

NEWS

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PRESS RELEASE

January 21, 2004

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***California Dreamin'* Camera Clubs and the Pictorial Photography Tradition**

First Ever Exhibition of California Pictorialism on the East Coast

January 30, 2004 — March 28, 2004

Opening Reception & Lecture: Thursday January 29, 6 - 8:30 pm

Boston—The Boston University Art Gallery (BUAG) is excited to announce *California Dreamin': Camera Clubs and the Pictorial Photography Tradition* opening at the gallery on Thursday, January 29th. *California Dreamin'* examines the very active, yet relatively under examined tradition of pictorial photography practiced in the context of camera clubs in California during the first half of the twentieth century. Representing the work of forty seven photographers, *California Dreamin'* focuses on well-known artists, including Ansel Adams, Anne Brigman, William E. Dasonville, John Paul Edwards, Arnold Genthe, Karl Struss, Margrethe Mather and Edward Weston; while exposing lesser-known artists including Fred R. Archer, Will Connell, Arthur F. Kales, Louis Fleckenstein, Louis Goetz, Florence B. Kemmler, Hiromu Kira, Toyo Miyatake, William Mortensen, Kaye Shimojima, and others.

California Dreamin' sets out to defy tired stereotypes that minimize twentieth-century Pictorialist practice. Pictorialism after about 1910 has typically been ignored or trivialized in histories of photography, as photographers and critics in the 1920s began to embrace a more modernist approach to photographic practice. As such, Pictorialism came to be seen as outdated. Whereas modernist photographers were celebrated for their appreciation of urban, industrial and technological subjects, and their use of pure photographic vision through control of perspective and hard focus; Pictorialist photographers were chastised for their embrace of idealized, picturesque subjects, their use of expressive printmaking techniques and hand manipulation, and their preference for soft focus. Although this dichotomy between Pictorialism and modernism continues to be perpetuated in exhibitions and scholarship, this was not the case in the camera clubs themselves. *California Dreamin'* demonstrates that photographers working in camera clubs under the rubric of "Pictorialism" created work that either incorporated elements from both modes or encompassed more modernist modes altogether.

The broad selection of images presented in *California Dreamin'*, many of which have never been exhibited or reproduced before, will attest to the visual power, complexity, and breadth of photography created in the camera clubs. Camera clubs were thriving centers of photographic activity at this time, with a particularly strong following in California. Within these clubs, a range of amateur and professional photographers interacted socially and intellectually in order to exchange ideas about photography and art.

Scholars and curators on the West Coast are writing about the history of California Pictorialism and camera clubs, yet this history still remains virtually unknown on the East Coast. Most photographers in this exhibition, even those crucial to the development of photography out west, will be entirely new to New England viewers.

California Dreamin': Camera Clubs and the Pictorial Photography Tradition showcases over ninety photographs from a group of forty-seven individual artists. Lenders to the exhibition include: The J. Paul Getty Museum, The Los Angeles County Museum of Art, The Oakland Museum of California, Michael G. Wilson and the Wilson Centre for Photography, the Stephen White Collection (II), Dennis Reed, and other private lenders. A full-color, 125-page exhibition catalogue—with an essay by exhibition Curator and Boston University Art Gallery Director, Stacey McCarroll, and an introduction by Boston University Professor of Art History and Photography Historian, Kim Sichel—accompanies the exhibition.

PUBLIC PROGRAMMING

OPENING RECEPTION

Thursday, January 29, 7:00-8:30 p.m.

LECTURE

Dennis Reed: photography collector, curator and co-author of *Pictorialism in California: Photographs 1900-1940* (1994), will present the lecture, *In the Glare of the Sun: Pictorial Photography in California*.

Thursday, January 29, 6:00 – 7:00 p.m.

Concert Hall, College of Fine Arts, 855 Commonwealth Avenue

GALLERY TALK

Stacey McCarroll: Exhibition Curator and Director, Boston University Art Gallery, will speak on the exhibition's images and themes.

Wednesday, March 10, 1 p.m.

At the Gallery

IMAGES AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

Please call the gallery or visit the BU Art Gallery website at www.bu.edu/ART for events and programming information during the season. All exhibitions and events are free to the public.

Information

Boston University Art Gallery
855 Commonwealth Avenue
Boston, MA 02215
TEL (617) 353-3329
FAX (617) 353-4509

Gallery Hours
Tuesday-Friday 10am –5pm
Saturday & Sunday 1 – 5 pm
www.bu.edu/ART

The **Boston University Art Gallery** (BUAG) is a non-profit art gallery geared toward an interdisciplinary interpretation of art, and committed to a culturally inclusive viewpoint that expands the boundaries of the museum. Exhibitions focus on international, national and regional art developments chiefly in the 20th century; seek to present the cultural and historical context of art, and to acknowledge the artistic contributions of under-recognized sectors of the population. BUAG is located at 855 Commonwealth Avenue, inside the College of Fine Arts at Boston University (BU West T stop on the B Green Line).

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