

# en / in foco / focus

SELECTED WORKS *from the*  
PERMANENT COLLECTION



**en** Changing the Face  
of Photography  
**foco**  
**.org**

**En Foco / In Focus:**  
Selected Works from the Permanent Collection

Published in conjunction with En Foco's nationally traveling exhibition of the same title

Curated by Elizabeth Ferrer

En Foco, Inc. (Bronx, New York: 2012)

Copyright © 2012 by En Foco, Inc.

ISBN: 978-0-9888261-0-6

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any means, electronic or mechanical, without permission in writing from the publisher. Inquiries should be addressed to En Foco, Inc., 1738 Hone Avenue, Bronx, NY 10461. [info@enfoco.org](mailto:info@enfoco.org) [www.enfoco.org](http://www.enfoco.org)

**En Foco's** mission is to support and nurture photographers of diverse cultures, primarily U.S. residents of Latino, African and Asian heritage, and Native Peoples of the Americas and the Pacific. En Foco makes their work visible to the art world while remaining accessible to under-served communities, using the photographic arts as a universal means to promote cultural equity, giving a more inclusive portrayal of the artistic contributions made by artists of color, and a supportive platform as they grow into different stages of their careers.

Cover: © Louis Carlos Bernal, *Dos mujeres, familia López* (*Two Women, the Lopez Family*), 1978/2011

Editor: Miriam Romais

Editorial Assistant /Copy Editor: Dani Cattan

Book Design: Lisa Marie Perkins [www.lisaperk.com](http://www.lisaperk.com)

Printing: Eastwood Litho, Inc. [www.eastwoodlitho.com](http://www.eastwoodlitho.com)

**This book is dedicated to all the current and future photographers with work in the En Foco Permanent Collection. It is an honor to care for and preserve your mark on the world.**

“We entered the twentieth century generally believing that Americans had a definite shape and color. A remarkable experiment in democracy had led us to the door where myths are made, and we casually accepted a melting pot concept as if it were payment for belonging. As photography set its cast during that early formative period, it established an exclusionary imagery that visually white washed an entire society. An aesthetic developed out of this process, reinforcing additional myths in an attempt to create one ideal form of Americanism, one ideal look and sound. Any other notions were relegated to exotica. It is possible that as the twenty-first century approaches, a new American aesthetic will evolve from the infusion of fresh and fertile energies bursting out of the nation’s constrained corners.”

---

**Charles Biasiny-Rivera**, co-founder of En Foco, Inc.

Excerpt from his editorial in the premiere issue of *Nueva Luz* (1985)

# Table of Contents

## En Foco / In Focus: Selected Works from the Permanent Collection

### INTRODUCTION

by **Bill Aguado**, *Cultural Activist & Arts Consultant* 1

### EN FOCO / IN FOCUS: SELECTED WORKS FROM THE PERMANENT COLLECTION

by **Elizabeth Ferrer**, *BRIC Arts / Media / Bklyn* 3

### PART I: THE ORIGINS OF EN FOCO: THE 1970S-1980S AND THE DOCUMENTARY IMPULSE

7

### PART II: EN FOCO EXPANDS: REFLECTING DIVERSITY AND NEW APPROACHES IN AMERICAN PHOTOGRAPHY (MID 1980S-1990S)

27

### PART III: EN FOCO TODAY: PHOTOGRAPHERS LOOKING INWARD AND OUTWARD (2000- )

49

### ARCHIVAL DESIRE, CREOLE IMPULSES: REFLECTIONS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF COLLECTING VISUAL EVIDENCE

by **Renée Mussai**, *Autograph ABP* 91

### EPILOGUE

by **Miriam Romais**, *En Foco, Inc.* 95

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

97

### ARTISTS IN THE PERMANENT COLLECTION (1974-2012)

101

Photo: Larry McNeil's work spread out on Light  
Work's conference room table, being admired by  
Hannah Frieser before being prepped for framing.  
© Miriam Romais



# Introduction

It was June 1975 when I first came across En Foco and its founding director Charles Biasiny-Rivera. The encounter was in Central Park during the Puerto Rican Parade where he had a table with information on En Foco and its artists. Little did I know then that this chance encounter would result in a decades-long friendship and professional relationship with En Foco.

The three-part exhibit, *En Foco/In Focus: Selected Works from the Permanent Collection*, describes the three phases in the development of En Foco as well as its constituents. What started as a male, Puerto Rican-dominated core, has expanded to a broad-based, diverse constituency of photographers of all ethnicities, nationalities and gender — or as they should be referred to: “artists.” Today’s artists have found a true home at En Foco, one that adequately represents and advocates for their interests in this challenging contemporary art world.

As distinguished as En Foco’s track record is for artist services and support systems, it is also a living archive of the struggle for cultural equity for artists and arts organizations of color. These important archives, especially the art work, reflect the beginning of the community art movement; that is, En Foco is one of the few long-standing non-profits whose journey is reflected in their permanent and expanding art collection.

From the 1970s to the early 80s, the struggle was for recognition of En Foco’s members as legitimate artists worthy of funding. The strength and quality of the artists enabled En Foco to establish itself as a professional arts organization. As a new generation of artists emerged in the 80s, they also depended on

En Foco to provide the leadership and guidance in the quest for cultural equity. The early En Foco artists who survived the pioneering days of the 70s were justly acknowledged for their professional stature and hence as important role models.

It is also interesting to note that from the mid-80s through the 90s the community arts field blossomed in spite of inadequate resources. Similarly, artists of color were now taking advantage of various educational and professional training opportunities. As such, En Foco began to witness a proliferation of new constituents, defining their universe according to their new priorities. The initial En Foco generation of artists was looked upon as icons while the second generation was establishing their place as creative activists.

Let me remind the readers that the 90s were not a fiscal environment where stabilization and growth were encouraged. Governor Mario Cuomo in the early ‘90s gave the New York State Council on the Arts its most draconian cuts ever, 53%. A couple of years later, Mayor Rudy Giuliani was advocating extremely harsh budget cuts for community-based art institutions. As if New York City’s cuts weren’t enough, his mayoral reign was rife with efforts to censor artists while threatening his “arts enemies” with political reprisals.

As we move forward in the third generation (late ‘90s to En Foco today), we have seen the dramatic impact that technology has had on the arts universe and photography in particular. Today’s artists are vested in mixed media, performance-based art, and as you read this introduction new hybrid art forms with photography as its base are coming to the forefront.



Photo: En Foco founding members circa 1974 (top left to bottom right): Charles Biasiny-Rivera, Roger Cabán, George Malave, Phil Dante, Nestor Cortijo.

Today's En Foco has had to meet the challenges of the field and have done so within their finite means.

Through it all, there has been a proliferation of challenges facing organizations like En Foco. From political interference to corporate and foundation retrenchment in their support systems, En Foco and other like-minded organizations and artists, have been able to withstand the affronts hurled at them. As you experience En Foco's "Permanent Collection" exhibition please keep in mind that it is not only an

exhibition of En Foco's artists but also the role En Foco played in the cultural development of New York City and beyond. This chronicle of achievement should not go unnoticed or unappreciated. All of us today have a stake in the preservation of the cultural histories and art forms. En Foco is one such entity that needs your support. En Foco must prevail and its artists must prevail as well.

**Bill Aguado**

# En Foco / In Focus: Selected Works from the Permanent Collection

Since its founding in New York in 1974, En Foco has been dedicated to promoting cultural diversity in the field of photography. It has nurtured and supported photographers of diverse cultures, beginning with Latinos in New York, the focus of its initial efforts in the 1970s, and then soon broadening its mission to embrace photographers of African, Asian, and Native American heritage across the United States. En Foco has become recognized in the field of photography for its publication *Nueva Luz*, its highly competitive annual New Works Photography Fellowship Award, workshops, and exhibitions. Much less known is the collection that it has amassed of works by many of the photographers who have taken part in its programs and exhibitions over its nearly four-decade history. The collection now numbers nearly 750 prints dating largely from the 1970s to the present day and continues to grow. It encompasses not only a plurality of voices but also subject matter, photographic approaches, and points of view. The images presented in this exhibition and this accompanying publication offer an introduction into this significant photographic collection.

En Foco's permanent collection (of which only a small percentage is presented here) contains example after example of highly accomplished, innovative work by photographers who remain largely absent from the established "canon" of the history of American photography. By this, I mean absent from standard

En Foco's collection reveals a parallel history of photography from nearly the last half century, perhaps one that is incomplete, but that is tantalizing in its suggestion of a broader, and certainly more complex history than has been presented to date by the great majority of museums, curators, and historians of photography.

---

published histories of photography, absent from major museum surveys, and absent from the significant public collections that have come to define the scope of photography, whether to those with a casual interest or to serious students and followers of the medium. The photographers who have worked with En Foco possess unique cultural and social perspectives, and have brought issues to the table that others might wish to overlook. In doing so, they have significantly broadened the scope of contemporary art and image

making. In fact, in my mind, En Foco's collection reveals a parallel history of photography from nearly the last half century, perhaps one that is incomplete, but that is tantalizing in its suggestion of a broader, and certainly more complex history than has been presented to date by the great majority of museums, curators, and historians of photography.<sup>1</sup>

As the first significant generation of photographers represented by En Foco's permanent collection – those who emerged in the late 1960s and 1970s – mature and begin to pass, the importance of the organization's work in forming this collection is ever more apparent. Without patronage and institutional support of an organization like En Foco, the legacies of these older, pioneering figures, could easily fall into obscurity. Nevertheless, other cultural institutions throughout the United States should follow their lead in preserving the work and legacies of photographers' outside the cultural and commercial mainstreams. In suggesting this need, many questions come to mind: Should culturally specific museums take the lead? Should we look to

institutions like the Japanese-American Museum in Los Angeles, the Arab-American National Museum in Detroit, or El Museo del Barrio in New York, to focus on collecting bodies of work from the communities they represent? And can the major collecting museums with significant resources be compelled to broaden the scope of their collecting to truly reflect the historic and newly forming communities in their midsts? Will this work be collected if the photographers lack support from commercial galleries and affluent collectors?

