

# snap shots

Volume 25 Number 6

February 2020

**Edie Bresler, Director of the Photography Program at Simmons U, is PHSNE Speaker  
Sunday, February 2, 2020, 1:30 P.M.  
Woman's Club Workshop, 72 Columbus St., Newton Highlands MA**



Edie Bresler is an artist whose practice combines the relational nature of photography with chance. A long-time educator, Bresler is director of the photography program at Simmons University in Boston.

Bresler's presentation, *Based on a True Story*, will feature an overview of her artistic pursuits inviting social and aesthetic collaboration across communities. It will include a discussion about the handmade nineteenth century cyanotype process, found objects, appropriation, and the many artists and writers who have helped shape Bresler's vision and practice.

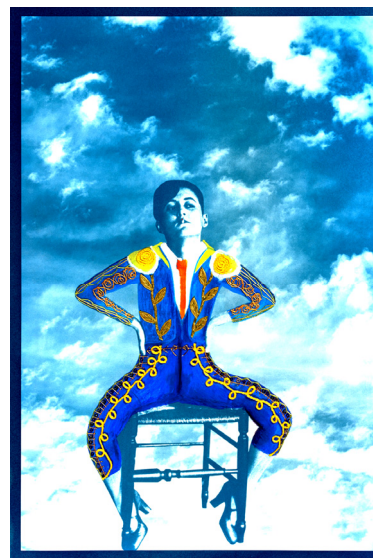
Her photographs encompass a broad range of approaches and techniques. *The Yes Project* consists of cyanotypes created in collaboration with participants and passersby from a variety of communities. Cyanotypes are a camera-less process, made with sunlight to create a silhouette of whatever is in direct contact with the prepared pages. Participants lie down and reach and stretch across sheets of vellum that are hand-coated with a light sensitive emulsion. A relational action in the moment, Bresler continues extending moments, like a human jigsaw puzzle, to create large wall constructions and site specific installations.

*Anonymous* is inspired by the discovery of a series of "anonymous" nudes made between 1843-1910. Curious about the unknown back-story between the photographer and subject, Bresler creates her own narrative. After scanning the original images, she locates them in another space and begins sewing a set of clothes. She refers to the resulting unique photographs as alternate moments, simultaneous mo-

ments, and combined meditations on our present moment.

Bresler is well known for her long-term social documentary project, *We Sold A Winner*, which follows the trail of winning jackpots from \$1 million to \$1.5 billion back to the mom and pop stores where the tickets were sold. Her portraits of the families and places left in the wake of someone else's random fortune present a unique portrait of America following the 2009 economic downturn.

Her projects have been featured on *Good Morning America*, *WGBH Greater Boston*, *Photograph Magazine*, *Lenscratch*, *Slate*, *Photo District News*, *Business Insider*, *Esquire Russia*, *Fast Company*, and others. They have been exhibited at Gallery Kayafas



*Anonymous Woman 1895, 2019 Matadora*

in Boston, Davis Orton Gallery and Photoville in New York, the International Photography Festival in Pingyao China, Gallery 1401 in Philadelphia, and many other venues.

Bresler's photographs are in the permanent collections of the Houston Museum of Fine Arts and the Danforth Museum of Art. She has a BFA from the School of

Visual Arts, NYC and an MFA from Leslie University College of Art and Design, Boston.

Bresler has received numerous grants including a 2017 Massachusetts Cultural Council fellowship in Photography, Visual Artist Fellowships from the Somerville Arts Council and Berkshire Taconic Arts Foundation, and a New York State Artist Fellowship.

## MIT Offers *The Polaroid Project*

After a world-wide, critically acclaimed tour, *The Polaroid Project: At the Intersection of Art and Technology* is on display at the MIT Museum in Cambridge, very close to the site where instant film was invented. The exhibit “tells the fascinating and instructive story of the Polaroid company, and presents all aspects of Polaroid photography, including the technology that made it possible” (<http://mitmuseum.mit.edu/thepolaroidproject>).

The 250 images include work by 175 artists including Ansel Adams, Chuck Close, Harold Edgerton, Walker Evans, PHSNE member Jessica Ferguson, David Hockney, Robert Mapplethorpe, Robert Rauschenberg, and Andy Warhol. “The exhibition also showcases more than 75 artifacts—including cameras, prototypes, experimental films, and other technical materials—from the MIT Museum’s own historic Polaroid collection.”



