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Lectures Highlight CAM's 'Eyes on the Street' Show

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Paul Graham at the Cincinnati Art Museum - Salena McKenzie/Cincinnati Art Museum

Last night, British photographer Paul Graham presented his FotoFocus-sponsored lecture at Cincinnati Art Museum. Graham's work is in two of FotoFocus' featured exhibitions — the museum's *Eyes on the Street* and the *Stills* show at Downtown's Michael Lowe Gallery. *Eyes on the Street* is up until Jan. 4; *Stills* closes Nov. 1.

Graham's work is related to but updates classic street photography in that, based on what he said last night, he seeks out subtle shots rather than what he calls "clichéd" or obviously dramatic images. He tries to build haiku-like, enigmatic visual sequences that in their small details cumulatively provide insight. (That said, he did show slides from a recent series that features rainbows.)

It's a difficult task not always easily evident to the viewer, but he expressed his purpose eloquently last night and repeatedly mentioned those whose work inspired him — Robert Frank, Diane Arbus, Garry Winogrand.

For those moved by his work, there's a Where's Waldo quality to "reading" the smallest details — the color of a tie or T-shirt, the positioning of a pedestrian on a street, the relationship of the camera angle to a storefront sign, the choices in focus.

This is particularly noticeable in his recent *The Present* series of New York street life, from which the Cincinnati-displayed photos come. "It's the theater of the street, the theater of life coming at you," he said. He also prefers that his framed prints be mounted on a gallery wall close to the floor, to approximate sidewalk level. But he acknowledged last night that the *Stills* show did not do that, and he enjoyed being able to see his photos at more normal eye level.

His *The Present* photos in *Eyes on the Street* capture the results of bold action or drama, a rarity for him, in that a woman has fallen on the sidewalk while others move toward her.

Meanwhile last night, the museum's associate curator of photography, Brian Sholis, distributed announcements of two additional events connected to the current *Eyes on the Street* show: a Nov. 5 panel discussion at 7 p.m. about *Eyes on the Street* at Niehoff Urban Studio, University of Cincinnati, 2728 (Short) Vine St.; and a Nov. 19 conversation at 7 p.m. on "Art and Privacy" featuring Cincinnati Police Chief Jeffrey Blackwell and civil-rights lawyer Alphonse Gerhardstein. It's at the museum's Fath Auditorium.

Go [here](#) for more information.