



The Photogram

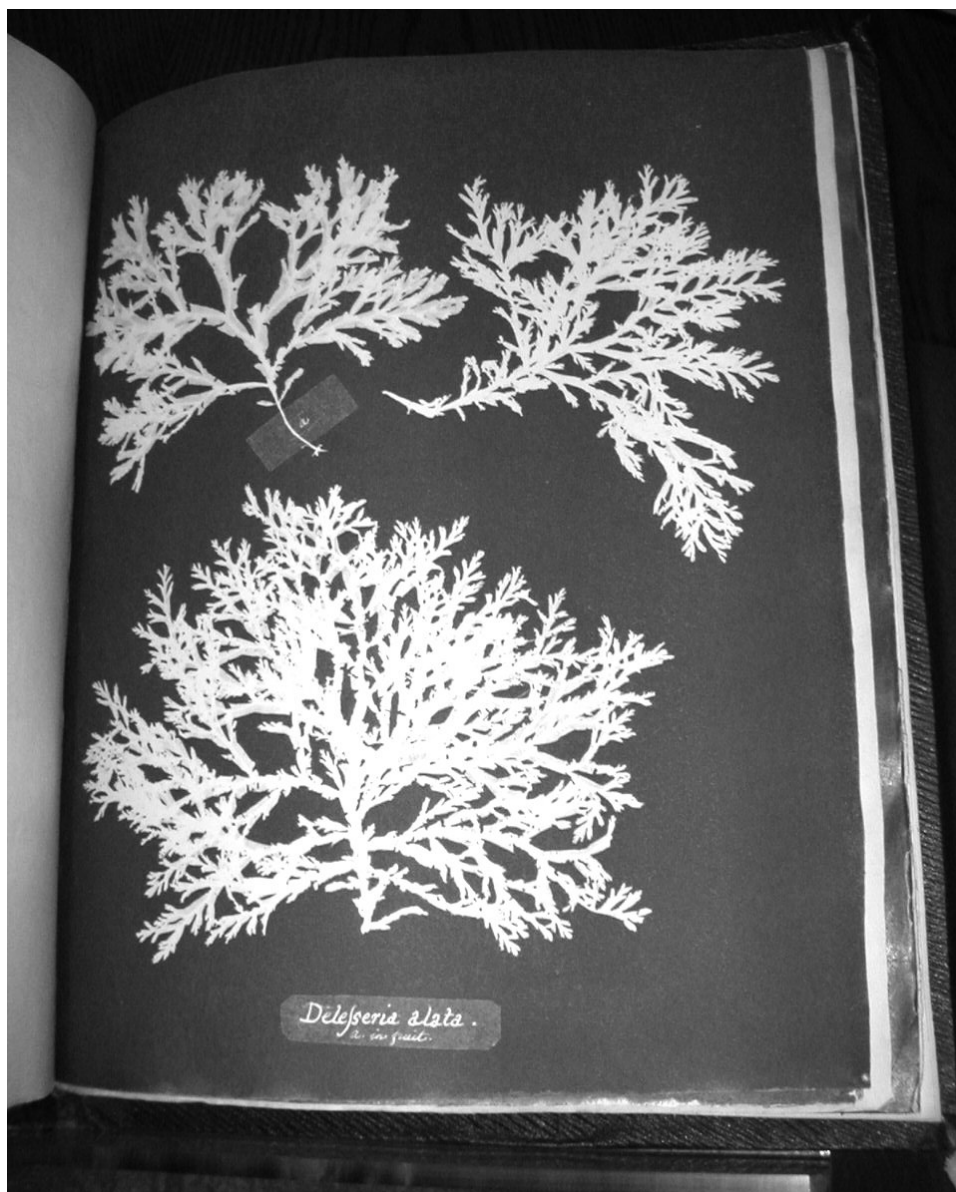
Newsletter of the Michigan Photographic Historical Society

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Anna Atkins, *Delesseria Alata in Fruit*, cyanotype from *Photographs of British Algae: Cyanotype Impressions*, 1843. Collection of the Detroit Institute of Arts. Photograph by Judith Harrison Kalter, 2006.