Nevertheless, other cultural institutions throughout the United States should follow their lead in preserving the work and legacies of photographers' outside the cultural and commercial mainstreams.

---

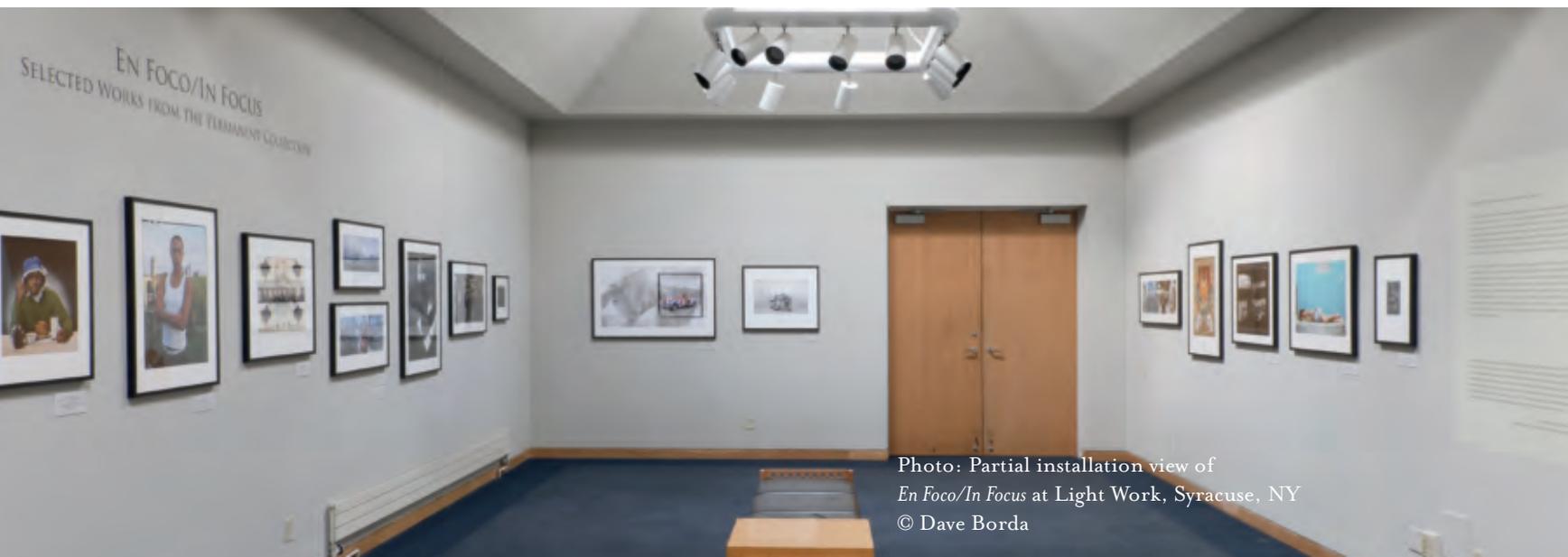


Photo: Partial installation view of  
*En Foco/In Focus* at Light Work, Syracuse, NY  
© Dave Borda

In doing so, the organization emphatically reflected the multicultural discourse of the 1990s, one that pressed for the inclusion of a multiplicity of cultural and ethnic voices, whether in the spheres of culture, politics, or the media.

---

It is important to note that with rare exception, these photographers have been excluded from the commercial market, which often provides the point of entry for artists in achieving broad success and recognition. For me, these questions point not only to the importance of En Foco's work in developing this collection, but also, to a great deal of work to be done, as well as to the challenges in making our visual legacies much more accessible and recognized.

The earliest works in the exhibition, dating to the 1970s and 1980s, are primarily in black and white and reflect the documentary impulse that characterized photographic work produced during and in the aftermath of the civil rights era. For the first time, Latino and African American photographers were actively documenting the life around them, whether in Spanish Harlem, the Lower East Side of Manhattan, or East Los Angeles. In contrast to photographic essays of the period exposing inner-city decay, these were images by individuals who lived in and intimately understood the rhythms of life in these neighborhoods. Cultural

representation became self-representation in this era, as the camera became a potent means of political and self-expression for a pioneering generation of Latino, African American photographers and others traditionally absent from the medium's history.

The second part of the exhibition traces En Foco's broadened mission, as it extended its scope beyond Latino photographers based in New York. In doing so, the organization emphatically reflected the multicultural discourse of the 1990s, one that pressed for the inclusion of a multiplicity of cultural and ethnic voices, whether in the spheres of culture, politics, or the media. Numerous photographers in this decade (and increasingly visual artists drawn to photography as a tool), deployed the medium to examine identity (racial, ethnic, sexual, gender-based), the concept of otherness, and the social and cultural contexts that shape perspectives on the self. The growing predominance of such techniques as photomontage, constructing scenes for the camera, combining text with images, and various forms of darkroom manipulation, provided fitting tools to

In contrast to photographic essays of the period exposing inner-city decay, these were images by individuals who lived in and intimately understood the rhythms of life in these neighborhoods.

---



Photo: Partial installation view of  
*En Foco/In Focus* at Light Work, Syracuse, NY  
© Dave Borda

explore complex issues of identity and to create politically charged visual statements.

The final part of this exhibition looks at *En Foco* in the millennial era, 2000 to the present day. The youngest photographers represented in the collection are truly reflective of the contemporary art scene's global landscape. Latinos, African Americans, and Asian Americans remain significant to the collection's growth, but so do immigrant or exiled artists from the Caribbean, South America, and the Middle East, as well as those who represent the growing prevalence of complex hybrid identities in urban America. Whether dealing with local or universal themes, photographers of the current generation approach photography with great freedom, drawing from multiple photographic traditions, cultural histories, and creative modes. Significantly, these artists have come of age as digital technologies matured. They have essentially replaced the old, analog processes, and virtual realities and communities have assumed an influential role in the way we perceive the world and our place in it. Nevertheless, for all of these photographers, the

printed image, the photographic image, remains profoundly valued for its endless capacity to document, communicate, exhort, and express the continuing flux of life.

**Elizabeth Ferrer**

Two major exceptions should be noted here: First, the Lehigh University Art Gallery (LUAG) in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, long directed by artist and curator Ricardo Viera, has presented numerous exhibitions of Latino and Latin American photographers. LUAG also maintains a permanent collection of culturally diverse photographers. In addition, photographer and scholar Deborah Willis, Professor at New York University, is the nation's leading historian of African American photography and curator of African American culture. Her numerous books and exhibitions in this field have played a decisive role in establishing the history of African American photography. Nevertheless, looking at the field I know best – Latino photography – the situation is very different. In fact, I find that American museums pay much more attention to Latin American art from countries south of the border than to Latino artists working in the United States.



**Chevrolet Boy**  
 Raymond Beckett, c. 1952, Queens, NY, courtesy artist or Chicago, IL  
 Young Woman Waiting for the Bus, Springs, NY, 1982  
 Silver gelatin print



**Roger Cohen**  
 Young Woman Waiting for the Bus, Springs, NY, 1982  
 Courtesy artist or New York, NY, Co-Founder of the Point  
 James Adams Day, 1979  
 Gelatin silver print



**Rocky Flinn**  
 James Adams Day, 1979, New York, NY,  
 courtesy artist or Chicago, Illinois, 1982  
 Celia and Ralph, 1982  
 Gelatin silver print



**Part I** The Origins of En Foco  
*the 1970s-1980s and the documentary impulse*

Louis Carlos Bernal

Dawoud Bey

Roger Cabán

Phil Dante

Ricky Flores

George Malave

Frank X. Méndez

Héctor Méndez Caratini

Sophie Rivera

Juan Sánchez

Photo: Detail of exhibition installation at Light Work's Robert B. Menschel Photography Gallery,  
Syracuse, NY. September 1, 2011 - February 5, 2012. © Miriam Romais

# LOUIS CARLOS BERNAL

Chicano, 1941 – 1993

b. Douglas, AZ, resided in Tucson, AZ

*Dos mujeres, familia López*  
(*Two Women, the Lopez Family*), 1978/2011

Archival pigment print on Canson Infinity  
Platine Fibre Rag paper, 9 x 9"



# "CIA. HARINERA ESTRELLA",

S.A.  
Elaboradora de la Prestigiada  
"HARINA ESTRELLA"  
Especial Para Panadería y Tortillas  
Prueba Nuestra Espesita y Nutritiva "CREMA DE TRIGO"

Calle 6 y Av. 2 No. 598  
Apdo. Postal 113 Toluca, Mex. D.F. Agua Prieta, Son.



EX-10



# HÉCTOR MÉNDEZ CARATINI

Puerto Rican

b. 1949, San Juan, PR, resides in Carolina, PR



*Devoto I (Devotee I), Hormigueros,  
Puerto Rico, 1983*

Gelatin silver print, 14 x 14"



*Viernes Santo (Good Friday), San Germán,  
Puerto Rico, 1983*

Gelatin silver print, 8  $\frac{3}{4}$  x 13"

## JUAN SÁNCHEZ

Puerto Rican

b. 1954, Brooklyn, NY, resides in Brooklyn, NY



*Abigail's First Communion, Brooklyn, New York, 1978*

Gelatin silver print, 5 x 7 ½ "



## ROGER CABÁN

Puerto Rican

b. 1942, Isabela, PR, resides in New York, NY;

Co-Founder of En Foco, Inc.