*Thepolaroidproject*  
<https://mitmuseum.mit.edu/>

The exhibit runs through June 21, 2020. It will be shown in two phases to protect the photographs, closing from February 24<sup>th</sup>-March 8<sup>th</sup> for re-installation.

## Davis Museum Hosts Two Exhibits on Vernacular Photography

During her presentation at PHSNE’s September meeting, curator Carrie Cushman mentioned construction of a 19th century photo studio for one of two concurrent exhibits at the Davis Museum, Wellesley College from February 7 - June 7, 2020.

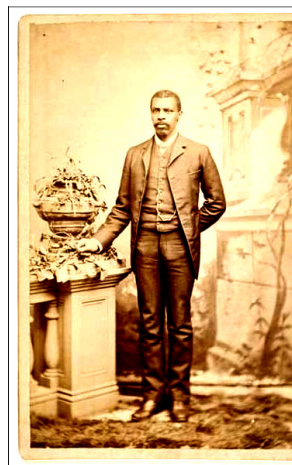
*Making, Not Taking: Portrait Photography in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century* features that studio along with daguerreotypes, ambrotypes, cartes-de-visite, cabinet cards, and tintypes from the museum’s extensive holdings. The title suggests that “before photographs were taken or snapped, they were *made*. Early photography was a process that involved a great deal of time, labor, and costly materials” (<https://www.wellesley.edu/davismuseum/whats-on/current/node/171791>).

*Going Viral: Photography, Performance, and the Everyday* considers our everyday relationship to photography: the ways in which we mediate, understand,



*Anonymous snapshot, 20th century*  
Gift of Peter J. Cohen

and narrate our lives through the snapping and sharing of photographs, and how and why certain types of images become socially infectious. In addition to the 123 snapshots on view, the exhibition will also showcase an Original Kodak camera, early amateur photography manuals, along with Kodak number 1 and 2.



*Abraham P. Beecher*  
Portrait of a Man  
19th century cabinet card  
Gift of Rosamond Vaule

The opening celebration is scheduled for February 6<sup>th</sup> from 6:30 - 9:00 P.M. and a curatorial gallery talk will take place on Tuesday, February 11<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 P.M. A symposium, *Handmade Photography Today*, will be held on Saturday, March 7<sup>th</sup>. For additional information, visit <https://www.wellesley.edu/davismuseum>.

## PHSNE Membership

**New members are invited to join for half the rates for the first year.** Regular PHSNE membership (U.S. and Canada) is \$20 for students, \$40 for individuals and institutions, and \$45 for a family; foreign membership is \$50. Join or renew online at [www.phsne.org/join](http://www.phsne.org/join) or [www.phsne.org/renew](http://www.phsne.org/renew), or send a check in U.S. dollars, drawn on a U.S. bank or dollar denominated international money order. Please check the expiration date on the *snap shots* mailing label before sending in dues.

Send payments, changes of address, and other contact information, to Joe Walters Jr, PHSNE Membership Chair, 47 Calvary St., Waltham MA 02453. (Call: 617-826-9294; email: [membership-chair@phsne.org](mailto:membership-chair@phsne.org); or use the Web form at [phsne.org/application](http://phsne.org/application)).

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## The Voigtlander Vitessa Line

In the 1950s, Austrian based Voigtlander introduced the Vitessa, “an innovative 35mm folding rangefinder camera’ with a barn-door assembly (<http://camera-wiki.org/wiki/Vitessa>—see barn-door design in photo below).

Probably the most desirable and valuable of the series was the Vitessa L, produced from 1954 to 1957. Several sources compared it to a Leica M3. “The focusing is operated by the user’s right thumb via a wheel on the back of the top plate, with a distance dial (and depth-of-field scale) set into the top plate. The film advance, which cocks the shutter automatically, is operated with a large plunger rod sticking out of the top plate, that can be retracted when the camera is folded.”



*Voigtlander Vitessa 500 AE, electronic, rosewood look, wikipedia.org*



*Voigtlander Vitessa L, camerawiki.org*

Not surprisingly, the cameras evolved over time. Later models added strap lugs, automatic parallax correction, and an uncoupled selenium meter. The camera had several nicknames: Scheunentor (barn in German reflecting the barn-door assembly) and Lighthouse, thanks to the unusual plunger rod.

Voigtlander also used the name Vitessa for later models. In the 1960’s, it produced the Vitessa 500 series (35 mm) and the Vitessa 126 (126 film). “Although (the Vitessa 500 AE) also bears the company name Zeiss Ikon, it was designed and produced at the Voigtländer works in Braunschweig, Germany.