THE PHOTOGRAM is the official bulletin of the Michigan Photographic Historical Society (MiPHS). It is published five times a year. The contents are copyrighted the year of publication.

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THE PHOTOGRAM welcomes contributions to its pages from both MiPHS members and non-members. To submit an article, review, occasional photo ad (MiPHS members only) or informational item for publication, write to:

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Please include your e-mail address with all correspondence. Authors and advertisers are responsible for the accuracy of their contributions to *The Photogram*. The views of the authors do not necessarily reflect those of the Society.

SUBMISSION DEADLINES:

June 1 (July-Summer issue)
August 1 (September-October issue)
October 1 (November-December issue)
January 1 (February-March issue)
March 1 (April-May issue)

The MICHIGAN PHOTOGRAPHIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY is an organization dedicated to advancing an understanding and appreciation of the history of photography through membership meetings, special events and publications, and through shared endeavors with other organizations and the general public. The MiPHS is a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation chartered by the State of Michigan.

The MiPHS welcomes new members. Dues are \$25 per year (January 1- December 31), \$30 outside the USA, \$15 for students with valid ID. For information and application forms, call 248.549.6026, visit us online at www.miphs.org or write to:

MiPHS
P.O. Box 2278
Birmingham, MI 48012-2278

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ANNUAL MiPHS PHOTOGRAPHICA SHOW&SALE

Novi Community Center, 45175 W. Ten Mile Road (½ mile west of Novi Road), Novi, MI, Sunday, **OCTOBER 26**, 10:00AM-4:00PM. MiPHS members who have their proposals accepted for educational image, camera or ephemera displays will receive two complimentary tickets to the annual dinner and lecture in 2009. For information about submitting a proposal, call Cindy Motzenbecker at 248.549.6026. A table reservation form is included in this issue of *The Photogram* and is available online at www.miphs.org. Application deadline is October 20.

A MiPHS MEMBERS' PORTFOLIO ISSUE 2008

With the success of *The Photogram's* September-October 2007 issue in which MiPHS members shared items from their collections, we have decided to create a second members' portfolio for this coming September-October 2008 issue. This can not be done without your assistance. So help make this a special issue by submitting a photograph and a short description (limit 100 words) of a favorite photographic item (camera, photo, ephemera) from your personal collection. Send a photograph or jpeg along with your description to *The Photogram* Editor, Jan Schimmelman. E-mail: schimmel@oakland.edu. Mailing address: The Department of Art and Art History, Oakland University, Rochester, MI 48309-4401. Please let the Editor know a.s.a.p. if you plan to submit an item. **DEADLINE— AUGUST 1**

NEWSWORTHY

Opening reception on September 12, 6:00-9:00PM, for "Vintage Argus: Contemporary Images," an exhibit in memory of George T. O'Neal, by members of the Ann Arbor Area Crappy Camera Club, co-sponsored by MiPHS. Argus Building, 535 W. William Street, Ann Arbor. Exhibit runs until October 13. For information, call Mark O'Brien at 734.971.6033. **Jan Schimmelman**, Editor of *The Photogram*, received the 2008 Marian P. Wilson Award for scholarship and writing for her book, *The Tintype in America, 1856-1880*, from the College of Arts and Sciences at Oakland University, Rochester, MI.

Rob Niedermann's article "Kinnear Cameras Large Format in a Small Size," published in *The Photogram* 34, no. 2 (September-October 2006), was reprinted in the May 2008 issue of *Photographica World*.

Announcing a new publication: *A Biographical Index of Daguerreotypists in Canada, 1839-1871*, by Graham Garrett. For information, a downloadable sample, and a link to order the CD-ROM, visit the Website: www.sephoto.com/Site/News.html.