*Juana, Puerto Rico, 1975*

Gelatin silver print, 7 ½ x 11"



# FRANK X. MÉNDEZ

Puerto Rican

b. 1937, New York, resides in Bayamón, PR

*Doña Ramona Campos, Ponce, Puerto Rico, 1975*

Toned gelatin silver print, 10 x 8"

## LOUIS CARLOS BERNAL

Chicano, 1941 – 1993

b. Douglas, AZ, resided in Tucson, AZ



*Saturday Night, Del Rio Ballroom, 1981*

Gelatin silver print, 9 x 9"



## DAWOUD BEY

African American

b. 1953, Queens, NY, resides in Chicago, IL

*Young Woman Waiting for the Bus*, from the series  
*Syracuse, NY*, 1985

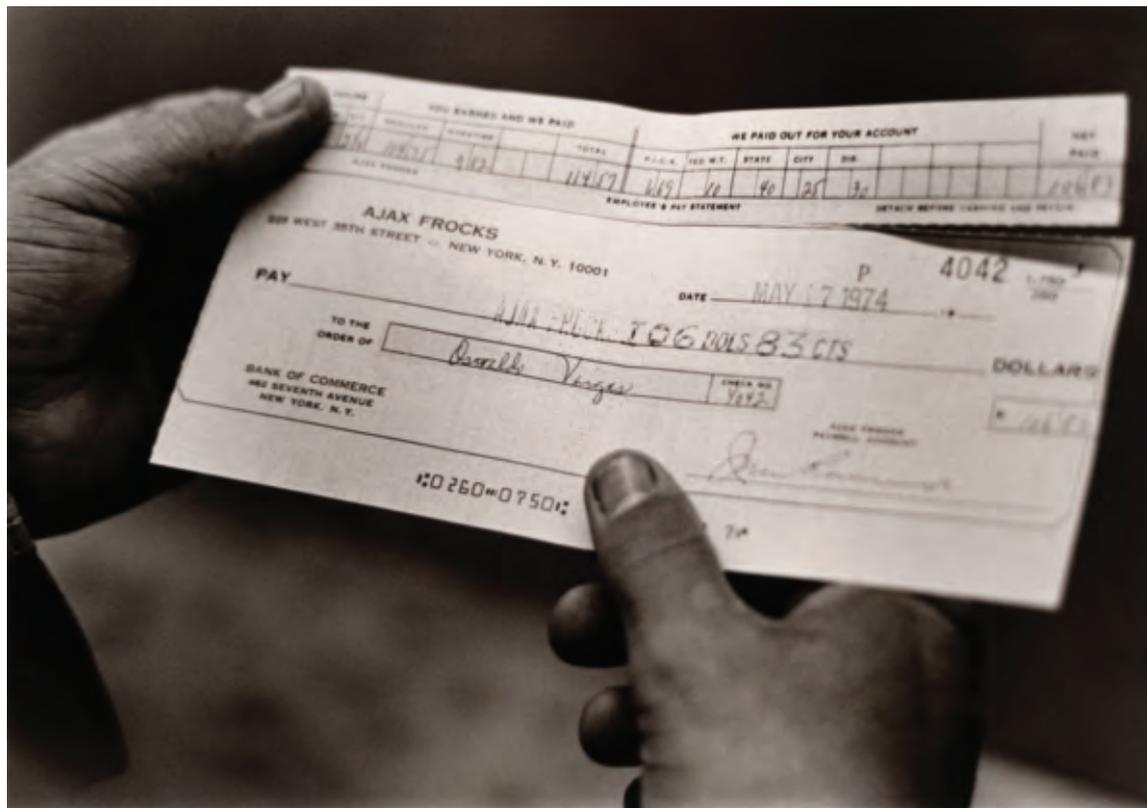
Gelatin silver print, 6 ½ x 9 ½"

# PHIL DANTE

Puerto Rican, 1934 – 2004

b. New York, NY, resided in New York, NY

Co-Founder of En Foco, Inc.



Untitled, 1974

Gelatin silver print, 6 ¼ x 9”



*Manos de obrero (Worker's Hands),  
New York State, 1978*

Gelatin silver print, 6 ¼ x 9"

## RICKY FLORES

Puerto Rican

b. 1961, New York, NY, resides in Cortlandt Manor, NY

*Carlos and Boogie*, from the series  
*Ser Puertorriqueño (Being Puerto Rican)*, 1982

Gelatin silver print, 9 x 13"





“Photographing my community, coupled with the turbulent and violent transformation of the landscape around us, galvanized me to document what was taking place around me. It wasn’t an atypical experience to photograph a fire on our block on any given day, just like it wasn’t atypical to take photos of kids playing in the park or on the street or in some abandoned building. It was a commonplace experience for us. It always struck us as funny when people would express some horror when we would relate a tale from the block or just simply state that we were from the South Bronx. A social stigma was instantly attached to that pronouncement, one that continues to take place even today.”

Excerpt from interview with Collette McGruder, CIIS blog (2012)

**Ricky Flores**

*FDNY Dispatch: Is There a Fire Over There?* from the series *Ser Puertorriqueño (Being Puerto Rican)*, 1986

Gelatin silver print, 13 x 9”





## GEORGE MALAVE

Puerto Rican

b. 1946, Puerto Rico, resides in New York, NY

*Boy with Dead Bird*, from the series  
*Varet Street*, 1969/2011

Archival pigment print on Canson Infinity  
Platine Fibre rag paper, 13 ¼ x 19 ¾"

“The boy found a dead bird in a backyard lot and began showing it off, then he threw it in the air, trying to make it fly. This image is from a photographic essay on the street life that many of the city’s children experienced during the mid- 1960s and 70s in New York City.”

Correspondence with George Malave, 2012

## SOPHIE RIVERA

Puerto Rican

b. New York, NY, resides in New York, NY



*Untitled from the series Revelations, 1980s/2012*

Archival pigment print on Canson Infinity  
Edition Etching Rag paper, 15 x 15"



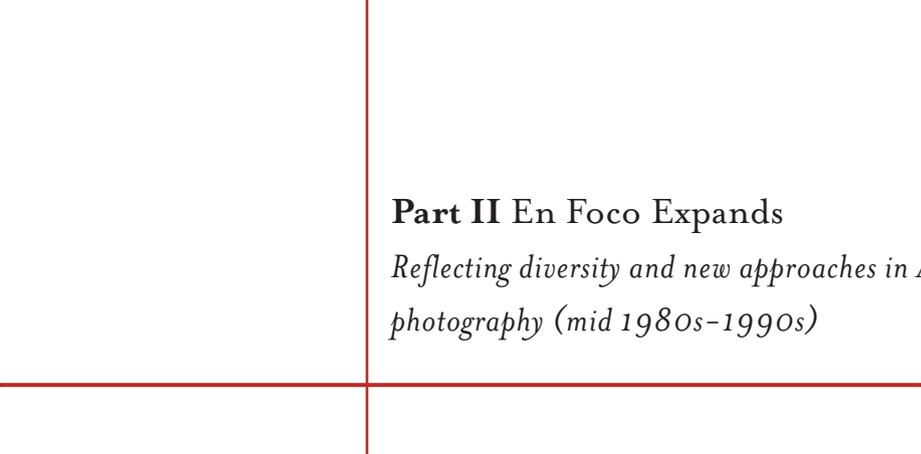
23



24



25



## Part II En Foco Expands

*Reflecting diversity and new approaches in American  
photography (mid 1980s-1990s)*

Adál

Max Aguilera-Hellweg

Charles Biasiny-Rivera

Gerald Cyrus

Kenro Izu

Nitza Luna

Annu Palakunnathu Matthew

Tony Mendoza

Néstor Millán

Pipo Nguyen-duy

Kunié Sugiura

Kathy Vargas

Víctor Vázquez

Photo: Detail of exhibition installation at Aljira: a Center for Contemporary Art, Newark, NJ.  
June 7-August 18, 2012. © Miriam Romais

## GERALD CYRUS

African American

b. 1957, Los Angeles, CA, resides in Philadelphia, PA

*Untitled, St. Nick's Pub, Harlem, NYC, 1995*

Gelatin silver print, 8 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 12 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>"





# KENRO IZU

Japanese

b. 1949, Osaka, Japan, resides in Red Hook, NY



*The Wall*, from the series *Sacred Places*, 1983

Gelatin silver print, 6 x 8  $\frac{3}{4}$  "



*Pyramid of the Magician, Uxmal, Mexico, 1981*

Gelatin silver print, 6  $\frac{3}{4}$  x 8  $\frac{3}{4}$  "

## KUNIÉ SUGIURA

Japanese

b. 1942, Nagoya, Japan, resides in New York, NY

*Curds*, from the series *Notation from Nature*, 1989

Toned gelatin silver print, 16 x 20"





Carlos Muci Sosa '89

I am the Child  
ever reborn.  
awareness of life  
so ever believes.  
only to suffer  
and I will  
hope. Walk  
that you  
path to the  
there you  
hear the



God who is  
I am the  
for whom  
you have  
unto me  
bring you  
with me  
may learn the  
center.  
will  
glory of

Your innocence.

