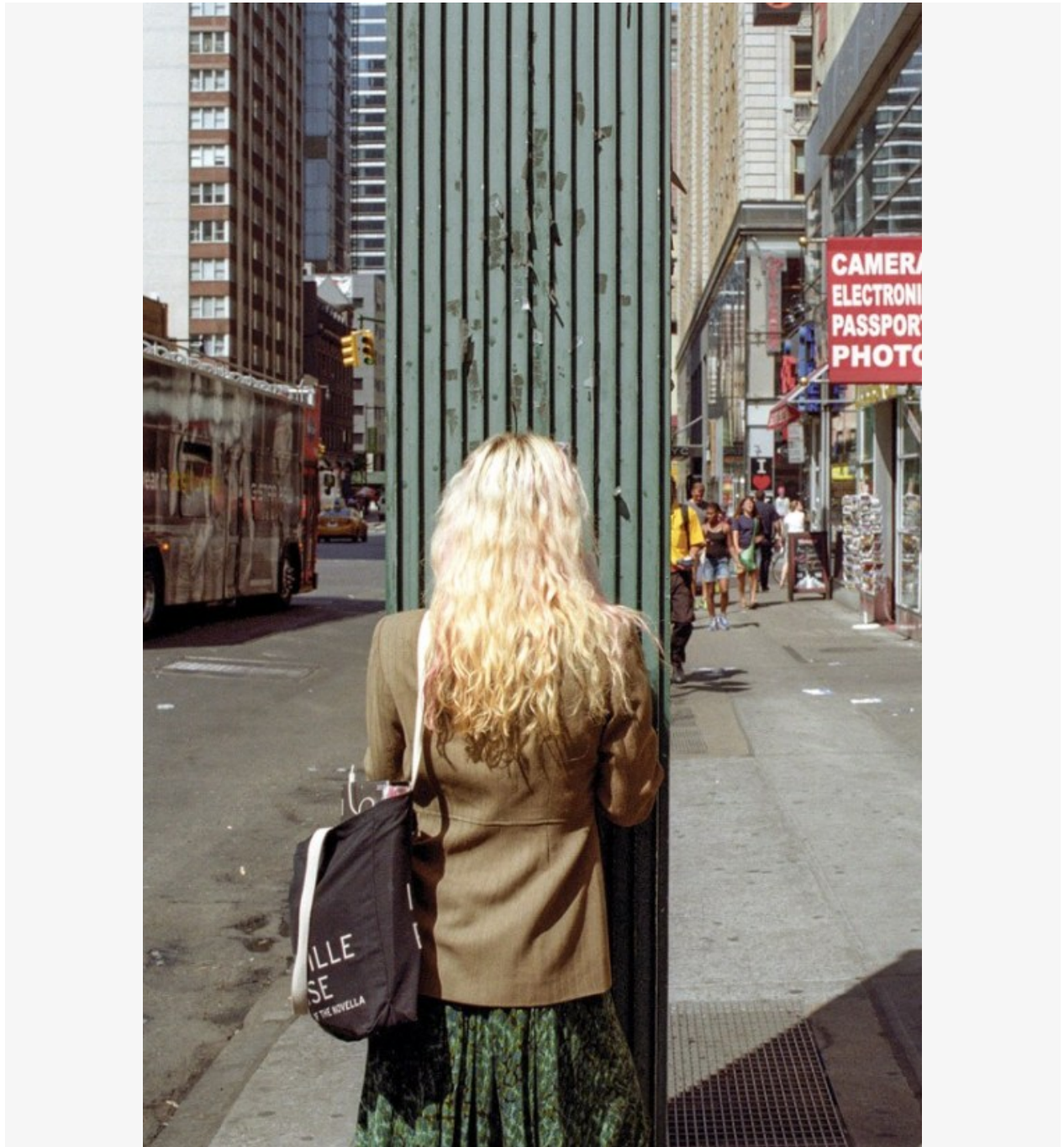




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Finding your way through FotoFocus 2018

by [Movers and Makers](#) • September 25, 2018



Teju Cole, "New York City May 2015," (detail, vignette added) courtesy of the artist. This work is part of the FotoFocus interdisciplinary collaboration "Blind Spot," Oct. 6 at 5 p.m. at Memorial Hall.

