criteria can help you make that determination:

1. Red leather bellows on folding cameras that open with a drop front? It's from the period before World War I but not much earlier than 1900. Example: Folding Pocket Kodaks.



2. A box camera that loads with glass plates in holders? It's probably from the period of the detective cameras (if it's larger than a largish shoe box), and it's a later camera and up to about 1910 if smaller. Examples: in the large size, the Blair Detective; small, the 3 1/4 -by-4 1/4 inch Cyclone Magazine camera.

3. German cameras that are all black with black enameled parts are prior to 1930 but could go back to 1905. With chromed tops or internal parts for an overall "modern" look, it's not earlier than about 1930 and up to the present. Examples: early (black), Voigtlander Avus or the ICA Ideal; later with chrome and a modern look, the Zeiss Contax II and later models of the Plaubel Makina.



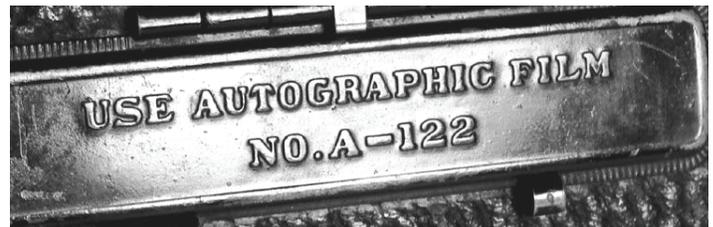
4. German cameras with Compur shutters? If the Compur shutter is old style (top dial, side dial marked ZBT, left lever to cock, right lever to trip), introduced in 1912, then the camera dates during the period from 1912 to 1928. Compur shutter of the rim-set type? With a chromium ring that is rotated by gripping the rim edge of the total shutter mechanism? These can only be found on the KW Patent Etui, and later the same camera was available with rim-set shutters; rimset Compur, the Kodak Re-comar cameras 18 and 33.

5. Fold-open cameras with wooden lens board that conceals shutter mechanism plus wooden bed on which shutter-lens assembly stands? From 1890s up to 1905. Examples: No.4 Folding Kodet, Premos, and Conleys.



6. View camera with no shutter assembly on the lens; lens cap on lens for *on-off* exposures? Cameras up to 1895 and usually from about 1880 on, plus rarer wet-plate cameras of the Civil War period and up to 1880. Look for the wet-plate stains at the bottom of the camera where the film holder is seated as one of the telltale clues.

7. Folding camera of small size with a squeeze-bulb activated shutter, usually found with red leather bellows? Not later than about 1910 but not earlier than 1900.



8. Does the camera interior or does film still in the camera provide a film-size number? Here are the earliest possible dates for the film size as a clue to the earliest possible date for the camera:

- #101 - 1895 #102 - 1895 #103 - 1896 #104 - 1897
- #105 - 1898 #106 - 1898 #107 - 1898 #108 - 1898
- #109 - 1898 #110 - 1898 #111 - 1898 #112 - 1898
- #113 - 1898 #114 - 1898 #115 - 1898 #116 - 1899
- #117 - 1900 #118 - 1900 #119 - 1900 #120 - 1901
- #121 - 1902 #122 - 1903 #123 - 1904 #124 - 1905
- #125 - 1905 #126* - 1906 #127 - 1912 #128 - 1912
- #129 - 1912 #130 - 1916 #616 - 1932 #620 - 1932
- #135 - 1934

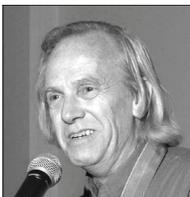
- (35 mm) #823 - 1935 (Bantam) #126 - 1963
- (Instamatic) #110 - 1973 (Pocket Instamatic)

*Not to be confused with #126 of 1963.

~Reprinted from PHSNE Journal, summer 1987,
Photos by Lew Regelman

In Memoriam: John Craig

John Craig, honorary life member of PHSNE and three time president, including founding president in 1973, was one of the first full-time U.S. dealers in photography.



Daguerreian Society
2007

His interest in antique photography began around 1970 while he was a student at Wesleyan University, working as a photographer/reporter at the *Hartford Courant*. After college, he remained with the newspaper for six years, owned a retail camera store, and served as a photographer with the Connecticut Army National Guard. He wrote a column for *Shutterbug* for nearly ten years about collectors' shows around the country.