## CHARLES BIASINY-RIVERA

Puerto Rican

b. 1930, Bronx, NY, resides in Olivebridge, NY

Co-Founder of En Foco, Inc.; Executive Director from 1974-2005

*Child God*, 1999/2006

Digital print with gold acrylic and mixed  
media, 15 ½ x 19 ½”



---

## VÍCTOR VÁZQUEZ

Puerto Rican

b. 1950, San Juan, PR, resides in Old San Juan, PR

*La ave María*, 1995 (detail)

Mixed media on plywood, unique work, 42 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 48"

## KATHY VARGAS

Chicana

b. 1950, San Antonio, TX, resides in San Antonio, TX



*Untitled, from the series Valentine's Day/Day of the Dead, 1999*

Unique hand-colored gelatin silver print  
II  $\frac{3}{4}$  x 9"

## PIPO NGUYEN-DUY

Vietnamese

b. 1962, Hue, Vietnam, resides in Oberlin, OH



“This series was about race, gender, and culture and how one adjusts to a new culture, specifically my adjustment as an Asian man to Western culture. Thinking about coming here as a Vietnamese refugee and getting dismissed by the culture and then all of a sudden to have this power to participate and to talk about the kind of issues that I was concerned with, it was an empowering experience.”

Excerpt from interview with Jessica Juliao, CIIS blog (2012)

*Untitled, from the series Assimilation, 1995*

Gelatin silver print, 6 x 6 ½”



*Untitled*, from the series *Assimilation*, 1995

Gelatin silver print, 8 1/2 x 5 1/2"



## ANNU PALAKUNNATHU MATTHEW

South Asian

b. 1964, England, resides in Providence, RI

“This image is reminiscent of the gestures, sounds and smells that are childhood impressions of my cultural homeland. The images are a time warp, taking me back so the memories can be experienced over and over again.”

Correspondence with Annu Palakunnathu Matthew, 2012

*Women Walking, from the series  
Memories of India, 1997*

Gelatin silver print, 5 x 5”

# TONY MENDOZA

Cuban American

b. 1941 Havana, Cuba, resides in Columbus, OH



*Untitled, from the series Stories, 1983*

Gelatin silver print, 11 ½ x 10"

## NITZA LUNA

Puerto Rican

b. 1959, Santurce, PR, resides in San Juan, PR



*Palma de Abanico de las Islas Fiji (Fan Palms from the Fiji Islands), 1995*

Platinum palladium print, 20 x 12"

# NÉSTOR MILLÁN

Puerto Rican

b. 1960, San Germán, PR, resides in San Juan, PR



Above:

*Untitled, from the series Lejos y Cerca del Mar, (Far and Near the Sea), 1994-95*

Gelatin silver print, 11 x 14”

Right:

*Untitled, from the series Lejos y Cerca del Mar, (Far and Near the Sea), 1994-95*

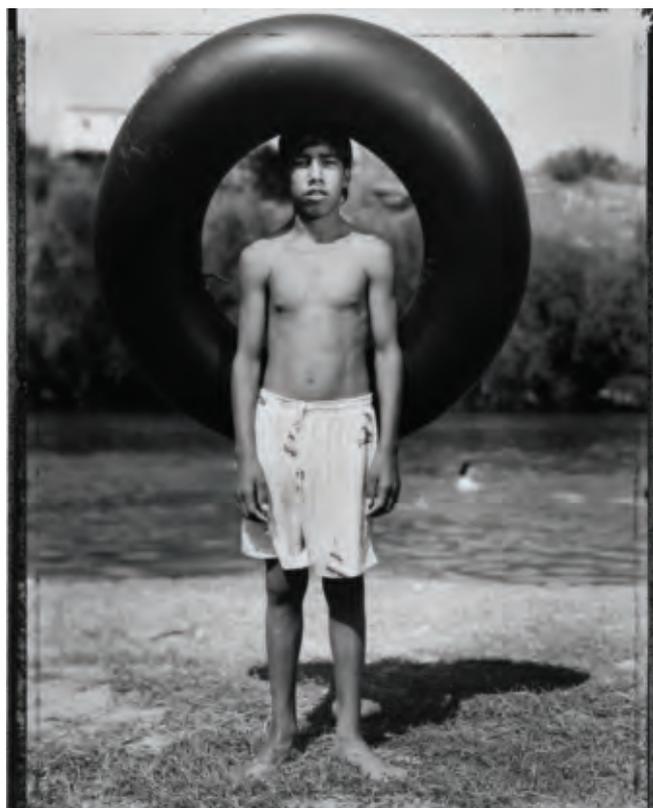
Gelatin silver print, 14 x 11”



## MAX AGUILERA-HELLWEG

Mexican American

b. 1955, Fresno, California, resides in Stamford, CT



*Boy with Tire, Rio Grande, from the series La frontera sin sonrisa, 1989*

Gelatin silver print, 22 x 18"

“*Conceptual Jíbaro Art* is meant to collapse self-portraiture’s self-referential quality. It arises from my constant mockery of the possibility of ever achieving an ultimate, definitive picture of one’s self by exposing the absurdity behind the search for ultimate reference to selfhood in art.”

Correspondence  
with Adál, 2012.



---

## ADÁL

Puerto Rican

b. 1948, Utuado, PR, resides in San Juan, PR

*Conceptual Jíbaro Art*, from the series *I Was a Schizophrenic Mambo Dancer for the FBI*, 1990/2012

Archival pigment print, 20 x 20”





**Part III En Foco Today**

*Photographers looking inward and outward (2000- )*

Jaishri Abichandani	Stephen Marc
Sama Alshaibi	Rania Matar
Don Gregorio Antón	Larry McNeil
Chuy Benitez	Groana Melendez
Terry Boddie	Delilah Montoya
Samantha Box	Dulce Pinzón
Valdir Cruz	Bonnie Portelance
Ana de Orbegoso	Jane Tam
Lisdebertus, aka Luis Delgado-Qualtrough	Hank Willis Thomas
Dean Dempsey	Hong-An Truong
Lola Flash	Wendel A. White
Myra Greene	
Muriel Hasbun	
Germán Herrera	

Photo: Detail of exhibition installation at OAS/SG/AMA Art Museum of the Americas, F Street Gallery, Washington, DC. March 14-May 16, 2012. © Fabian Gonçalves Borrega



## STEPHEN MARC

African American

b. 1954, Rantoul, IL, resides in Tempe, AZ

*Untitled*, from the series *Passage on the Underground Railroad*, 2006

Archival pigment print, 9 x 26"



*Can a mother forget her suckling child?*

“Much of my work addresses American history with an emphasis on the black experience. My intent is to provide interpretative imagery that is visually engaging and informative, where viewers are able to make discoveries, gain insight into, and come to terms with this country’s complex and challenging history. In this image, the ocean scene from Cape May Point, NJ is filled with the figure of a contemporary woman with braided hair ‘stripes’ superimposed on her back, and two historical illustrations: an enslaved woman being whipped from Henry Bibb’s 1850 slave narrative autobiography (courtesy of the Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore), and an 1875 Harper’s Monthly rendering of an African slave coffle.”

Correspondence with Stephen Marc, 2012

## JAISHRI ABICHANDANI

South Asian

b. 1969, Bombay, India, resides in Queens, NY

“New York and Tokyo are situated within nations that are or have been at war with one another. *Reconciliations* uses appropriated imagery of various international cities to create imagined utopian spaces and landscapes in order to explore and subvert historic, geographic and political boundaries.”

Correspondence with Jaishri Abichandani, 2012.

*New York Tokyo*, from the series *Reconciliations*, 2007

Archival pigment print on Canson Infinity  
Edition Etching Rag paper, 16 ½ x 22”





## CHUY BENITEZ

Chicano

b. 1983, El Paso, TX, resides in Houston, TX

*La Virgen de la Baking Pan, Denver Harbor District,  
from the series Houston Cultura 2007/2010*

Archival pigment print on Canson Infinity  
Platine Fibre Rag paper, 11 x 36"



“Chuy Benitez’s photographs are a bold assertion of presence, of the right to occupy space. Each panorama encompasses its subject fully: the whole person, the whole scene. His images seem to make a statement co-authored with the photographer: Here I am and here I stay.”

Excerpt from Arlene Goldbard’s essay “The Gaze that Creates Community,” *Nueva Luz* volume 13#1 (2008)