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Hello MiPHS Members—We have a lot of exciting articles to look forward to this year in the 2008-2009 volume of *The Photogram*. The September issue will focus on MiPHS members' collections. In November we look forward to Jim Jensen's article on "The Demise of the Professional Photographer, 1880-1903." In February there will be two articles: David Rubello's essay on Jack Albin, an early Hollywood paparazzo, and Eaton Lothrop's article, "Thinning Down a Camera Collection." We end this volume in April with Gregory Popovitch's look at modern daguerreotypy and Ralph London's article on the "Beau Brownie Guide for Collectors." This will be the first *Photogram* printed in color! It is going to be a great "reading" year for all of us.

—Best regards, Jan Schimmelman



Figure 1 Left: *Photographs of British Algae: Cyanotype Impressions*, Anna Atkins, 1843. Collection of the Detroit Institute of Arts. Right: Larry Schaaf, *Sun Gardens: Victorian Photograms by Anna Atkins*, 1985. Photograph by Judith Harrison Kalter, 2006.

THE CYANOTYPE PROCESS: ITS EARLY SIGNIFICANCE AND MODERN USAGE

“she had reason to believe that he practiced animal magnetism, and, if such things were in fashion nowadays, should be apt to suspect him of studying the Black Art up there in his lonesome chamber.” Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The House of the Seven Gables*, 1851

By Judith Harrison Kalter

In April 1842, while doing experiments on a process for which he would eventually coin the term photography (writing with light), Sir John Frederick Herschel (1792-1871) discovered that the effect of sunlight on potassium ferricyanide was the formation of Prussian blue,¹ familiar to most of us as the blueprints used by builders and architects. In communications with his friend and fellow scientist, William Henry Fox Talbot (1800-1877) who published *The Pencil of Nature* in 1844, Herschel shared his attempts to find different ways of achieving the lasting qualities of a positive image in the intense blue color. The cyanotype process, as Herschel named it, referred to the many ways he achieved the Prussian blue color.² Prior to the proliferation of digital photography, serious photographers were, like Hawthorne’s nineteenth-century photographer Mr. Holgrave described above, confined to spending large blocks of time in darkened rooms. The cyanotype process allowed practitioners to do much of their creative work out of doors in daylight as cyanotype chemistry is sensitive primarily to ultraviolet light.

Sir John Herschel shared the results of his experiments with friend and neighbor Anna Children Atkins (1799-1871), who in 1843 published *Photographs of British Algae: Cyanotype Impressions*. She designed, constructed and developed each separate page at her home in Halstead Place, Kent. This achievement made her the first person to use photographic illustrations in a book. (See *Photogram* cover)

Larry Schaaf lists thirteen known copies of Anna Atkins’ book in his publication *Sun Gardens Victorian*

Photograms by Anna Atkins.³ A fine and complete copy of her book is owned by the Detroit Institute of Arts. It is possible to view it by making an appointment with Hope Saska in the Department of Prints, Drawings and Photographs. Seeing the actual book is a thrilling experience. However, scheduling a time for an appointment could prove to be a wait. The staff has a full calendar and is often occupied with current exhibitions.

After making an appointment to view the book, I arrived at the Detroit

Institute of Arts and was given a guest pass, then escorted to the study room and met by Michigan Photographic Historical Society Advisory Board Member Nancy Barr, who is Associate Curator of the DIA’s Department of Prints, Drawings and Photographs. She had arranged for *Photographs of British Algae: Cyanotype Impressions* to be set out on a massive oak library table. Next to the book lay an acid-free bookmark and white cotton gloves for turning the pages. (Figure 1)

It is one experience to view the

pictures of Anna Atkins' work in modern books or on the Internet, and quite a different experience to see the original work and feel the weight of each Prussian blue page as you turn it over. The corners of each $10\frac{3}{8} \times 8\frac{1}{8}$ inch page had tiny pinholes. Perhaps pins were used to keep the paper flat while drying. Only the front of each page held an image, and the watermark, which could cover most of the page, was clearly apparent on the reverse side: "J WHATMAN TURKEY MILL 1843." The watermark's size and prominence seemed to witness the importance of the production of a fine paper at that time. This was the same paper used by W. H. Fox Talbot.⁵

The contents of the known copies of this work vary. The copy at the DIA is made up of an introduction and a table of contents, and then is divided into six parts with a total of sixty-eight illustrations. Each part is preceded by a page which lists the individual illustrations. One of the interns believed it was rebound in the 1940s with its green cloth cover. There is a small piece of rough-edged paper attached to the first page inscribed: "From Mrs. Atkins — With Mr. Children's kind regards." Perhaps this paper was from the original wrapping that Mrs. Atkins was known to use to present copies of her book. The original owner's name, "Sir Thomas Phillips Middle Hill coll," is inscribed in black ink on the inside cover. On the third page she dedicated the book: "To my dearest Father this attempt is affectionately inscribed."