Craig was mentioned in *Popular Photography*, *The Rangefinder*, *Camera and Darkroom*, and numerous other publications. Many customers seeking instruction books for old cameras were referred to him. He had more than 155,000 instruction booklets in stock for thousands of cameras, accessories, and projectors - and nearly 10,000 other interesting photographic items. He published reprints of early photographic catalogs, usable and classic camera instruction booklets, and worthwhile camera repair manuals.

Beginning in 1994, he published several editions of *Craig's Daguerreian Registry*, a reference tool for dealers and collector's to identify and date the more than 12,000 photographers who worked in the United States prior to 1860. In his own words, "I should be a corporation with numerous employees, but I'm not. I'm still only a one-man operation-- organizing, filing, writing, lugging, shipping, talking, and often being generally confused."

PHSNE Meetings

Meetings are usually held on the first Sunday of each month, September to June, at 1:30 p.m. at the Americal Center, 467 Main St., Wakefield, MA, preceded by a mini trade fair at 12:30 and an open meeting of the PHSNE board at 11:00 a.m.

Upcoming meetings:

April 30, May 1—Photographica 75

June —Field trip, TBA

Driving directions to Americal Center:

I-95 to exit 39, North Ave. toward Reading/Wakefield (right turn on North from the south; left turn from the north). Drive approximately 1.5 miles, then turn left at Main St. Destination is on the left: 467 Main St., Wakefield, MA 01880.

Parking available next door at the school, behind the building, and on Main St.

Public transportation:

The Wakefield station of the Haverhill rail line is within 1/2 mile of the Center, and a bus line stops in front of the building. Details are available at mbta.com.

PHSNE Online

PHSNE's Web site is online at phsne.org. George Champine is the Webmaster.

Join the PHSNE Forum online discussion moderated by Joe Walters; sign up and log in at phsne.org/forum. For an archive of back issues of *snap shots* and meeting presentations, visit phsne.org/archive.

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Photographic Historical Society of New England
Next Meeting: Sunday, April 3, 2011
Jesseca Ferguson's Handmade Photography
Americal Center, 1:30 P.M.

West Newton, MA 02465-0189
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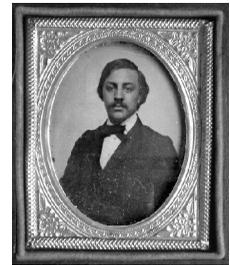
Photographica

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Sun. May 1, 2011 9:00am-3:00pm



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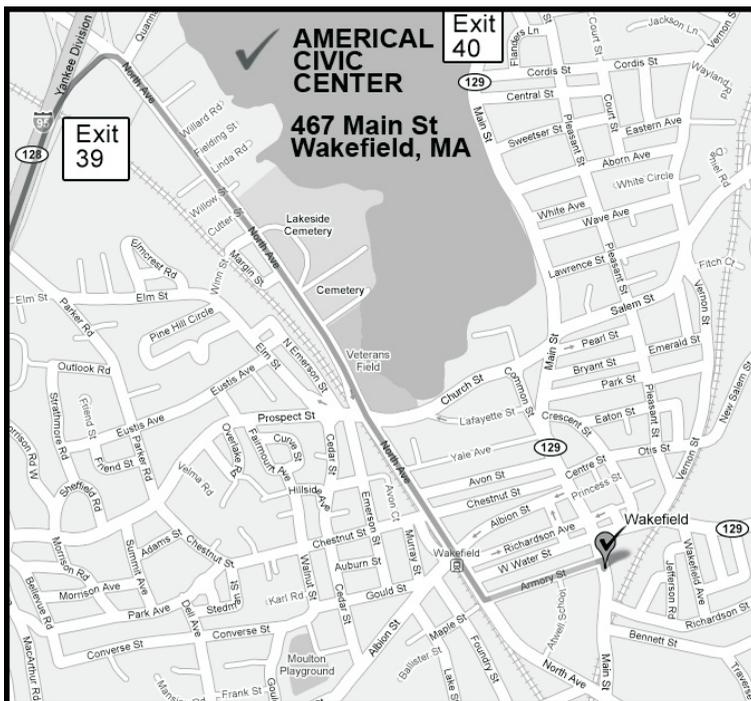
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