

## DOCUMENT:

### Contemporary Social Documentary Work from Greater Boston

**EXHIBITION DATES:** February 2-March 26, 2006

**OPENING RECEPTION:** Thursday, February 9, 5:30-7:30pm  
832 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, MA 02215, [prcboston.org](http://prcboston.org)

**BOSTON, MA.** The Photographic Resource Center (PRC) is proud to present a group exhibition showcasing recent social documentary work from Boston and on Boston as seen through the eyes of 9 emerging and early midcareer photographers. A unique blending of art and activism, the exhibition aims to spotlight a new generation of local documentary photographers by considering a variety of projects of interest to Greater Boston as well as approaches to social documentary and the "document." Perhaps most importantly, the show will also consider what we can do after the picture is taken. Featured artists include **Mariliana Arvelo & James Patten** (Cambridge, MA), **Claire Beckett** (Jamaica Plain, MA), **Suzi Camarata** (Boston, MA), **Christopher Churchill** (Amesbury, MA), **Lisa Kessler** (Boston, MA), **Surendra Lawoti** (Somerville, MA), **Michael Manning** (Cambridge, MA), and **Amber Davis Tourlentes** (Somerville, MA).

The 8 projects highlighted in *DOCUMENT* include Arvelo & Patten's color and "tactile" photographs of the deaf-blind community in Greater Boston; Beckett's study of the Massachusetts National Guard, Camarata's work with the businesses of Mission Hill and its Main Streets Program; and Churchill's portraits of the Dorchester community. Additional featured projects include Kessler's study of the church abuse crisis in Boston; Lawoti's portraits of Somerville firefighters; Manning's photoessay on a group of homeless people in Chinatown; and Davis Tourlentes's document of gay-parented families in the area. Boston has a long tradition of documentary work—burgeoning especially in the 1970s and 80s—including its production, publication, exhibition and collection, and these contemporary photographers expand and build upon this foundation.

A number of photographers in *DOCUMENT* use one particular group or person to elaborate on issues that are specifically Boston-related, while others spotlight national issues through a local connection. Several incorporate a significant amount of text and context; others aim for minimalism and overall aesthetic effect. Interestingly enough, almost all of the photographers are not originally from Boston. Given the area's plethora of colleges, students and teachers are often drawn to the city and then stay, lending their unique perspectives to Greater Boston. Borrowing a phrase from the prospectus of the NEA-funded "Boston Photo-Documentary Project" (1980-82)—a project that focused on the Leather District and Fort Point Channel area and of which PRC founder Chris Enos was a part—the photographers featured in *DOCUMENT* continue to follow this important path and equally serve as "historians of the present."

### A CELEBRATION OF BOSTON ON COMMONWEALTH AVENUE

*DOCUMENT* is held in conjunction with the **Boston University Art Gallery's** exhibition *A Photographic Portrait of Boston, 1840-1865* (February 10 - April 2, 2006) and will coincide with the College Art Association's (CAA) national conference held in Boston, February 22-25, 2006. The BU exhibition, curated by Anna Kamplain, features early, historic photographs taken by Boston photographers of Boston and Bostonians. Highlighting four major Boston photographic archives—the Boston Athenaeum, the Boston Public Library, Historic New England, and the Massachusetts Historical Society—the show reassesses this early period and exhibits some of its images publicly for the first time. In addition, BU's **School of Visual Arts's 808 Gallery** is hosting a *New England Regional BFA Exhibition for CAA (February 14-25, 2006)* featuring work by 14 area art programs. Taken altogether, these offerings, all held on the same street, make for many great reasons to get off at the BU West T-stop (or f-stop as we like to call it)!



Surendra Lawoti (Somerville, MA), *District Chief Peter St. Clair (Appointed October 31, 1977), Somerville Fire Department*, from the series "Fire," C-print, 2005, 40 x 30 inches, Courtesy of the artist

## **DOCUMENT: Contemporary Social Documentary Work from Greater Boston, p.2**

### **Mariliana Arvelo and James Patten (Cambridge, MA)**



Mariliana Arvelo began this project through Jaimi Lard, who was born completely deaf with almost no vision and works in public relations for the Perkins School for the Blind in Watertown, MA (perhaps best know for their famous alumna, Helen Keller). Through Laird, Arvelo was introduced to a larger deaf-blind community and began to photograph and learn sign language. Based on Arvelo's compelling color photographs, her partner Patten then designed a computer program to produce a series of "tactile photographs" on wood panels through a CNC laser etching process. The result is a photographic relief that can be touched and is truly interactive and educational for people of all abilities. Born in Caracas, Venezuela, Arvelo graduated in 2002 from the New England School of Photography. Patten is currently completing his Ph.D. at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Media Lab. Their websites are [arvelophoto.com](http://arvelophoto.com) and [jamespatten.com](http://jamespatten.com).