One area that presented difficulties for me was reading her handwritten introduction. It was evident that she had first written it out on a separate sheet of paper that could be used multiple times in the production process (the edges of paper are evident on the final copy on the larger page). Here she refers to her work as "Photographs," and explains that it was the difficulty of accurately drawing the tiny detail of the algae that lead her to make use "of Sir John Herschel's



Figure 2. Judith Kalter, *Garden Hostas*, 2005, cyanotype.

beautiful procefs of Cyanotype." Her penmanship is small and precise, but the use of "f" for "s" (written in the manner of the eighteenth century) often confounded me in such words as "glafs" for glass or "procefs" for process. However, the satisfaction of finally deciphering her message was exciting. The cyanotype process has provided a very clear picture of the samples Mrs. Atkins used. I found that the lower the degree of opacity in the sample the more detail and depth are evident, giving such items as feathers a very photographic look as compared to the thicker samples of some ferns; just as Mrs. Atkins had noted in her introduction.

I had also requested to see the museum's 1869 photograph of Sir John Frederick Herschel by Julia Margaret Cameron. It was on display behind the library table on the narrow shelf of a crowded bookcase that took up an entire wall. Having his image nearby, peering over my shoulder, was the perfect companion to this antiquarian experience.

Printing photographs using the cyanotype process has gone in and out of fashion since its inception in 1842. Atkins used the process to make photograms by putting her ephemeral seaweed specimens directly onto the coated paper and allowing the shadows they cast when placed in sunlight to form the image.⁴ By using basically the same process, artists today can create photographs using negatives generated from digital images.⁶ (Figure 2, also see Appendix)

The simplicity of the cyanotype process made it convenient for use by many, especially after the advent of the dry plate and then gelatin emulsion film. Louis Comfort Tiffany used cyanotype flower studies in his work with leaded glass.⁷ In addition to his memorable large-scale photographs of the American West, William Henry Jackson did a romantic series of portraits for the Detroit Publishing Company using the process to great effect in the early 1900s, embellishing the images with subtle gold and brown toning.⁸

Figure 3 (right). Photograph on pillow. Collection of Judith Kalter.

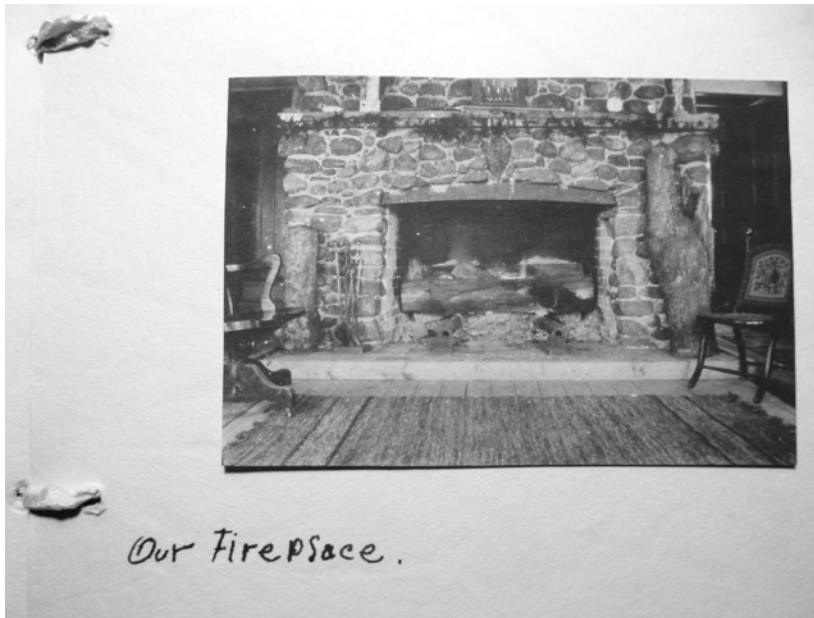


Figure 4 (left). Unknown photographer, Handmade album, ca.1900. Collection of Judith Kalter. Note the group photograph centered on the mantelpiece.

