



FOTOFEST INTERNATIONAL and HOUSTON CENTER FOR PHOTOGRAPHY

[www.fotofest.org](http://www.fotofest.org) | [www.hcponline.org](http://www.hcponline.org)

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For Immediate Release:

# ***THIS SIDE OF PARADISE:*** ***New Photographic Work from Texas Artists***

## **TALENT IN TEXAS VI**

Curated by Catherine D. Anson  
for FotoFest International and  
Houston Center for Photography

**October 8 -  
November 14, 2015**



Kasumi Chow and Desiree Espada, *Cake*, 2015.  
Courtesy of artist and Public Trust, Dallas

**HOUSTON, TEXAS - SEPTEMBER 30, 2015** - FotoFest and Houston Center for Photography (HCP) announce ***THIS SIDE OF PARADISE: New Photographic Art by Texas Artists***, the sixth exhibition in the Talent in Texas series, co-presented by FotoFest and HCP.

The *Talent in Texas* series was initiated by FotoFest in 2004 to focus on both artist and curators in the Lone Star State. FotoFest and HCP began to collaborate on the series in 2008, with the series' third installment. In the first five exhibitions, the series has featured 57 artists from 15 cities across the state, and six invited curators.

*This Side of Paradise* showcases the work of **23 artists living and working with photography, video and installation, across Texas**. Curator **Catherine D. Anson**, the Houston-based Executive Editor of PaperCity Magazine, and author of the acclaimed survey of Texas contemporary artists *Texas Artists Today*, has assembled a new diverse group of artists, some well-established and others emerging, for this sixth installment of the series. The exhibition is divided between the two venues – FotoFest at Silver Street Studios, in the Washington Avenue Arts District; and Houston Center for Photography, in the Museum District. The works in the exhibition are grouped around a number of themes, and each space explores those subtexts, functioning as a series of exhibitions within a larger exhibition.

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**The featured artists are:**

**Delaney Allen** (Dallas)  
**Christie Blizard** (San Antonio)  
**Kasumi Chow & Desiree Espada** (Dallas)  
**Bryan Florentin** (Dallas)  
**Steve Goff** (Odessa)  
**Michele Grinstead Griffiths** (Houston)  
**Mary Margaret Hansen & Patsy Cravens** (Houston)  
**Julie Ledet** (San Antonio)  
**Jack McGilvray** (San Antonio)  
**Leigh Merrill** (Dallas)

**Michele Monseau** (San Antonio)  
**Nancy O'Connor** (Houston)  
**Irby Pace** (Dallas)  
**Lané Pittard** (San Antonio)  
**PROJECT B (Barbara Levine and Paige Ramey)** (Houston)  
**Rolando Sepulveda** (Austin)  
**Tom Turner** (San Antonio)  
**Rodrigo Valenzuela** (Houston)  
**Elise Weber** (Houston)  
**Carlo Zinzi** (Austin)

Subject matter and aesthetics are wide-ranging — **landscape, still life, portraiture, personal essay, new documentary work and a revisiting of the past, especially the rich traditional of vernacular photography** — manifested in an array of attitudes and styles. Pop influences surface as do nuances from the cinema; there's also an edge of Surrealism, alongside hyperrealism and a sense of manufactured, constructed or artificial reality, especially as regarding nature, which here is either not natural or super natural.

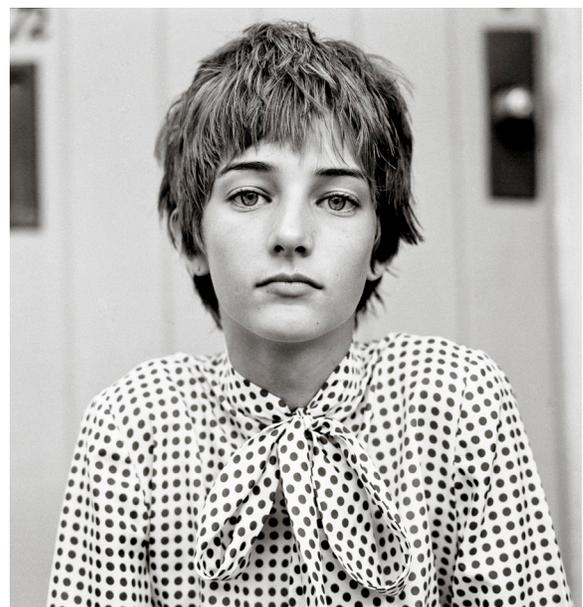
Landscape as metaphor, still life as sign, portraiture as portal, and a revisiting of the past as both a call to action and as a vehicle for time travel are some of the threads in the tapestry that is *This Side of Paradise*.

**Like the book that its title is borrowed from, *This Side of Paradise*, the first novel by F. Scott Fitzgerald**, there's a sense of romance, poetry and often buoyant possibilities. There are also injections of humor, a touch of the profound, a sense of transformation or the undertaking of a voyage to enchanted realms. Consequently, Yosemite's mighty trees become screens for day-glo light shows (Tom Turner, at FotoFest) or a boy comes down from a perch in a trunk and begins a humble life where the mystical is present in the everyday (Nancy O'Connor, at HCP).

Or the portrait in a Victorian locket is super-sized (Michele Grinstead Griffiths, at HCP) while frankfurters sprout from a backyard tropical jungle (Carlo Zinzi, at FotoFest), a mockingbird's plaintive call wafts above a fast food establishment's drive-through lane (Leigh Merrill, at FotoFest), or digital landscapes paradoxically possess the beauty of a piece of Tiffany Favrile glass (Michele Monseau, at FotoFest).