– By Cynthia Kukla

FotoFocus Biennial arrived earlier this year with openings for a few fabulous photography-based and photography-inspired exhibitions. This month, things heat up with keynote lectures and special events for the FotoFocus Biennial Program, Oct. 4-7. The complete Biennial includes more than 90 exhibitions and programs in Cincinnati and throughout the region – including Dayton, Rosewood Art Centre, Wright State University and Columbus – and will continue into 2019. For the uninitiated, Cynthia Kukla, Cincinnati artist and emeritus professor of art, offers a crash course on what's what and who's who.

In the beginning

Around 2010, an idea to showcase and promote a large-scale program with more focused exhibitions and discussions of photography was bandied about by James Crump, then curator of photography at the Cincinnati Art Museum, and Thomas Schiff, photographer and longtime photography supporter. The two knew of other large photography festivals that took place around the country, but our region had nothing similar. FotoFocus began to take shape from those early discussions.

And then there was light

Crump and Schiff provided steering, and the idea flourished. FotoFocus as an organization emerged in 2010. The Biennial began in 2012. Crump and Raphaela Platow, director and chief curator of the Contemporary Arts Center, served as co-directors. More than 60 museums, galleries and art centers participated in that first program.

“FotoFocus started as an idea and a lot of passion to highlight lens-based art in the Greater Cincinnati region,” Platow said. “A super-creative group of lens proponents started meeting regularly around a table in a meeting room at the (Cincinnati) Art Museum and started dreaming. The dream then turned into an executable plan, and the FotoFocus Biennial was born.

“I had the great privilege to co-chair its first iteration with James Crump. It has been exhilarating to experience how the event has developed into an international Biennial, working closely with numerous arts institutions in the region to create highly acclaimed exhibitions and programs with artists from around the globe.”

2018 Biennial

This year marks the Biennial's fourth run. More than 80 venues are participating, and for the first time, FotoFocus-curated exhibitions will fill the entire Contemporary Arts Center. Exhibits this year, under artistic director Kevin Moore, will explore the theme “Open Archive,” delving into the concept that photography has been central to our world since the early 20th century. The theme emphasizes that modern art is tied to the understanding that photography has shaped how we see things. Today's artists

might hear, “You draw so well. Your picture looks just like a photograph.” But in the time of Rembrandt they may have heard, “You draw from nature so well.”

In many ways, the camera lens has replaced the eye. As a result, the enormous glut of digitally stored photographs offers up fascinating ways of presenting and archiving images for the present and future.

Your tour starts here

To navigate your way through the full event lineup, start with fotofocusbiennial.org. You’ll find lectures, special events and exhibits. The site offers an event calendar and a wealth of descriptive info and reference images.

A Biennial passport, at \$25, gains entrance for everything FotoFocus. While most exhibitions are free, passport holders can attend the four-day Biennial Program events. They also receive invitations to special activities, including members-only openings at the major museums and a day trip to participating exhibitions in Dayton.

Biennial Program week

Organizers describe this as the core of the Biennial, establishing the exhibition’s theme and showcasing the dialogues that tie the program together. You’ll find keynote lectures, conversations, performances, screenings and receptions with artists and curators, running Oct. 4-7.

fotofocusbiennial.org



Francis Bruguère,
"Couple Embraced," 1929, courtesy of the J. Paul Getty Museum

Top picks

Guest curators and artists from across the globe have all found a place in the Biennial, but Mary Ellen Goeke, FotoFocus executive director, noted that local stories find importance, too.

“In addition to so many internationally recognized artists, I’m excited about the historical photography exhibitions that explore, specifically, Cincinnati’s social history and architectural past through archives,” Goeke said. “We’re pleased to see the depth of history being brought to bear on contemporary life.”

For those overwhelmed by choice, we suggest wading in with what the following exhibits have to offer. Think of this as a wonderful treasure hunt that lasts until February.



Karl Blossfeldt, “Adiantum pedatum. Maidenhair fern,” 1926, courtesy of Karl Blossfeldt Archive

No Two Alike: Karl Blossfeldt, Francis Bruguière, Thomas Ruff

Creatively restages a 1929 exhibition in London, with Blossfeldt – a photographer known for his stark close-up portraits of plants, twigs, seeds and leaves – juxtaposed with the work of French photographer Bruguière – cut-paper abstractions and photographs with multiple exposures. Ruff looked to Blossfeldt's primal modernism for inspiration.