Books on the history of photography are filled with the works of dedicated professionals and amateurs, mostly men, during the nineteenth century. However, many women took up photography using the cyanotype process. Camera clubs were formed at women's colleges, such as Vassar on the Hudson River in New York.⁹ Today these photographs can still be found as postcards, some sent with enigmatic messages and post-marked between 1890-1910. Women could purchase pre-sensitized fabric, and then using glass or celluloid film negatives

could print out images on cloth that could be sewn into quilts or pillows for decorating their homes. (Figures 3)

Women photographers also enjoyed making small photo albums with the Prussian blue images. These intimate little memory books often recorded a family adventure or documented the interiors and exteriors of their homes, their neighborhoods, as well as family and friends. (Figure 4) Some are found on ivory paper and often tied at their spines with charming blue satin ribbons.

There is a difference of opinion regarding the proper storage and safest lighting conditions for the display of cyanotype photographs. At the Harry Ransom Center in Austin, Texas, I recently saw an Anna Atkins photogram exhibited behind a deep green velvet curtain that needed to be lifted to reveal the image, but would safely keep it in the dark while not being viewed. On the other hand Terry King writes, "when properly exposed and developed, they are as 'tough as old boots.'" ¹⁰

Using the cyanotype process to teach young people gives them a clear understanding of the role of light and its variable characteristics in photography. They are amazed when their collages of found objects arranged on the coated papers begin to form recognizable shapes in the sunshine and remain after processing in running water. With so many ways to engage with the cyanotype process—reading about its history, finding and collecting photographs, or even making your own cyanotype images—this process is definitely one that the photography enthusiast can experience and enjoy. 📷

FOOTNOTES

1. Mike Ware, *Cyanotype: The History, Science and Art of Photographic Printing in Prussian Blue* (London: Science Museum and National Museum of Photograph, Film & Television, 1999), 24.
2. Ibid., 29. During this period Herschel also coined such terms as “positive” and “negative” to describe photographic images.
3. Larry J. Schaaf, *Sun Gardens, Victorian Photographs by Anna Atkins* (New York: Aperture, 1985), 41-45.
4. Ibid., 33.
5. Larry Schaaf, *The Photographic Art of William Henry Fox Talbot* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000), 22.
6. Jill Enfield, *Photo-Imaging: A Complete Guide to Alternative Processes* (New York: Amphoto Books, 2002), 68-69.
7. *Floral Decoration*, cyanotype, ca. 1890. *Louis Comfort Tiffany Artist for the Ages*, exhibition catalog (London: Scala, 2005).
8. William Henry Jackson, Detroit Publishing Company Photograph Collection, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C.
9. For an article on the use of the cyanotype at women’s colleges, see Sabine Ocker, “The Role of the Cyanotype in Women’s Colleges, 1890-1910,” *The Photogram* 31, no. 2 (September-October 2003): 7-9.
10. Terry King, PhotoHistory@yahoogroups.com, February 3, 2008.