## TERRY BODDIE

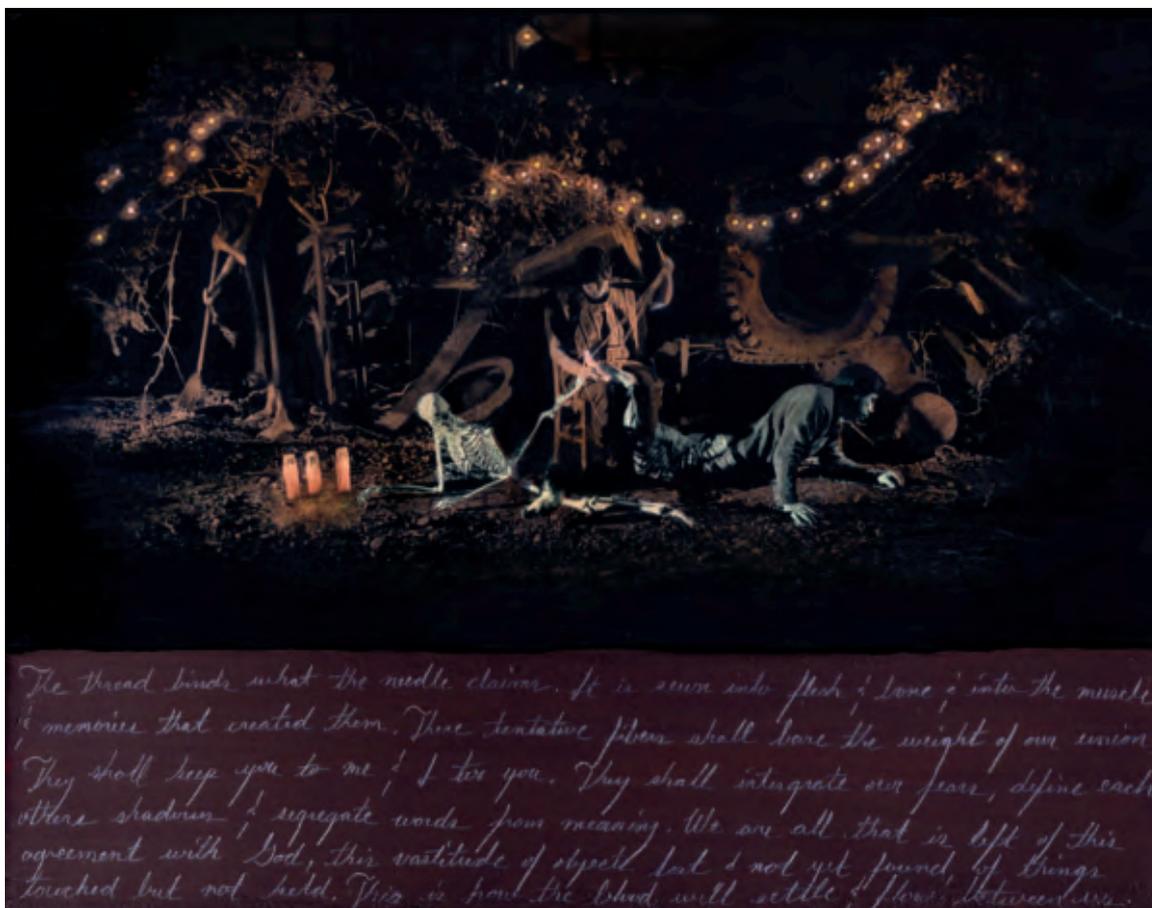
Nevisian

b. 1965, Nevis, resides in West Orange, NJ



*School Days*, from the series *Residue of Memory*,  
2000/2007

Archival pigment print, 16 x 20"



## DON GREGORIO ANTÓN

Chicano

b. 1956, East Los Angeles, CA, resides in Arcata, CA

*The Thread Binds What the Needle Claims*, from the series *The Rules of Tragedy*, 2008

Unique translucent image on copper, 7 x 9"

"I photograph not where I've been, but how I've been: transcribed only what I was taught, rather than what I was thinking, and tried never to assume the shape of reality."

Correspondence with Don Gregorio Antón, 2012.

## DULCE PINZÓN

Mexican

b. 1974, Mexico City, Mexico, resides in Mexico City, Mexico

“The Mexican immigrant worker in New York is a perfect example of the hero who has gone unnoticed. It is common for a Mexican worker in New York to work extraordinary hours in extreme conditions for very low wages which are saved at great cost and sacrifice and sent to families and communities in Mexico who rely on them to survive. The principal objective of this series is to pay homage to these brave and determined men and women that somehow manage, without the help of any supernatural power, to withstand extreme conditions of labor in order to help their families and communities survive and prosper.”

Excerpt from Dulce Pinzón’s artist statement in *Nueva Luz* volume 12#1 (2007)

*Catwoman*, from the series *The Real Story of the Superheroes*, 2005-2010

Archival pigment print on Canson Infinity Platine Fibre Rag paper, 20 x 25”



“MINERVA VALENCIA from Puebla works as a nanny in New York.  
She sends home 400 dollars a week.”

*Harvey Birdman, from the series *The Real Story of  
the Superheroes*, 2005-10*

Archival pigment print on Canson Infinity  
Platine Fibre Rag paper, 20 x 25"



“JOSÉ ROSENDO DE JESÚS from the State of Guerrero works as a union organizer in New York. He sends home 700 dollars a month.”

## SAMANTHA BOX

African / East Indian

b. 1977, Jamaica, resides in New York, NY



*Untitled, from the series Invisible: Homeless LGBT Youth in New York City, 2005*

Archival pigment print, 8 x 12"



## GROANA MELENDEZ

Dominican American

b. 1984, Brooklyn, NY, resides in New York, NY

*Laura Daydreaming*, from the series *Family Work*,  
2006/2011

Archival pigment print, 17 x 26"

“Melendez is part of a generation made of people who are curious about the place they’ve heard about in their parents’ stories, a place that lives in childhood dreams. They do not identify with just one country or one culture. They are the inhabitants of two worlds; they have double identities. In her own words, she states, ‘I am Dominican and American, an insider and an outsider.’ Melendez uses this state to her advantage. The richness of her work comes from the space in-between. Maybe this is the required distance to see ourselves clearly in the reflection that is family.”

Excerpt from Deborah Jack’s essay “Bloodlines: Depicting the Family Circle,” *Nueva Luz* Volume 14#3 (2010)

## ANA DE ORBEGOSO

Peruvian

b. 1964, Lima, Peru, resides in New York, NY

*La Virgen del Norte* from the series *Virgenes urbanas*, 2006/2011

Archival pigment print on Canson Infinity Platine Fibre Rag paper, 24 x 20"



# LISDEBERTUS AKA LUIS DELGADO-QUALTROUGH

Mexican American

b. 1951, Mexico City, Mexico, resides in San Francisco, CA

“With its distinct visual alchemy, *Unfathomable Humanity* removes its source images from their original contexts and recombines them to tell different stories, outline hidden connections, and make scandalous accusations. Although the juxtapositions are abrupt, they deal a leveling blow to conventional hierarchies and cut through the justifications that lull us into accepting brutality as a necessary part of life.”

Excerpt from Sharon Mizota’s essay “Hidden Histories,” *Nueva Luz* volume 13#3 (2009)

*Empire*, from the series *Unfathomable Humanity*,  
2006/2010

Archival pigment print, 15 x 19 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>”



## DEAN DEMPSEY

Mexican Irish

b. 1986, Tucson, AZ, resides in New York, NY



*Wrong Bar*, from the series *You, Me and the Other*,  
2009

Archival pigment print, 15 x 36"

## SAMA ALSHAIBI

Palestinian Iraqi

b. 1973, Basra, Iraq, resides in Tucson, AZ



*Target Practice*, from the series *Birthright*, 2004

Archival pigment print, 29 x 23"

## LOLA FLASH

African American/Native American

b. 1959, Montclair, NJ, resides in New York, NY

“I can’t tell you what exactly makes me ‘fall in love at first sight’ with my models, but there is just something about their individuality that hooks me. With Kinky D, I loved her presence. She has this strength, yet gentleness about her. When we created this photo, I found out that Kinky D actually grew up in the neighborhood (London’s East End) which provides the background, and that she is mixed race. Since the essence of *[sur]passing* is related to skin color, I never ask specifics, such as this about my subjects, as their faces speak to their history without any need for words.”

Correspondence with Lola Flash, 2012

*Kinky D, London, from the series [sur]passing, 2003*

Archival pigment print on Canson Infinity  
Platine Fibre Rag paper, 24 x 19”





## MYRA GREENE

African American

b. 1975, New York, NY, resides in Chicago, IL

“Confronted with an upswell of personal and public bigotry (the rhetoric surrounding Katrina), I was forced to ask myself, what do people see when they look at me? Am I nothing but black? Is that skin tone enough to describe my nature or expectation in life? Do my strong teeth make me a strong worker? Does my character resonate louder than my skin tone? Using wet-plate collodion (a process linked to the times of ethno-graphic classification, popular from 1850-1880s), *Character Recognition* explores my ethnic features. When I applied this old process to my interest in the black body and self, the imagery described my body in a way never imagined. Tainted with the visual history of American slavery, these images point directly to the features of race. Thick lips and nose, and darken skinned; these contemporary studies link the view to a complicated historical past. While the process of wet plate codes the body in this work, the body is able to speak back. Through small facial gestures, the body reacts and rejects to these modes and ways of classification. ”

Excerpt from Myra Greene’s artist statement in *Nueva Luz* volume 12#3 (2008)

*Untitled, from the series Character Recognition,*  
2006/2008

Archival pigment print, 7 x 5 ¼”

## MURIEL HASBUN

Salvadoran/American/French

b. 1961, El Salvador, resides in Washington, DC



*Hélène's Eye*, from the series *Protegida/Watched Over*, 2003

Selenium toned gelatin silver print, 20 x 24"



## WENDEL A. WHITE

African American

b. 1956, Newark, NJ, resides in Galloway, NJ

*Marshalltown School, Mannington, NJ, from the series Schools for the Colored, 2008/2011*

Archival pigment print, 13 x 20"

## GERMÁN HERRERA

Mexican

b. 1957, Mexico City, Mexico, resides in San Rafael, CA

*This Too Shall Pass*, from the series *Book of Mirrors*, 2002

Archival pigment print, 12 x 16"





## RANIA MATAR

Lebanese

b. 1964, Beirut, Lebanon, resides in Brookline, MA



*Dead Mother, Beirut*, from the series  
*The Veil*, 2005

Archival pigment print, 10 x 15"



## VALDIR CRUZ

Brazilian

b. 1954, Guarapuava, Brazil, resides in New York, NY

*Salto Curucaca I, Guarapuava, Paraná, Brazil,*  
from the series *The Water's Way*, 2006

Pigment on paper, 14 x 18"

"His photographs reveal that nature and humanity are one, rooted in a symbiotic relationship of irrefutable consequence. His landscapes are elegant metaphors for the whole of nature and a means which we can gauge the health of the planet."

