

### FotoFocus Biennial 2014: 'Photography as Dialogue'

By Maria Seda-Reeder

A conversation with Kevin Moore, curator and artistic director

FotoFocus is a biennial lens-based art festival celebrating photography as "the medium of our time." This year's festival features special exhibitions and five days of lectures, panel discussions, screenings and performances in and around Memorial Hall and Washington Park, in Over-the-Rhine, Oct. 8-12.

The festival is supported by a month-long regional showcase including museums, universities, art schools and gallery exhibitions, more than 50 local venues in Cincinnati, Dayton, Northern Kentucky and in other Southwest Ohio communities. (See Arts & Culture Calendar, page 17) This vast display is meant to spotlight our region's importance in the field and ignite a dialogue between contemporary photo-based art and the history of photography. In fact, this year's theme is "Photography in Dialogue."

Express contributor Maria Seda-Reeder spoke with FotoFocus curator and artistic director, Kevin Moore to get a better idea of what people can expect from this year's FotoFocus events. Moore brings vast experience as an independent

photography curator, writer and teacher based in New York.

**Q:** How did you become involved with FotoFocus?

**A:** In 2010, I curated the "Starburst" exhibition (color photography in America, 1970-1980) at the Cincinnati Art Museum that (FotoFocus founder) Tom Schiff funded and I met him and Mary Ellen Goeke (FotoFocus executive director) around that time.

**Q:** You're based in New York City, how difficult was it organizing such a large-scale event from afar?

**A:** It's definitely kept me busy! I was there (in Cincinnati) just last week. I'm coming back typically for a week at a time; I've made four or five trips already this year and I also attach that to my independent work here in London, New York and Los Angeles. So they (FotoFocus staff) come to participate in those events too. It's not as hard as you might imagine. It's a new kind of institution. We're a nonprofit that creates exhibitions, and (compared to traditional

staffs of 150+ at many area art institutions) we're light on our feet.

**Q:** What does the curatorial theme of "Photography as Dialogue" mean for this year's Biennial?

**A:** Photography is interesting because it's so accessible and has to do with our understanding of reality; it's so closely connected to life. But (in terms of art history) during the 20th century, photography was locked in a narrow box. Usually it was black and white photography with social content and good composition.

It was often used in relation to painting and film; but I always felt like it was interesting to look at as a broader subject. Film, painting and sculpture have always been interested in contemporary art's relationship to the history of photography. Anyone looking in galleries or museums sees that contemporary photography looks different from historic photography. (Contemporary photography) is big, colorful; sometimes moves, sometimes is sculptural. I'm interested in how you look at the history of photography as one continuous thing.



▲ Kevin Moore, artistic director and curator of FotoFocus

The contemporary is promiscuous. It mixes with so many things.

**Q:** With more than 50 venue sites, how important was it for you and other organizers to find places that would reach a diverse audience?

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# BIENNIAL



Jeff L. Rosenheim, Curator in Charge of the Department of Photographs at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. ©2013 J&K Krenn

THE FOTOFOCUS BIENNIAL 2014  
OCTOBER 8 - NOVEMBER 1, 2014  
CINCINNATI, OH

PHOTOGRAPHY IN DIALOGUE

Opening Week Programming  
October 8-12, 2014  
Memorial Hall

This October-long celebration of photography and lens-based art encompasses 50+ regional museums, art centers, universities, and galleries. The opening week programming includes keynote speaker Jeff L. Rosenheim, Head of the Department of Photographs at The Metropolitan Museum of Art; special guest American filmmaker, collector, visual artist, John Waters; along with many other guests brought to Cincinnati by FotoFocus and Curator Kevin Moore.

Passport: Your Ticket to FotoFocus

For access to exhibition openings, special performances, and exclusive parties, purchase your Passport Ticket at [www.fotofocusbiennial.org/passport-tickets](http://www.fotofocusbiennial.org/passport-tickets)

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[WWW.FOTOFOCUSBIENNIAL.ORG](http://WWW.FOTOFOCUSBIENNIAL.ORG)

# FOTO FOCUS

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**A:** We decided early on that it would be in Washington Park. It's changed a lot in just the 10 years I've been coming to Cincinnati. In trying to place museum shows, we realized we wanted to do more than just those. One day we were standing around Washington Park and wondering about the empty buildings along the way. We wanted pop-up gallery shows and we found three storefronts ready to be renovated or rented out monthly and we turned them into white cubes, even frosting out the windows. Another one is Lightborne Studios. It will host the "Screenings" exhibition.

And there will be ArtHub, a pavilion built by Jose Garcia, and that will be the hub of activities (in Washington Park). There we'll have "Fotogram," where we'll stream live onscreen what our army of Instagrammers posts. "Fotogram" is a self-curating exhibition—a symbolic place where all these activities converge in the live feed. Anyone can join, they just have to hashtag #FotoFocus2014. It's important to understand it's all very high/low. We want to stimulate people at the sophisticated end, but reach the masses with some basics, and the range of shows reflects that. Some are intellectual, some compelling. But you also don't have to know anything about photography or art. There's something for people at many different levels. ♦



▲ Vivian Maier, Self-portrait, 1959.  
© Vivian Maier/Maloff Collection,  
courtesy Howard Greenberg  
Gallery, New York

### Kevin Moore's 'don't miss' FotoFocus picks:

#### Contemporary Arts Center, 44 E. Sixth St., downtown

"Taiyo Onorato and Nico Krebs: The One-Eyed Thief." A collaborative production by the two Swiss intra-disciplinary artists, which—according to Moore—"illustrates everything about 'Photography in Dialogue.'"

#### FotoFocus pop-up gallery, 1500 Elm St., Over-the-Rhine

"David Benjamin Sherry: Western Romance." Classic American landscape photography with thoughtful curatorial juxtapositions from local private collections.

#### FotoFocus pop-up gallery, 1400 Elm St., Over-the-Rhine

"Vivian Maier: A Quiet Pursuit." Full of stop action photography; cinematic photos made by a passionate street photographer who kept her life's work secret from all but a few.

#### Lightborne Studios, 212 E. 14th St., Over-the-Rhine

"Screenings." The video accompaniment to "Stills," "Screenings" consists of 12 paired art films. There are no show times; just two separate screening rooms with couches to sit on, and a cash bar playing two-hour loops of the films.

#### Michael Lowe Gallery, 905 Vine St., downtown

"Stills." Envisioned as a complement to "Screenings," "Stills" features 13 contemporary artists who deal with stop action photography.

→ For more FotoFocus events, see the Express Arts Calendar, page 16 and 17, or visit [fotofocusbiennial.org](http://fotofocusbiennial.org)

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October 3, 2014–January 11, 2015

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316 Pike Street  
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All works are from the collection of Michael Mattis and Judith Hochberg.  
This exhibition was organized by art2art Circulating Exhibitions.

Clockwise: Man Ray, Portrait of Dora Maar (detail), 1936, gelatin silver print, © Estate of Man Ray; Jacques-Henri Lartigue, Avenue de la Providence with Châle and Goggles, women du Bois de Boulogne, Paris (detail), 1911, gelatin silver print, © Estate of Jacques-Henri Lartigue; Rex Bing, Champ-de-Mars from the Eiffel Tower (detail), 1931, gelatin silver print, © Estate of Rex Bing