Watch for a saga of a pair of women on a Thelma and Louise-style caper, turning from dejected housewives to artists with cameras ready to soar into new creative worlds (Mary Margaret Hansen and Patsy Cravens, at FotoFest), and work as well as a performance, by a talent who cleverly inserts herself into Good Morning America and Today show audiences (Christie Blizard, at FotoFest). Then puffs of smoke seemingly waft from Merlin's wand, appearing on the Marfa horizon (Irby Pace, at FotoFest), and a saucy pony tail placed against an expansive color-field of daisy yellow (Kasumi Chow and Desiree Espada, at FotoFest).

Meanwhile, there's an intriguing amalgamation of architecture, roadside and nature (Rodrigo Valenzuela, at FotoFest) and also an inquiry into the Westward expansion and manifest destiny (Bryan Florentin, at FotoFest), counterbalanced by a personal journey and voyage into family history, juxtaposed with the wide



Lané Pittard, *Katie, Age 15 (West Hollywood, CA), 2000.*  
Courtesy of the artist and French & Michigan Gallery, San Antonio

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open spaces and natural wonders of the American West (Delaney Allen, at HCP). And a pair of collaborators raids the refrigerator of vernacular photography to construct a shared narrative inspired by the trope of the horizon and its infinite possibilities (Project B, at FotoFest).

Still life and objects as tools for mining identity bubble up as a topic (Rolando Sepulveda, at FotoFest), as do gender constructs circling round the notion of Southern ladies (Elise Weber, at FotoFest). The rich vein of contemporary portraiture and the techniques of 19th-century photography conflate (Steve Goff, at HCP), while a lakeside retreat for a middle-class family, where the body of water is gradually disappearing, becomes a new documentary subject for the meaning of place for an American family (Jack McGilvray, at HCP). And a mining of portraiture alongside still life evokes moments that can only be described as cinematic (Lané Pittard, at HCP). Rounding it all out, the audience interacts with decks of lyrical images, which function as talismans for an exchange of ideas, ritual and mystery (Julie Ledet, at HCP).

## **TOURS AND OTHER PROGRAMMING**

Artist talks are scheduled for both venues. **The first Artist Talk takes place at Houston Center for Photography, Saturday, October 10 at 2pm, at their gallery in the Museum District, 1441 West Alabama.** The artist tour at **FotoFest is scheduled for Saturday, November 7 at 2pm at the FotoFest Gallery at Silver Street Studios, 2000 Edwards Street** in the Washington Avenue Cultural District.

**A curator led tour of the exhibition, at both venues, is scheduled for the exhibition's final day, Saturday, November 14, 2015,** at 11am. The tour begins at FotoFest and continues at HCP, where a light lunch will be provided.

Other tours and programs may be planned and will be announced on the FotoFest and HCP websites at **www.fotofest.org** and **www.hcponline.org**.

Tours for other groups are available free, with reservations, at either space. To arrange a tour please contact Jennifer Ward, 713.223.5522, exhibits@fotofest.org.

For more information or for visuals from *THIS SIDE OF PARADISE*, please contact:

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## **FOTOFEST INTERNATIONAL**

Founded in 1983 by photographers Frederick Baldwin and Wendy Watriss, FotoFest is a year-round, international non-profit organization promoting the photographic arts and education. FotoFest started the first and longest-running international citywide festival of photography in the U.S. The Biennial festivals and FotoFest's year-long programming are known for their presentation of important talent, contemporary and historical, from around the world. In selecting its exhibitions and related art programs, FotoFest has a strong commitment to aesthetic quality and important social ideas. FotoFest has curated and commissioned exhibitions of photo-based art from Latin America, Asia, Europe, the Middle East and North Africa. Its Biennial portfolio review, the Meeting Place, is considered one of the best in the world. In addition to its year-round art programming, FotoFest's school-based education program, Literacy Through Photography, uses photography to stimulate visual literacy, writing and analytical thinking.

FotoFest is located at Silver Street Studios, 2000 Edwards Street in the Washington Avenue Cultural District. Gallery hours are: Wednesday – Saturday, 11am - 5pm. For more information, please call 713.223.5522 ext 19 or visit [www.fotofest.org](http://www.fotofest.org).

## **HOUSTON CENTER FOR PHOTOGRAPHY**

Founded in 1981, Houston Center for Photography is a nonprofit organization offering year-round exhibitions, workshops, publications, outreach programs, lectures, classes, and home to an on-site library housing more than 2,500 books on photography as well as a state of the art digital darkroom. HCP's mission is to increase society's understanding and appreciation of photography and its evolving role in contemporary culture. HCP strives to encourage artists, build audiences, stimulate dialogue, and promote inquiry about photography and related media through education, exhibitions, publications, fellowship programs, and community collaboration. HCP is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization serving as a resource to its members and the community with programs that have regional and national impact.

HCP is located at 1441 West Alabama in the Museum District of Houston. Gallery hours are: Wednesday -Thursdays, 11 am - 9 pm, Fridays 11am-5pm, Saturday and Sunday 11am-7pm. For more information, please call 713.529.4755 or visit [www.hcponline.org](http://www.hcponline.org).

## **FOTOFEST 2014-2015 ART PROGRAM SEASON SPONSORS**

Houston Endowment Inc; City of Houston through the Houston Arts Alliance; National Endowment for the Arts; Texas Commission on the Arts; The Wortham Foundation; FotoFest Board of Directors; Judith and Gamble Baldwin; Robert Gerry III; William and Rosalie Hitchcock; HexaGroup; Houston Public Media; and iLand Internet Solutions; and Silver Street Studios

## **HOUSTON CENTER FOR PHOTOGRAPHY Sponsors**

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