Excerpt from James Enyart's essay, "*The Water's Way (O Caminho das Águas)*," *Nueva Luz* volume 12#3 (2008)

# LARRY McNEIL

Tlingit/Nisgaá

b. 1955, Juneau, Alaska, resides in Boise, ID

*In the True Spirit of White Man, from the series  
Fly by Night Mythology, 2002*

Archival pigment print, 23 x 39 ½"



In the true spirit of white man, I stole this car in my search for america. Just call it manifested destiny. I asked the owner to take my picture in front of his car before I took it and assured him that it was god's will that I take his car. god meant for this fine machine to be flying down the freeway. I told him. Are you a real indian he asked, I thought you were all vanished. As soon as you give me the keys I'll be another vanishing indian I told him. Can you look more noble? I told him sorry, this is as stoic as I can manage for now. He asked if I had any regalia to put on, you know, to make it look authentic. This is as real as it gets I told him. I saw in a book that you people were all vanished, he said again. I asked him if he still has his native culture and who is the vanished one, you or me... He told me that his grandfather was Edward Curtis and that he made some of the best photographs ever of indians before they vanished. Like me? Kind of.

Thanks for the car I told him, but I've got some serious vanishing to catch up on...

HAVERCHROME

KODAK T1P 5049



## DELILAH MONTOYA

Chicana

b.1955, Fort Worth, TX, resides in Houston, TX

*Humane Borders Water Station*, from the series  
*Trail of Thirst*, 2004

Digital print on aluminum, 15 ½ x 27 ½”



“This installation depicts the perilous migration route across the Arizona Sonora desert and the omnipresent thirst for water experienced by migrants during their clandestine border crossings. This cultural landscape represents ‘a contemporary middle passage,’ where between 1996 and 2004, more than 3,000 migrants perished along the border.”

Correspondence with Delilah Montoya, 2012



She says to me smugly, "People are afraid of immigrants." The words echo in the car. I bite down the urge to spit in her face with the understanding



PEACE



that my bitterness is directed towards her self-appointed authority as member of a not-so-distant colonizing family, most willing to speak for all. As if I did not know.

## HONG-AN TRUONG

Vietnamese

b. 1976, resides in New York and Chapel Hill, NC

“For me, the process of going through visual archives about Viet Nam always involves a process of looking for family members and not seeing oneself there. My use of archival images is a challenge to a kind of hegemony of aesthetics, the regime of the visible. Since I was young, I have been acutely aware of this struggle over the image - this battle over what kinds of images are allowed.”

Correspondence with Hong-An Truong, 2012

*Get Rid of Vietnamese, from the series From a Hot Border, 2001*

Toned gelatin silver print, 19 ½ x 24”



## JANE TAM

Chinese American

b. 1986, Brooklyn, NY, resides in New York, NY

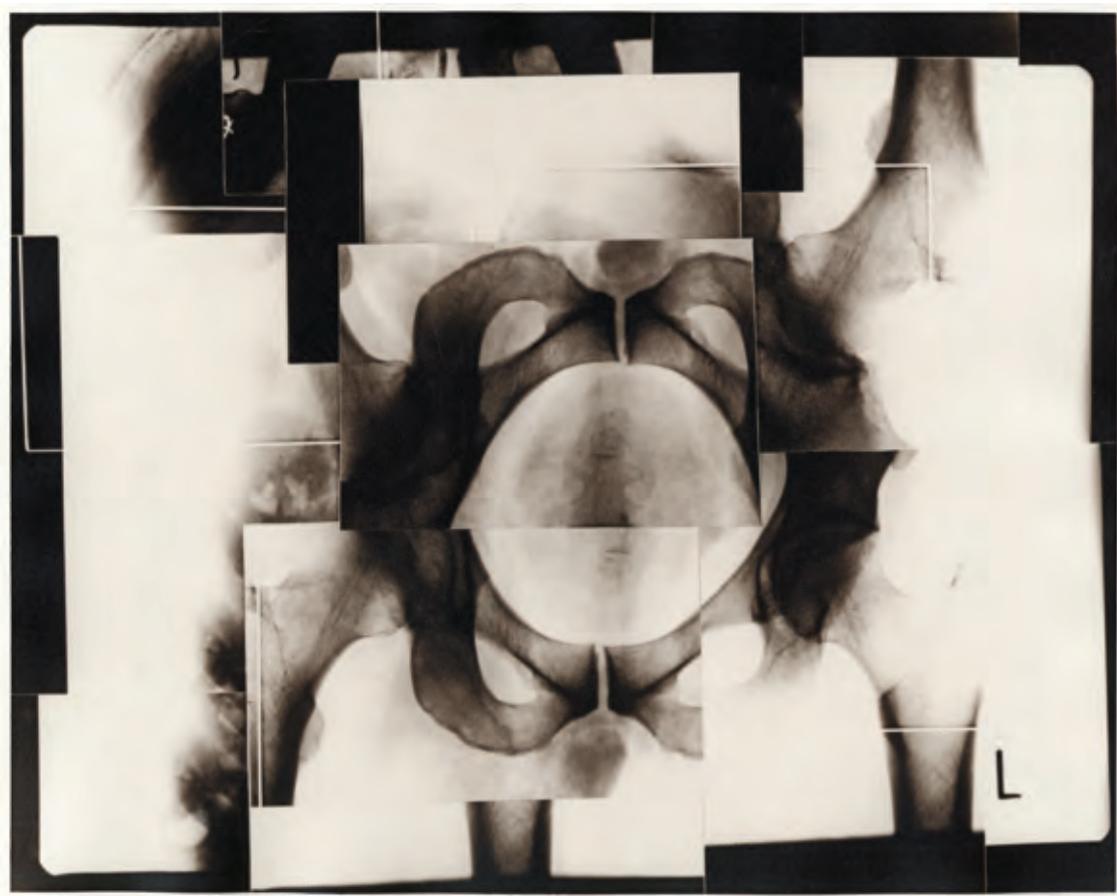
*Untitled, from the series Can I Come Home  
with You?, 2007*

Archival pigment print, 6  $\frac{3}{4}$  x 8  $\frac{1}{2}$ "

## BONNIE PORTELANCE

Woodland Metis/Ojibwa

b. 1965, London, Ontario, resides in Calgary, Canada



*Abyss*, from the series *Wavelengths of Light*,  
2004/2008

Sepia toned gelatin silver print, 20 x 24"

## HANK WILLIS THOMAS

African American

b. 1976, Plainfield, NJ, resides in New York, NY

“I believe that in part, advertising’s success rests on its ability to reinforce generalizations around race, gender and ethnicity which can be entertaining, sometimes true, and sometimes horrifying, but which at a core level are a reflection of the way a culture views itself or its aspirations. By unbranding advertisements I can literally expose what Roland Barthes refers to as ‘what-goes-without-saying’ in ads, and hopefully encourage viewers to look harder and think deeper about the empire of signs that have become second nature to our experience of life in the modern world.”

Excerpt from Hank Willis Thomas’ artist statement, *Nueva Luz* volume 13#2 (2008)

*Smokin’ Joe Ain’t J’mama*, 1978/2011, from  
the series *Unbranded: Reflections in Black from  
Corporate America 1968-2008*

Archival pigment print on Canson Infinity  
Platine Fibre Rag, 16 x 15 ¼”



# Archival Desire, Creole Impulse:

reflections on the importance of collecting visual evidence

‘There is no political power without control of the archive, if not of memory. Effective democratization can always be measured by this essential criterion: the participation in and the access to the archive, its constitution, and its interpretation.’

– Jacques Derrida<sup>1</sup>

## I – THE ARCHIVE EMERGES IN FRAGMENTS

Allied through respective missions firmly grounded in global identity politics, Autograph ABP’s and En Foco’s permanent collections represent continuously growing, living archives – ongoing projects with a shared objective to address a series of gaps in ‘mainstream’ histories of photography, and highlight significant bodies of work by a diverse constituency of artists traditionally overlooked.

Living archives always constitute, to paraphrase Stuart Hall, an open-ended, unfinished conversation between the past and the present: inescapably decontextualized, repositioned, and inscribed from a contemporary perspective.

Many of the works and artists represented [by Autograph ABP and En Foco] powerfully mediate this ‘conversation’, as they critically explore binary politics of race and representation, identity and difference, society and self – transforming the archive into fluid image depositories of evolving artistic production, of *‘interpenetrate archival activity, active and dialogic in relation to the questions which the present puts to the past.’*<sup>3</sup>

## II – ASSEMBLING VISUAL EVIDENCE

In the context of subject-distinctive collections, hybrid photographic practices predominantly concerned with politics of diversity and cultural identity, the archive is inevitably haunted by lacunae, an army of (visual) phantoms: seen/read in relation to a plethora of absences and presences, heavily pregnant with meaning and responsibility.

Collecting thus becomes first and foremost an interventionist project to make visible marginalized and underexposed histories, a crusade to develop alternative image repertoires and disrupt hegemonic power structures and perhaps most importantly, the creation and conservation of visual evidence by and about subaltern voices.

Photography, by virtue of its immediacy and ubiquity, is an ideal medium to stage a counter-discourse fortified by visual evidence en masse, as perhaps best illustrated over a century ago in W.E.B. Du Bois' pioneering *American Negro Exhibit* at the 1900 Paris Exposition: with over 350 strategically assembled portraits, Du Bois' project was executed with the explicit curatorial agenda to confound prevalent stereotyped depictions of the quintessential 'other' in fin de siècle America and Europe, testament to his belief in the power of the visual, and in photography as a political tool to institute social change.<sup>4</sup>

The archive is inevitably haunted by lacunae, an army of (visual) phantoms: seen/read in relation to a plethora of absences and presences

---

'It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity.'

– W.E.B. Du Bois<sup>2</sup>



Installation view of *En Foco/In Focus* at  
Aljira, Newark, NJ  
© Miriam Romais



### III - INSIDE THE COLLECTION

Without such critical resurrection acts – research, commission, preservation, contextualization, and dissemination – images are confined to a spectral existence, forever lost to the apparatus of dehistoricization. Engaged archiving lifts them from the prism of (Derridean) spectrality into visibility: they become newly preserved chapters in a compendium of photographic chronicles perpetually annotated.

