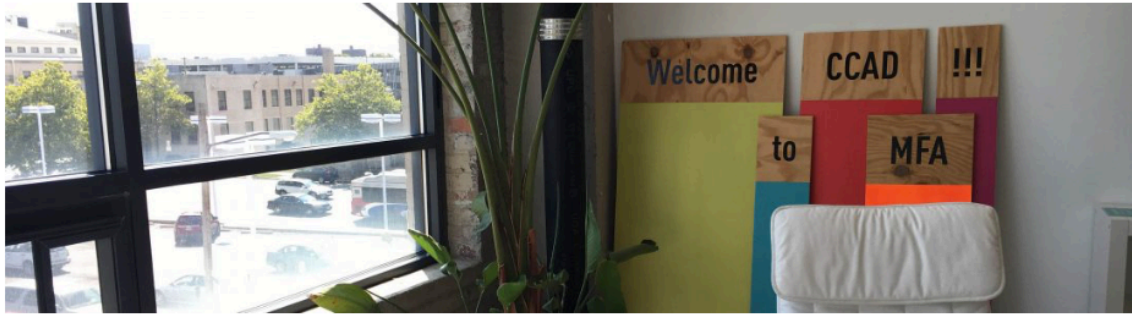


Tales as a First Year Graduate Student (sharynbeodeker.wordpress.com)  
October 11, 2016



## Tales as a First Year Graduate Student

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### A trip to Cincinnati

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"We get caught up in other people's worlds, and you never ask yourself how you became." -Zanele Muholi



This past Saturday I was given the opportunity to attend a variety of lectures held at the 21c Museum Hotel in Cincinnati as part of the programming for the Fotofocus 2016 Biennial. There were a number of photographers and curators speaking specifically about their own works and their practices as artists. This photograph is a work by Nan Goldin— a photographer I have long admired for her raw yet beautiful imagery- and it was one of the first things I saw while walking around 21C. What an amazing opportunity to see such incredible work. I was also able to see some wonderful photographs by George Legrady that in a way came to life right before my eyes. Legrady takes images and overlays them with “generative video animation.” In simpler terms, it looks like a holograph as the image overlays and changes when you walk by it. *Something I felt was, in a way, similar to my newest interest in the exploration of imagery and Augmented Reality!* Talk about being inspired.

In regards to the lectures, I specifically enjoyed hearing from Jackie Nickerson and Susan Meiselas about their experiences as documentary photographers. They both explain their practice and work as a “response to what [they’re] seeing, and as a means to “understand a place or people.” I was extremely happy to hear that *Susan’s newest book edition of her Nicaraguan photo series has an Augmented Reality component!* I was keen to speak to her- even if just for 5 minutes- about her experience with AR and learn more about how she incorporated it into her photography practice. I summoned up enough courage to catch her just before she got on the elevator and was able to get her card!

Before heading over to the Underground Railroad Freedom Center for the opening of Jackie Nickerson, Zanele Muholi, and Robin Rhode’s works, Julian Cox, curator of Photography for the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco and Sheila Pree Bright, a photographer based in Atlanta, held a conversation about “American Civil Rights, Then and Now.” Sheila’s latest work, 1960Now, is composed of a series of images documenting the people and happenings with the current Black Lives Matter movement. Her work is moving, inspiring, and a true document of the divide and sadness that has begun to harbor our nation. Julian Cox spoke more about the history of the Civil Rights movement and the role photography played in the documenting of that time. Both provided a very real perspective that was combined, nothing short of powerful.

The opening at The Underground Railroad Freedom Center was also another great experience. [Zane Muholi's](#) portraits of the LGBTQ community in South Africa, as well as her own personal self portraits were extremely striking. I found myself looking at these people and feeling as if they were truly looking right back at me- and nearly looking into my soul- as ridiculous as that may sound. One image in particular really struck me. The subject of the image had beautiful, light colored eyes, that were just impossible to escape. (below image is not the exact one from the gallery, however it is of the same model/subject). Within each photo there was a realness and a power to the way in which the model was standing. As if they were to say, this is who I am, and I will change for no one. They had a great beauty to them.



[Robin Rhode's](#) work was one I had a harder time understanding/connecting with. For the exhibition, he had 3 videos play for a total of approximately 10 minutes. I particularly found one video interesting (still shown below), because I felt there was the most narrative within this short film. His work aims to discuss and “express the struggle for equality and dignity with poignancy, humor, and poeticism.” I would be interested to see more of his work and spend some more time with it.



The photographs that follow are images I took of other works that I found inspiring for their beauty, craft, technicalities, concept, etc. I was only able to view a small portion of the work that is on display as part of the Fotofocus Biennial (and also some works that are not) but I can only imagine what the rest of the galleries in Cincinnati hold.