### **Claire Beckett (Jamaica Plain, MA)**

Since 2004, Claire Beckett has been photographing members of the Massachusetts National Guard. Traveling to training facilities camps in the Greater Boston area—from Dorchester to Framingham—Beckett usually stays the weekend with these soldiers in training. Beckett's project calls into question many issues, from the balance of civilian and military life (these forces refer to themselves "M-day" or Mobilization day soldiers) to the role of the military and war in society. Originally from Chicago, IL, Beckett earned a BA in Anthropology from Kenyon College (Gambier, OH) and will earn her MFA in photography from Massachusetts College of Art (MassArt, Boston, MA) this spring.

### **Suzi Camarata (Boston, MA)**

What began as a project in 2001, has since grown into a deep relationship with the ethnically and economically-diverse neighborhood she calls home, Mission Hill. For 3 years, she has photographed the businesses that line Tremont Street and Huntington Avenue for a community calendar to benefit Mission Hill Main Streets. Part of the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Main Street Program and a non-profit, the Mission Hill neighborhood joins 18 other designated areas sponsored by the city of Boston. Even these short 5 years, the area has begun to show signs of gentrification, with new businesses replacing the very same enterprises she first documented. Born in Korea, Camarata grew up in Japan and Dallas, TX. She holds a BA in political science from the University of Rochester (Rochester, NY) and pursued studies in photography at Art Institute of Boston. Her website is [camarataphotography.com](http://camarataphotography.com).



### **Chris Churchill (Amesbury, MA)**

Christopher Churchill's project focuses on the Patrick O'Hearn Elementary School in Boston's Dorchester neighborhood. The school serves children from diverse ethnic, linguistic, and ability backgrounds in grades K-5. Dr. William Henderson has been an educator in Boston for the past 33 years, and the principal of O'Hearn for the last 16. O'Hearn is nationally-recognized for its full-inclusion program—integrating students with general, special, and gifted needs together—and Churchill's images reflect this unique diversity. Born in Maine, Churchill graduated from the Maine Photographic Workshops in 1998. Churchill's work can be found in many collections and galleries including the Boston Public Library and The Addison Gallery of American Art (Andover, MA). His editorial and commercial clients include *Boston Magazine*, *The Sunday Globe Magazine*, Hill Holliday Advertising Agency, and The Federal Reserve Bank. His website in [www.christopherchurchill.com](http://www.christopherchurchill.com).



### **Lisa Kessler (Boston, MA)**

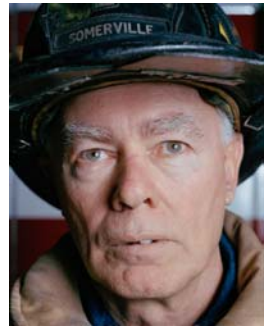
From 2002 to 2004, Lisa Kessler photographed the sexual abuse crisis in Boston's Roman Catholic Church as a project titled "Heart in the Wound." In Boston alone over 800 people reported abuse to the church (victims' advocates estimate over 100,000 across the US were sexually abused at the hands of their priests). Kessler shows the whole gamut of the crisis, from the protests at the Cathedral of the Holy Cross in the South End (just down the street from where Kessler lives), to the settlements, support groups, and eventual legislation. Kessler

documented this pivotal period and issue via images, interviews, and short film on DVD. Originally from New York, Kessler is a freelance documentary and editorial photographer and educator with almost 20 years of experience. Currently teaching at Northeastern University and the Maine Photographic Workshops, she holds a BA in history from Brown University and a MS in journalism and photojournalism from BU. With this project in 2004, she received an Honorable Mention for the Honickman Foundation First Book Prize from the Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University (Durham, NC).