Engendering the archive is an act of love, at once proposed and imposed. It represents a site of intervention, a reclaimed space for inscription, and reflection, a wager against cultural amnesia and erasure.

---

Inside the collection, photographs mutate, cease to exist as individual images – instead, they signify as a collective entity/whole, a corpus of accumulated visual evidence interlaced with questions not only of identity and belonging, but also of subjectivity and agency, of power and position. Collectively, they acquire a mnemonic function, yet each in their own right remains emblematic of the way photography renders the world as image, of photography's evidentiary and transformative powers, nomadic nature, and indexical signature – its ability to transgress and transcend dominant modes of representation through the production of counter images.

### IV - EN FOCO / IN FOCUS

En Foco's genre-defying, cross-cultural collection presents often unseen photographic histories – lived experiences and pictorial testimonies captured or directed by 'indigenous' artists, whose

Photo: *Mal d'Archive: Collect, Study, Preserve, Reflect*, a panel discussion moderated by Elizabeth Ferrer, with Deborah Willis, Brendan Wattenberg and Miriam Romais at Aljira, Newark, NJ (7/10/12).

© Lola Flash

work encompasses myriad temporal shifts and representational challenges. Many of the selected photographs are marked by a feverish desire for the dual enunciation and representation of a corporeal and cultural homecoming characteristic of much diasporic and post-migrant photographic practice... Signified, for example, in the ambiguous stance of Hank Willis Thomas' decontextualised *unbranded* protagonist, the defiantly oppositional gaze of Lola Flash' androgynous subjects in *[sur]passing*, or the indissociable presence of the deceased ancestor/unborn progeny in Rania Matar's *Dead Mother* and Sama Alshaibi's *Target Practice* respectively.

## V – ARCHIVAL DESIRE, CREOLE IMPULSE

As curatorial agents engaged in diverse zones of cultural production, we spend much of our time – in a Foucauldian sense – deeply immersed in ongoing rituals of archival excavation/elevation, a process intimately bound to an abiding desire to critically ameliorate photographic history with 'new discoveries' and 'missing chapters.'

This preservation work is essential, and necessary. Part of our mission going forward must be to firmly locate 'the archives' within different discursive sites of engagement, and to extend their reach beyond

(at times) insular contextual frameworks of gallery, academy and museum circuits... and ultimately, to seek a public embrace: to infiltrate and permeate canons, to resurrect and inject works in unexpected places, to *creolise* photographic history.

To create lasting legacies and permanent platforms wherein the study of diverse photographic practices is no longer confined to the margins, where playing fields are indeed leveled and new dialogues fostered, so-called parallel or alternative photographic narratives must be '*un-othered*,' slowly yet irrevocably woven into the deeper fabrics of a collective cultural history. Because, as Derrida reminds us, *every archive is at once institutive and conservative, revolutionary and traditional*.<sup>5</sup>

**Renée Mussai**

'*Archival Desire, Creole Impulse*' presents adapted excerpts from current research/writing in progress.

1 Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

2 W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Mineola, New York: Dover Editions, 1994 (1903))

3 Stuart Hall, "Constituting an Archive" in *Third Text*, Vol. 15, No. 54, (2001), pp. 88-92.

4 The exhibition *W. E. B. Du Bois: The Paris Albums 1900* was presented by Autograph ABP at Rivington Place, London, September 17 – November 27, 2010. It featured over 200 photographs, and text extracts from Du Bois' writings.

5 Jacques Derrida, *Ibid.*

# Epilogue

I had been working several months at En Foco as a Program Associate – if not a year – before I realized that the padlocked room at the top of the stairs was in fact, En Foco’s. From its earlier history on Kingsbridge Road in the Bronx, the darkroom slowly turned into storage space as more and more back issues of *Nueva Luz* needed housing, frames from the former En Foco Gallery needed storing, and photo classes were no longer being offered. The back room became a receptacle for items that were too precious, or not (like the two ton mimeograph machine that no one could bear to move down the three flights of narrow stairs to dispose of).

It was so dusty you could taste it in the air just by breathing; windows were taped over with thick black garbage bags, and the gems we know today were buried amidst boxes, rolls of no-seams, old newspapers and whatever was being saved for future use. Walking in there was not unlike an episode of *American Pickers* on the History Channel. I’m serious: once we found a dead dehydrated three foot long snake that must have wiggled its way in from an adjoining apartment.

On a mission to make sense of the floor to ceiling piles of box after box, I started uncovering the photographs, which formed the basis of what is now the Permanent Collection. Prints from early exhibitions had been donated, or on extended loan until a new venue was to

be found, but all were entrusted to us – and we had an obligation as care-takers.

In 2000, we started accepting works into the collection again, and began to actively archiving and preserving them, while, building a database for research and scholarly study. We started assigning codes to each

The publication you hold in your hands is such a tiny sampling of what you can learn from contemporary photo-based artists of diverse cultures in this country.

piece, to reference and locate them amongst the piles of photo-dedicated boxes. We soon discovered there were hundreds. Seemed like Marisol Díaz [Program Associate at that time] and I kept finding something new every time we thought we were done. Daniel Schmeichler [*Nueva Luz* Co-Editor at that time] helped keep my sanity during that period, and shot the first digital files of the vintage prints for our website and database – new technology back then. I must have mentioned to Elizabeth Ferrer that we were knee-deep

in this project, because she made the time to trek up to the Bronx to see the prints for herself – and made us realize its preciousness went beyond even what we imagined.

Dennis Inch came to our rescue with archival materials for proper storage. Many others have been instrumental in helping establish these works as a proper archive: Veronica O’Hearn, Klara Hanincová and Hilary Thorsen. We knew this work needed to take its rightful place in history, deserving no less than to be admired globally, and in 2009 En Foco was awarded an NEA American Masterpiece grant to travel it as an exhibition with an accompanying catalogue. Canson Infinity donated paper to reproduce the images that were too delicate to travel: Luis Carlos Bernal’s and Sophie Rivera’s. They also provided enough to paper to print the brand new images coming in. Light Work’s staff then made the most luscious prints for inclusion in the show.

In fact, it was Hannah Frieser that helped make this dream come true by hosting the first show at Light Work in 2011. But the biggest thanks must go to Charles Biasiny-Rivera, for knowing the importance and relevance of our artists, far before their work became part of any collection.

The publication you hold in your hands is such a tiny sampling of what you can learn from contemporary photo-based artists of diverse cultures in this country. Difficult choices were made for the exhibition: it had to be small enough for venues to afford to present it after the economic collapse of 2008 – which meant leaving out too many talented and worthy artists. It’s a bit on the large side for a ‘small show’ nonetheless: fifty-six images by forty-eight artists, of twenty-one various ethnicities and nationalities.

Today, the En Foco Permanent Collection numbers over 750 prints and photo-objects, and it continues to grow. As we continue to advocate for cultural equity, and continue publishing their works, the future of this archive continues to gain the visibility and attention the artists merit.

**Miriam Romais**

## Acknowledgements

### A very special thanks:

To **Elizabeth Ferrer** for having inspired us to make this project blossom with extravagant intent; **John Fouke** (Consolidated Data Services) for having created our first archive database that impressed even the Museum of Modern Art; **Hannah Frieser** (Light Work) for being game to make amazing things happen; **Marysol Nieves** (Sotheby's) for lending her expertise on a short deadline; and to ALL En Foco's former and current staff living with small budgets, silly deadlines and huge hearts, especially **Marisol Díaz, Daniel Schmeichler, Dee Campos, Hilary Thorsen** and **Dani Cattán**.

The exhibition and its U.S. tour, is supported by the National Endowment for the Arts, the Nathan Cummings Foundation, the Elizabeth Firestone Graham Foundation, the Bronx Council on the Arts, Canson Infinity, Archival Methods, Light Work, the En Foco Board of Directors and friends. En Foco gratefully acknowledges their support in making this exhibition and publication possible.





Photo: Billboard outside of CIIS building,  
featuring Wendel A. White's work.  
© Deirdre Visser

## Exhibiting Venues

### APERTURE GALLERY PROJECT ROOM

547 West 27th Street, New York, NY 10001

[www.aperture.org](http://www.aperture.org)

September 9 - October 21, 2010

### LIGHT WORK

Robert B. Menschel Photography Gallery

303 University Place, Syracuse, NY 13244

Hallway Gallery

316 Waverly Avenue, Syracuse, NY 13244

[www.lightwork.org](http://www.lightwork.org)

September 1, 2011 - February 5, 2012

### ART MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAS

F Street Photo Gallery

1889 F Street NW, Washington, DC 20006

[www.museum.oas.org](http://www.museum.oas.org)

March 14 - May 16, 2012

### ALJIRA: A CENTER FOR CONTEMPORARY ART

591 Broad Street, Newark, NJ 07102

[www.aljira.org](http://www.aljira.org)

June 7 - August 18, 2012

### THE ARTS @ CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE OF INTEGRAL STUDIES

1453 Mission Street, San Francisco, CA 94103

[www.ciis.edu](http://www.ciis.edu)

January 22 - March 24, 2013

### VENICE ARTS

1702 Lincoln Blvd, Venice, CA

[www.venicearts.org](http://www.venicearts.org)

April 5 - May 5, 2013

An Official Exhibition of MOPLA

[www.mopla.org](http://www.mopla.org)

# Bios

Contributing Authors

**Bill Aguado**, a fixture in the Bronx since 1972, has been regarded as a leading cultural and community activist and advocate. Recently retired as Executive Director of the Bronx Council on the Arts (BCA), he is still called upon to lend his expertise to the independent artist, emerging community cultural groups and community-based organizations.