- Curated by Ulrike Meyer Stump. Through Jan. 13, Contemporary Arts Center



Chris Engman, "Refuge," 2016, courtesy of the artist

Prospect and Refuge, Chris Engman

Engman makes dramatic, large collage-installations of landscapes. He works with photographs as objects in physical space, scaling them to fit into the confines of a constructed environment. A mass of photographic images is transferred to the material surfaces of a space – covering the walls, ceiling, floor, and everything between – then photographed from a single vantage point.

- Curated by Carissa Barnard. Through Nov. 18, Weston Art Gallery

Wide Angle: Photography Out of Bounds

Features collage-inspired artists, including Marilyn Minter, best known for her high-glamour, over-the-top paintings and related large-scale photographs.

- Curated by Carissa Barnard, deputy director, FotoFocus. Through Nov. 18, Weston Art Gallery



Mamma Andersson, "The Lonely Ones," 2008, courtesy of Galleri Magnus Karlsson, Stephen Friedman Gallery and David Zwirner

Memory Banks, Mamma Andersson

Solo exhibit of paintings. "I'm always interested in expanding the definition of art photography," said Kevin Moore, FotoFocus artistic director and curator. "Like (painter) Gerhard Richter, Karin Andersson has an extensive photo archive she draws from for her work. She's also interested in photo's references to realism, reality and how we grasp realism plus multiple layers of fantasy through photo-based painting. Plus, I wanted to see something other than photographs, many of them black and white, in the Biennial. Karin's paintings are big, lush and colorful."

- Curated by Kevin Moore, FotoFocus artistic director and curator. Oct. 5- Feb. 10, Contemporary Arts Center. Opening reception: Friday, Oct. 5, 7-9 p.m.