## **DOCUMENT: Contemporary Social Documentary Work from Greater Boston, p.3**

### **Surendra Lawoti (Somerville, MA)**

Surendra Lawoti's project "Fire" focuses on the firefighters of Somerville, MA. He is interested in their experiences confronting the wrath and unpredictability of the fire, as well as the uncertainties, close calls, and losses. A native of Nepal, Lawoti came to the US in 1994. He received his BA in photography from Columbia College Chicago and his MFA in photography from MassArt this past spring. His work is included in the LaSalle Bank Collection, Ruttenberg Collection, and the Citibank Corporate Collection. Currently, he is an adjunct professor at Montserrat College of Art (Beverly, MA) and also works for Color Services, Inc (Needham, MA). Lawoti's website is [www.surendralawoti.com](http://www.surendralawoti.com).



### **Michael Manning (Cambridge, MA)**

Michael Manning's featured project began in the winter of 2002/2003 with his desire to discover for himself how the economy and cuts in social programs were affecting people living on Boston's streets. On his first day out, he met Lee, the leader of a group of homeless persons, self-titled "La Familia," generally living near Chinatown. Manning's project is an insightful, human look into a world we often see, but sadly is often overlooked. A Cambridge-based photographer with over 15 years experience, Manning has been awarded 4 first place awards from the New England Press

Association. Originally from New York, Manning attended Nova Scotia College of Art and Design and the Art Institute of Boston. He has exhibited at the Boston Architectural Center, Fidelity Corporation (Boston, MA), and the Danforth Museum of Art (Framingham, MA). A former staff photographer to CNC publications, he has also contributed to the Associated Press, *New York Times*, *Rolling Stone*, *Boston Magazine*, and the *Boston Globe*, among others. His website is [michaelmanningphoto.com](http://michaelmanningphoto.com).

### **Amber Davis Tourlentes (Somerville, MA)**

For the past eight years, Davis has been photographing her family: her gay father, his lifelong partner, her mother and stepfather as well as other gay-parented families. In a unique blending of art and activism, "Families on Stage" features selections of images of Boston area gay-parented families taken during Family Week in Provincetown, MA over the course of 4 years (2002-2005). Sponsored by the Family Pride Coalition—a unique non-profit organization that supports legislation, funding, and research regarding LGBT families—the weeklong conference draws thousands and garners national attention. A native of Boston's South End, Davis received her MFA in Photography and Computer Arts at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst in 1998 and then taught at Princeton University (Princeton, NJ). Currently, she teaches photography and new media at MassArt and Emerson College (Boston, MA) and is involved with many activist and support groups. In 2005, she received one of five individual grants in photography from the Massachusetts Cultural Council. Her website is [amberdavisphotographer.com](http://amberdavisphotographer.com).



*Beginning with the opening of the gallery exhibition, we will debut an online component to the exhibition at [www.bu.edu/prc/document](http://www.bu.edu/prc/document), including all images, more information on the photographers and projects, interviews and quotes, and extensive links of what you can do to help. As an added resource, the PRC presents what hopes to be an ever-expanding annotated timeline of past and current documentary projects by Boston photographers on Boston.*

### **CURATORIAL – FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE EXHIBITION AND PRESS IMAGES CONTACT:**

Leslie Brown, Curator, PRC, 832 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, MA 02215, (617) 975-0600, [lkbrown@bu.edu](mailto:lkbrown@bu.edu)

### **ABOUT THE PRC**

Founded in 1976, the PRC is an independent non-profit organization located on the campus of Boston University. Consistently cited by the press as an important voice in photography, the PRC provides its members and the general public with thought-provoking exhibitions, distinctive education programs, wide-ranging resources, and unique special events. Emphasizing new ideas and trends in contemporary photography, the PRC's gallery hosts 5-6 exhibitions each year. Led by regional and national photography luminaries, regular education programs include lectures, workshops, and portfolio reviews. Resource highlights include a comprehensive website, a bi-monthly newsletter, *in the loupe*, and the 4000-volume Aaron Siskind library. It is supported by grants from the Massachusetts Cultural Council, numerous private foundations, and the ongoing generosity of its members.