Through Bill's leadership at the Bronx Council on the Arts, the arts have become a respected and valued asset in the Bronx. During his tenure from 1978 through June 2011 when he retired, funding to Bronx arts organizations has increased dramatically, further demonstrating the importance of community arts and artists, representing people of color. A graduate of Hunter College, he received an M.A. from Fordham University. His current board affiliations include: En Foco, the Eugenio Maria de Hostos Community College Foundation, BronxWorks, and Full Circle Dance.

**Elizabeth Ferrer**, exhibition curator, has been Director of Contemporary Art at BRIC Arts | Media | Bklyn since 2007, and is a specialist in Latino and Mexican modern and contemporary photography. She has curated exhibitions of modern and contemporary art for numerous venues including BRIC Rotunda Gallery, the Americas Society, the UBS Art Gallery, the Aperture Foundation Gallery, the Smithsonian Institution, as well as for a range of museums in the United States and Mexico. She is curator of *En Foco/In Focus: Selected Works from the Permanent Collection*, an exhibition currently traveling in the United States. She has also been working on a comprehensive history of Latino photography in affiliation with FotoFest. Other major exhibition projects include traveling retrospectives of the photographers Mariana Yampolsky and Lola Alvarez Bravo, as well as of the pioneering Mexican modernist painter María Izquierdo. Ferrer has also written and lectured extensively on topics related to her fields of interest.

[www.bricartsmedia.org/contemporary-art](http://www.bricartsmedia.org/contemporary-art)

**Renée Mussai** is a curator and lecturer based in London. Affiliated with Autograph ABP for over a decade, she manages their Photography Archive and Research Centre at Rivington Place. Between 2009 - 2012, she has curated and co-curated (with Mark Sealy, Director Autograph ABP) several exhibitions internationally including at *Iziko South African National Gallery* (Cape Town); *Magnum Print Room* (London); and retrospectives of *Rotimi Fani-Kayode* (2011) and *James Barnor* (2010) at Rivington Place, London. She is twice recipient of the Sofie and Emanuel Fohn Fellowship, and in 2009/10 was non-resident fellow and guest curator of the Du Bois Institute's Rudenstine Gallery at Harvard University. Currently a PhD candidate at University College London, she has a special interest in feminist and post-colonial politics of portraiture, gender and sexuality in Africa and the African diaspora, and lectures internationally on photographic history and cultural politics.

**Autograph ABP** is a charity that works internationally to educate the public in photography, with a particular emphasis on issues of cultural identity and human rights. [www.autograph-abp.co.uk](http://www.autograph-abp.co.uk)

**Miriam Romais** is a curator, Editor of *Nueva Luz* photographic journal, and Executive Director of En Foco in the Bronx, NY, a non-profit supporting U.S.-based photographers of Latino, African, Asian and Native American heritage. She is also a nationally exhibited photographer with shows at venues such as the Smithsonian Institution, Museum of the City of NY, and El Museo del Barrio; and has received several grants and residencies. Romais was a panelist for the 2012 PhotoPlus Expo panel, *(Mis)Representation: The Under Representation of Non-Whites and Women in the Arts*; and co-Chair for the national SPE 2010 Conference, *Facing Diversity: Leveling the Playing Field in the Photographic Arts*. She curated exhibitions for organizations such as Aperture (*Mexico + Afuera*), Light Work (*Tracing Memory*), SPE (*Interstice*) and En Foco. As editor for En Foco's *Nueva Luz* photographic journal, the publication rose to a four-time finalist for a Lucie Award in the support category of "Best Photography Magazine," and is winner of three IPPIE Awards.

[www.enfoco.org](http://www.enfoco.org)

For more details on En Foco's artists, please visit the Photographer's section of [www.enfoco.org](http://www.enfoco.org)

# Permanent Collection Artists\*

(names in bold are included in the catalogue and traveling exhibition)

Adál, p 48	Papo Colo	David Gonzalez	Alex Leme
Mustafah Abdulaziz	Kerry Stuart Coppin	Tony Gonzalez	Luis Leonor
<b>Jaishri Abichandani</b> , p 53-54	<b>Valdir Cruz</b> , p 80	Ani González-Rivera	Adam Licht
Gilbert Acevedo	André Cypriano	Stephanie Graham	<b>Nitza Luna</b> , p 44
Charles Agel	<b>Gerald Cyrus</b> , p 29-30	<b>Myra Greene</b> , p 73-74	<b>George Malave</b> , p 25
Laura Aguilar	<b>Phil Dante</b> , p 19-20	Charlie Grosso	<b>Stephen Marc</b> , p 51-52
<b>Max Aguilera-Hellweg</b> , p 47	Carlos De Jesus	Glenda Guilmet	Ivonne Maria Marcial
William Alatraste	Perla De León	Herman Guzmán	Catherine Marino
<b>Sama Alshaibi</b> , p 70	<b>Ana De Orbegoso</b> , p 65-66	Carlos Guzmán	Marlo Marrero
<b>Don Gregorio Antón</b> , p 58	Pablo Delano	Archie Hamilton	<b>Rania Matar</b> , p 79
Myrna Arroyo	Jack Delano	Emily Hanako Momohara	Darrell Matsumoto
Omobowace Ayorinde	Tertuliano Delgado	<b>Muriel Hasbun</b> , p 75	Kervin Maule
Nydza M. Bajandas	<b>Lisdebertus</b> , aka <b>Luis Delgado</b>	Maria Eugenia Haya (Marucha)	<b>Larry McNeil</b> , p 81-82
Ricardo Barros	<b>Qualtrough</b> , p 67-68	Pato Hebert	Frieda Medin
<b>Chuy Benitez</b> , p 55-56	<b>Dean Dempsey</b> , p 69	Reynaldo Hernandez	<b>Groana Melendez</b> , p 64
<b>Louis Carlos Bernal</b> , p 9-10, 17	Marisol Díaz	<b>Germán Herrera</b> , p 77-78	<b>Frank X. Méndez</b> , p 15-16
John Betancourt	Carlos Diaz	Carlos del Santos Heyward	<b>Héctor Méndez Caratini</b> , p 11-12
<b>Dawoud Bey</b> , p 18	Carola Dreidemie	Liz Hunter	<b>Tony Mendoza</b> , p 43
<b>Charles Biasiny-Rivera</b> , p 35-36	Sandra Eleta	Dorothy Imagire	Pedro Meyer
<b>Terry Boddie</b> , p 57	Suilaman Ellison	Graciela Iturbide	Carlos Arnaldo Meyners
Elsa Borrero	Meg Escudé	<b>Kenro Izu</b> , p 31-32	<b>Néstor Millán</b> , p 45
<b>Samantha Box</b> , p 63	Robert Espier	Deborah Jack	Kevin J. Miyazaki
Kesha Bruce	María Angelica Fernández	Leena Jayaswal	Karen Miranda Rivadeneira
Angie Buckley	Arthur Fields	Tom Jones	Carmen Mojica
Robert Buitrón	<b>Lola Flash</b> , p 71-72	Tomiko Jones	<b>Delilah Montoya</b> , p 83-84
Millie Burns	<b>Ricky Flores</b> , p 21-24	Lisa Jong-Soon Goodlin	Osamu James Nakagawa
Roger Cabán, p 14	Elsa Flores Almarz	Stella Kalaw	Julio Nazario
Silvia Arlene Calzada	Morgan M. Ford	Marco Kalisch	<b>Pipo Nguyen-duy</b> , p 39-40
Pablo Cambó	Carol Foresta	Mike Kamber	Adrienne Odom
Angel Chevreest	José Galvez	Nina Kuo	Sandro Oramas
Tony Chirinos	José Ruben Gaztambide	Fernando LaRosa	Rodolfo Ornelas
Neil Chowdhury	Frank Gimpaya	Corky Lee	<b>Annu Palakunnathu</b>
Evelyn Collazo	Glen Goldstein	Mica Lee Anders	<b>Matthew</b> , p 41-42



Permanent Collection prints for  
*En Foco/In Focus* being unwrapped  
 and prepared for the exhibition  
 launch at Light Work.  
 © Miriam Romais

Lyssa Palu-ay  
 Freddy Perez  
 Edwin Pérez  
 Jaime Permuth  
 Julio Piedra  
**Dulce Pinzón**, p 59-62  
 O. Gustavo Plascencia  
**Bonnie Portelance**, p 88  
 Carmen Quesada  
 Susana Raab  
 Rafael Ramirez Aviles  
 Joe Ramos  
 Augustin Rivera  
 Rita Rivera

**Sophie Rivera**, p 26  
 Rafael Robles  
 Fernando Rodríguez  
 Linda Rogers  
 Miriam Romais  
 Jonathan Rosen  
 Monica Ruzansky  
 Daniel Salazar  
**Juan Sánchez**, p 13  
 Cristina Santiago  
 Juma Santos  
 Suzanne K. Saylor  
 Luis Servedio Morales  
 Edwine Seymour

Naomi Simonetti  
 Coreen Simpson  
 Frank Stewart  
**Kunié Sugiura**, p 33-34  
**Jane Tam**, p 87  
 Danny Tisdale  
 John Tonai  
**Hong-An Truong**, p 85-86  
 John Valdez  
 Ricardo Valverde  
**Kathy Vargas**, p 38  
 Toné (Jose Antonio) Vázquez  
 Josefa Vázquez  
**Víctor Vázquez**, p 37

Tony Velez  
 Rene Verdugo  
 Ramón Villa  
 Ivonne Villaquiran  
 Carrie Mae Weems  
**Wendel A. White**, p 76  
**Hank Willis Thomas**, p  
 89-90  
 Mariana Yampolsky  
 Zwulon Zelikowsky

\* from 1974 though 2012

**en** Changing the Face  
of Photography  
**foco**  
**.org**