Appendix: Notes on Making a Cyanotype Print from a Digital Photograph

By Judith Harrison Kalter

Special Projects in Photography, Oakland County Community College, Summer Term 2004

1. Select the digital photograph and open with Photoshop.
2. Convert to Black and White: IMAGE>MODE>GRAYSCALE
3. Decide on layout, add correction or changes
4. Size to fit printing frame and resolution. I used 200 dpi
5. Add curves: IMAGE>ADJUSTMENTS>CURVES>(1) or correct negative to balance tonal scale of black and white
6. Convert to a negative: IMAGE>ADJUSTMENTS>INVERT
7. Convert from GRAYSCALE back to RGB
8. Add RUBEUS: click on FOREGROUND COLOR SQUARE on the toolbar opening window: COLOR PICKER in the right corner change: C=0%, Y=75%, K=65% giving an amber color in FOREGROUND SQUARE
9. Change the photo from B&W to amber: EDIT>FILL When FILL window opens change Use: Foreground Color, Mode, Color, Opacity: 100%, click OK
10. Print out Amber colored negative on 3M TRANSPARENCY FILM FOR INKJET PRINTERS
11. Trim acetate to fit CONTACT PRINTING FRAME and place on glass
12. Place prepared paper coated side against negative in frame and close
13. Take CONTACT PRINTING FRAME out of doors and expose 5-15 (this will depend on several variables; time, season, weather)
14. Develop by washing in running water
15. Dry

RESOURCESBostwick and Sullivan, <http://www.bostick-sullivan.com>Burkholder, Dan. *Making Digital Negatives for Contact Printing*. Carrollton, TX: Bladed Iris Press, 1999.Enfield, Jill. *Photo-Imaging: A Complete Guide to Alternative Processes*. New York: Amphoto Books, 2002.James, Christopher. *The Book of Alternative Processes*, Albany, NY: Thomson Delmar Learning, 2002.**SOURCES FOR SUPPLIES***Blue Sunprints* sensitized cottons, silks and watercolor paper for sunprinting using the cyanotype process, <http://www.bluesunprints.com>Bostwick and Sullivan, <http://www.bostick-sullivan.com>Photographers Formulary Inc., <http://www.photoformulary.com>

Judith Harrison Kalter studied photography as an undergraduate at Wayne State University and later with MiPHS members Doug Aikenhead and Bill Rauhauser at what was then the Detroit Society of Arts and Crafts. To share her love of this subject, Judith teaches classes to elementary and middle school students in Detroit and Birmingham, MI. Several years ago she began to focus on the history of nineteenth-century processes and has catalogued photographs, provided displays and given workshops at the Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society’s Wisner House Museum in Pontiac, MI. Judith participated in the MiPHS Photographica Show and Sale in 2006 with an educational demonstration and display of cyanotypes, and she has been invited to present a paper on her photographic research along Michigan’s Grand River Avenue for the Society for Commercial Archaeology’s conference, September 11-13, 2008 in Albuquerque, NM. Judith lives in West Bloomfield, MI.



NATIONAL STEREOSCOPIC ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONVENTION

From Tuesday, July 9 to Monday, July 14, the National Stereoscopic Association will be holding their annual conference in Grand Rapids, MI. They have an active program with “room hopping” throughout the week. The conference will be held at the Amway Grand Hotel, and the events include: workshops where one can learn how to create stereo images, phantograms, stereo cards, amaglyphs, etc.; vintage and modern stereoview exhibitions; stereo theatre; banquet; auction; special excursions; and trade show (Saturday & Sunday). For information and a registration form, visit their website at <http://2008.nsa3d.org>.

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Hello Members! Hope everything is all right in your world.

Well, our fall Photographica Show & Sale is on deck. Some folks have volunteered and we have room for more. The Keithan-Rubellos are tentatively planning a book signing of Mary Keithan’s new photo book: *Michigan’s One Room School Houses*. For those of you who aren’t familiar with Mary’s photography, she works with a field camera and has published a book on Michigan barns. We also tentatively have Bill Schwab lined up to do another platinum demonstration. If anyone would like to put up an educational display and sit with it at the show, there’s a pair of 2009 dinner meeting tickets waiting for your efforts. (Chris Schnberger is the planned speaker.) If you’d like some extra Photographica flyers please feel free to contact me at motz48073@yahoo.com.

While we’re on the subject of “show & tell,” Jan Schimmelman, our *Photogram* editor, is anxiously waiting for your contribution to the September issue of *The Photogram*, which will be a members’ favorite. So if you’d like to see an item of yours represented there, send her a scan or photo with a sentence or two about why you want to share it.