**PRC Location and Hours:** The PRC is located at 832 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, MA, 02215. Public transportation: Green B Line, outbound, BU West T-stop. Hours are Tuesday through Friday 10 to 6pm, Thursdays from 10 to 8pm, Saturday and Sunday 12 to 5pm. Admission is \$3/general public, \$2/students and seniors, and free to all on Thursdays and on the last weekend of every month. The PRC is always free to members, Institutional Plus member schools, children under 18, BU students, faculty, and staff, and all school groups with appointments. For more information, call 617-975-0600 or visit [www.prcboston.org](http://www.prcboston.org). The PRC is accessible.

# PRESS RELEASE

for immediate release

PHOTOGRAPHIC RESOURCE CENTER  
at Boston University

prc

## EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING

**DOCUMENT: Contemporary Social Documentary Work from Greater Boston**

**EXHIBITION DATES:** February 2-March 26, 2006

**BOSTON, MA.** in support of the DOCUMENT exhibition, the PRC has a host of educational programs planned.

◆ **Panel Discussion: *To DOCUMENT Lives***

Thursday, February 2, 7pm, Boston University's College of Communications, Auditorium 101, 640 Commonwealth Ave. Admission: FREE!

Several artists in *DOCUMENT* explore the lives of people often marginalized by society. Join Chris Churchill, Lisa Kessler, and Michael Manning for a discussion on how and why they select their subjects and gain access into their worlds, and how they present those worlds to the public.



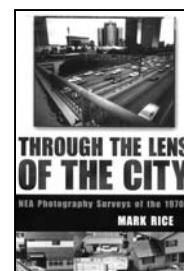
Antonin Kratochvil, *Bush Meat Market, Section V, Congo, Tropical take-away*, from [Vanishing], published by de.MO, Copyright Antonin Kratochvil.VII

◆ **Lecture & Booksigning: Antonin Kratochvil of VII Photo Agency**

Thursday, February 16, 7pm, 8 St. Mary's Street, Photonics, Auditorium 206

\$10 Members/ \$15 Non-Members/ Free for Full-time Students & Seniors!

In celebration of its 30th anniversary, the PRC presents a new lecture series featuring nationally and internationally renowned artists and historians working in photography and related media. Czech photographer Antonin Kratochvil, a founding member of VII Photo Agency and a premiere photo-journalist, kicks off the series.



◆ **Lecture: *Art or Document: Changing Perceptions of Documentary Photography Since the 1970s***

Thursday, February 23, 7pm, BU College of Communications, 640 Comm. Ave., Auditorium 101

\$5 for members/ \$10 Non-Members / FREE for full-time students and Seniors!

Mark Rice, Chair of the American Studies Department, St. John Fisher College (Rochester, NY) and author of *Through the Lens of the City: NEA Photography Surveys of the 1970s*, discusses the diminishing line between documentary and fine art photography facilitated by the NEA Surveys, and their lasting impact.



◆ **Masters Workshop: *Creating a Documentary Project with Michael Hintlian***

Saturday, February 25, 10am – 4pm, BU College of Arts and Sciences, Room 226, 725 Comm. Ave.

Fee: \$55 members, \$95 non-members, \$45 full-time students & Seniors. Reservations required, 617-975-0600

Join Michael Hintlian for a daylong workshop on crafting a documentary project, using examples from his recent book *Digging: The Workers of Boston's Big Dig*. Participants present own concepts for review and discussion.

▶▶ **EVEN MORE DOCUMENT PROGRAMS AND OUTREACH EFFORTS ARE IN THE WORKS, STAY TUNED** ◀◀

**Additional programs not related to Document include** (please see [prcboston.org](http://prcboston.org) for locations and details):

◆ **LECTURE/BOOK-SIGNING: *The Weather and a Place to Live, Photographs of the Suburban West*** by Steven B. Smith, RISD professor and winner of the **2005 Center for Documentary Studies/Honickman First Book Prize, January 26, 7pm**

◆ **PROFESSIONAL SEMINAR: Answering the Call (for entries): A How-To Guide with Leslie Brown & Jim Dow, February 7, 7pm**

**EDUCATION — FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THESE PROGRAMS AND PRESS IMAGES CONTACT:**

Michael Christiano, Education Coordinator, PRC, 832 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, MA 02215, (617) 975-0600

[mchristiano@prcboston.org](mailto:mchristiano@prcboston.org)

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