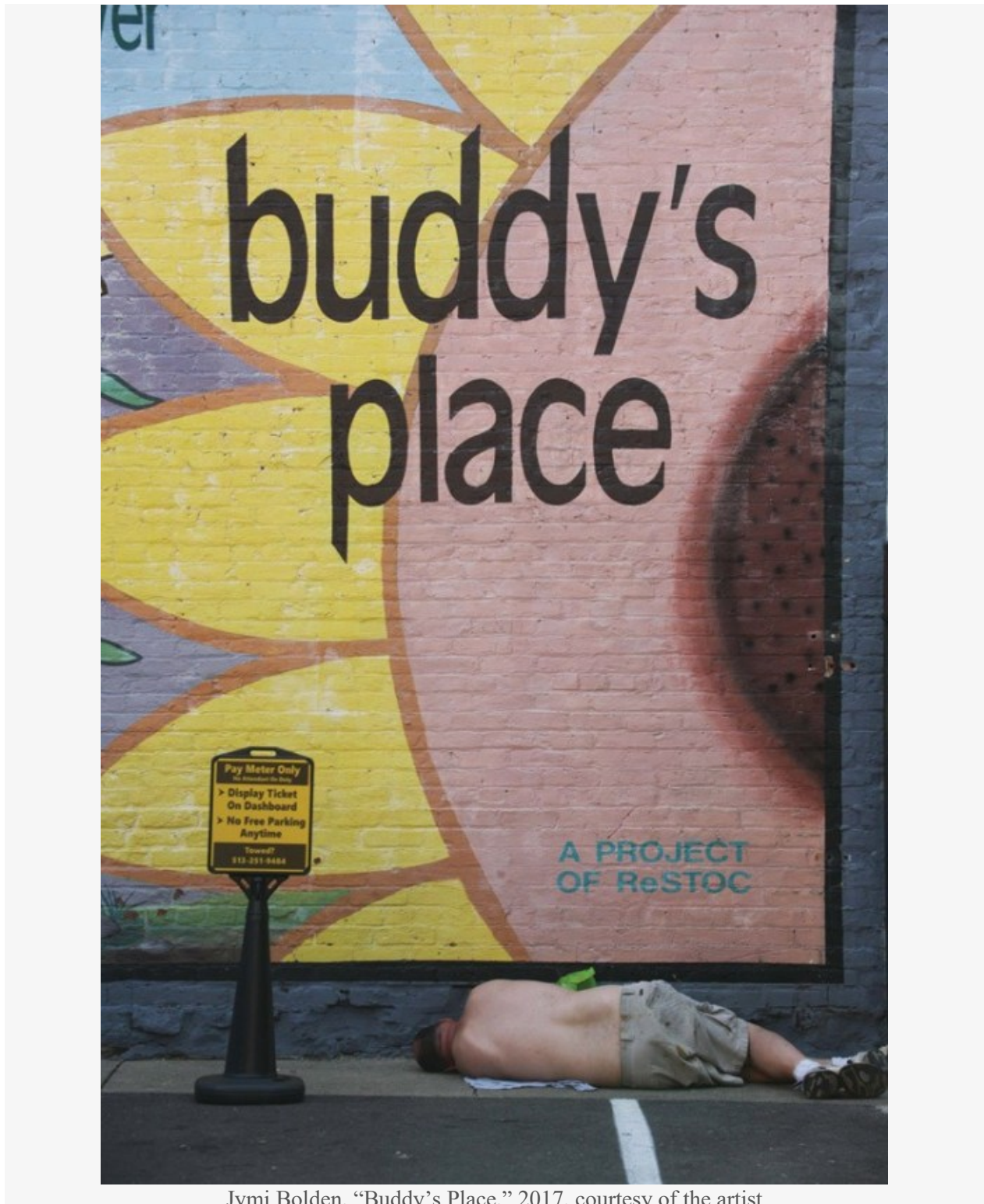


Eugène Atget, "Rue Asselin," 1921, courtesy of the Philadelphia Museum of Art
Paris to New York: Photographs by Eugène Atget and Berenice Abbott

Showcases two pioneers of street photography. According to Ann Glasscock, the Taft's assistant curator, this is the first museum exhibition "to explore the important artistic relationship between Eugène Atget and Berenice Abbott, who captured historic Paris and New York City's dynamic 1930s skyline in riveting views." Abbott

was Surrealist photographer Man Ray's assistant in Paris. She asked to sit for a portrait with Atget and ended up as the sole steward of his photography archive, printing the majority of his works available today and saving his work from obscurity.

- Curated by Kevin Moore, FotoFocus artistic director and curator. Oct. 4-Jan. 20, Taft Museum of Art. Opening reception: Thursday, Oct. 4, 5-7 p.m., followed by keynote lecture



Jymi Bolden, "Buddy's Place," 2017, courtesy of the artist

Down Here on the Ground

Group show of diverse street photography highlighting everyday life in our community.

- Through Nov. 9, Art Beyond Boundaries, Over-the-Rhine

Around the Corner

Artists are working from original source photographs to create murals, which are displayed next to the artist's interpretations. Walking tours of the murals are available at noon Oct. 12, 19 and 26.

- Through Oct. 31, Visionaries + Voices, Northside



Mickalene Thomas, "La leçon d'amour," 2008, courtesy of the artist

Other good bets

- The Cincinnati Art Museum features ***"Life: Gillian Wearing"*** from the Schiele Prize winner and British Turner Prize winner, Oct. 5-Dec. 30.
- Composer and pianist Vijay Iyer and Nigerian-American writer and photographer Teju Cole perform the powerful interdisciplinary

collaboration ***“Blind Spot,”*** Oct. 6 at 5 p.m. at Memorial Hall. Cole speaks at the Mercantile Library on Oct. 7 at 11 a.m.

- The Dayton Art Institute exhibition season concludes with ***“Muse: Mickalene Thomas Photographs”*** and its companion exhibition ***“tête-à-tête,”*** Oct. 20-Jan. 13.

Featured local talent

Flyover Country

Juried exhibition of works by local artists illuminating America’s interior regions. Sept. 29-Oct. 27, Xavier University Art Gallery, A.B. Cohen Center

Melvin Grier: Clothes Encounter

Seldom seen images from Cincinnati’s fashion scene in the ’80s and ’90s by former Cincinnati Post photojournalist. Through Nov. 4, Behringer-Crawford Museum

Finding Kenyon Barr

Photographs of Cincinnati’s lower West End circa 1959, before demolition. Curated by Anne Delano Steinert. Through Oct. 23, DAAP Galleries: Meyers Gallery, University of Cincinnati

Michael Wilson: They Knew Not My Name, and I Knew Not Their Faces

Black-and-white portrait series of people from Cincinnati neighborhoods. Through Dec. 31, Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County, downtown

Social Medium

Group show featuring social practice photography, with the aim to create community and enact social change. Through Nov. 10, Wave Pool, Camp Washington

fotofocusbiennial.org