The Voigtlander Company has a long and interesting history. It was founded in 1756 by Johann Christoph Voigtlander, an optician and inventor, to produce scientific instruments, and it remained in the family when he died in 1797.

The firm produced optical products, and in 1840, a Hungarian inventor, Josef Petzval, designed the Petzval lens for Voigtlander that had the widest relative aperture in its time, approximately f/3. This reduced exposure times, facilitating the production of daguerreotype portraits. The Petzval lens was used for about 100 years, mostly for portraits, as its narrow field of view was not well suited for landscapes. The 2013 PHSNE *Journal* contains an authoritative article, *The Petzval Lens*, by Dan Coluci.

The company began to manufacture cameras, one of which was the first all-metal daguerreotype camera. In 1849, Voigtlander Company built a factory in Germany and moved its headquarters there in 1862.

The chemical company Schering AG bought a majority share of Voigtlander in 1925. Many of the well-known Voigtlander cameras were produced under its ownership. Zeiss purchased Schering’s controlling interest in 1956. The brand name is still in use.

**Reminder: *Photographica* 89**  
**New Venue: Newton North High School**  
**Saturday, April 18, 2020**  
**Dealer setup—Friday, 4:00 P.M.**  
**Auction to follow show**

## Le Daguerreotype Restored

The Royal Academy of Arts and Sciences at Barcelona (RACAB) restored a Spanish Daguerre-Giroux camera. The process included restoration of the plate box chemistry bottles and replacement of the missing plate holder and mercury fuming box.

The daguerreotype process was patented in early 1839, equipment made it to Spain by September 1839, and it was demonstrated in Barcelona in November, 1839.



Le Daguerreotype: Daguerre-Giroux camera, Wetplatewagon

“The restoration project of this exceptional equipment was the first step of a more extensive research project about this camera,

the invention of daguerreotype process and first photography [sic] taken in Spain, by photographers and photographic history researchers Martí Llorens and Rebecca Mutell (Factoría Heliográfica). At the same time director Lalo García and producer Txell Sabartés (Voodoo Productions) are doing [or have already produced] a documentary about this historical photographic research” (<http://www.wetplatewagon.com/camera-daguerre-giroux/>). Efforts to locate the documentary were unsuccessful.

### PHSNE Meetings

Meetings are usually held on the first Sunday of each month, September to June, at 1:30 p.m. preceded by an open meeting of the PHSNE Board at 11:00 a.m.

#### Upcoming meetings:

**March 1**—Dick Moore, Magic Lanterns

**Saturday April 18**—*Photographica* 89, Newton North High School

#### Driving directions to Woman’s Club Workshop, 72 Columbus St., Newton Highlands MA:

From I-95/Rt-128 exit 20 take Rt-9 East toward Brookline/Boston. Turn left at Woodward St, right onto Lincoln St, and left onto Columbus St. WCW will be to your right. The WCW is about 1.4 miles inside 128.

Coming west on Rt-9 from Boston, turn right on Walnut St then left on to Lincoln St, then right onto Columbus St. The WCW (#72) will be to your right.

Limited time parking rules do not apply on Sundays. Park on Columbus or Lincoln. There is a public parking lot on the other side of Lincoln opposite the Church.

#### Public transportation:

See <https://mbta.com/>

#### Connect to PHSNE Online and by email:

PHSNE’s Web site is online at <http://phsne.org>. See <https://www.facebook.com/PHSNE/> for items of PHSNE interest. Comments are welcome, so join the discussion of photo history. Visit <http://phsne.org/member-services/archives/> for PHSNE history and *snapshots* issues. Scheduling changes due to weather conditions or other factors will be posted on this website.

Stay connected to PHSNE via our emails: a *snap shots* e-copy, and *Photographa* show announcements. Sign up at <http://phsne.org/emails>

## Websites of Interest

<https://2projectsave.org/vex2/index.htm>—*Spirit of Survival: Armenians through the Camera’s Eye*. The collection of photographs at the Project SAVE Archives chronicles the life and culture of Armenians from the 1860s through today, all over the world. These photographs illustrate life beginning in the 1860s through the 1950s, providing testimony of Armenian resilience even as the Genocide of 1915-1923 attempted to annihilate their existence.

<https://www.photrio.com/forum/threads/from-polaroid-sx-70-manipulation-issues.9615/> — for photographers interested in the creative uses of instant film

<https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-history-polaroids-art-ansel-adams-andy-warhol> — background information on history of the Polaroid Corporation and its technology (See related article on p. 2 about MIT exhibit)