The Detroit Institute of Arts will be opening the refurbished Albert and Peggy de Salle Gallery of Photography with the exhibition “Kenro Izu: Sacred Places” on July 9th. So that’s another reason to go to the DIA and see how it has changed for the better. (The cafeteria is wonderful, too!) There’s another exhibition of photographic interest at the Michigan Historical Museum in Lansing, “The Picture Man: Lansing through the Lens of R. C. Leavenworth,” which runs through September 30th. Leavenworth was a voracious professional photographer persuaded by the businessmen of Lansing to move there from Boyne City. His negatives have been donated to or purchased by the State of Michigan and are being scanned to save them. The Leavenworth exhibition is wonderful, and copies of the photos on display are available for a reasonable price which will go toward the scanning project.

So dodge the car-driving, negative-IQ, phone-talkers and I’ll see you at the Photographica Show & Sale in October!

— Thanks! *Cindy MotZ*

DETROIT INSTITUTE OF ARTS

KENRO IZU: SACRED PLACES

This exhibition documents endangered and never-before-photographed spiritual sites around the world, and marks the opening of the refurbished Albert and Peggy de Salle Gallery of Photography.

July 9-October 12

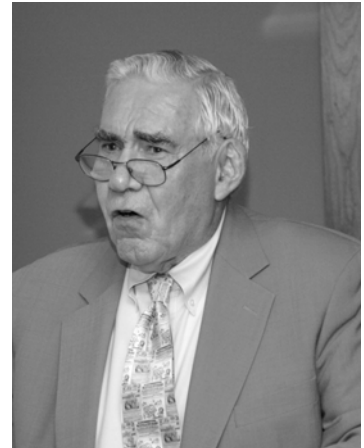
**Hours: Weds-Thurs 10-5,
Fri 10-10, Sat-Sun 10-6**

Free with museum admission.

Kenro Izu uses a custom-made 300-pound large-format camera, with 14 × 20-inch negatives, printed onto watercolor paper using the platinum printing process. www.dia.org

2008 ANNUAL DINNER AND LECTURE

Photos by Elayne Gross



TOP: Dietmar Haenchen, George Lavoie, Howard Bond and Kristen Barry; Tom Halsted and David Walle; Matthew Isenburg (speaker)
BOTTOM: Cindy Motzenbecker and Elayne Gross; Robert and Megan Farrell; Gregory and Bernadette Zemenick

PHOTO-HISTORY CALENDAR

July 9-14: National Stereoscopic Association Convention (Trade Fair – July 12-13), Grand Rapids, MI, www.stereoview.org
August 2: Mason Postcard & Paper Show, Cobblestone Events Center, Mason, MI, postcardwally@comcast.net
September 7: Columbus Postcard, Paper & Book Show, Columbus, OH, www.columbusproductions.com
September 7: Cleveland Camera Collectors Show, Cleveland-Richfield Quality Inn, Richfield, OH, www.photorama.com
September 7: London Photographic Fair, Bonnington Hotel, London, www.photofair.co.uk
September 12: **MiPHS** (co-sponsor) Opening reception for “Vintage Argus: Contemporary Images,” Argus Building, 535 W. William St., Ann Arbor, 6:00-9:00PM. Exhibition: September 12-October 13.
September 27-28: Photographica 70, PHSNE, Americal Center, Wakefield, MA, www.phsne.org
October 19: All Image Show, Hilton Garden Inn, Emeryville, CA www.mppmpresents.com
October 26: **MiPHS** – Annual Photographica Show & Sale, Novi Community Center, 45175 W. Ten Mile Road (½ mile west of Novi Road), Novi, MI, 10:00AM-4:00PM.
November 6-9: Daguerreian Society Annual Symposium (Trade Fair – November 8), Washington, DC, www.daguerre.org
November 9: London Photographic Fair, Bonnington Hotel, London, www.photofair.co.uk
November 13-16: Paris Photo 2008, Carrousel du Louvre, Paris, France, www.parisphoto.fr