

“Outsourced” and “Strangers in a Strange Land,” First Globalism Gallery talks – Wednesday, Oct. 17, 2012

CHRIS ATKINS, Outsourced, Gallery 262:

CA: This is the show I worked on over the past couple months. Curators were asked for ideas how to reinstall the second floor galleries based on themes within the broad idea of globalization, using works from the museum’s collection. So I took that idea of outsourcing. We’ve heard a lot about outsourcing lately - in Bain Capital. What are our conceptions of outsourcing?

Morrie – Since my wife manages many out-sourcers, they use call centers in other countries to answer call s and emails coming from the U.S. - by millions and millions

Bob – I think of it as a mixed blessing. Jobs for people outside the country but lack of jobs here.

CA - So it’s good and bad, pro and con. It gets spun as at the expense of domestic markets. It helps the economy that doesn’t have jobs. So I took this idea of outsourcing with those opposing ideas. I tried not to illustrate the idea, but to stretch it to take out of the realm of pure economics and politics. And see how the concept of outsourcing can be adjusted a little bit to art history and then within our history.

Examples that are hundreds of years old from the workshop of Tintoretto to Thomas Kindkade to the polo jacket from this year’s Olympics to a video that talks about the outsourcing of that labor and how that runs a national appeal, especially those who represent the country as athlete.

You may not see a iPod or an Apple call center. But there are other ways to adjust this term. As see in label copy and see how it finds its way into art

Q. Boyd – To me there’s a kind of cultural imperialism to globalism. It’s Western art. Not Chinese art. I see art culture expanding over indigenous cultures/

CA – That idea could be a show in itself – cultural imperialism, reverse imperialism or contemporary imperialism. Good place to start: Priscilla Briggs is a local artist and as someone who works with Minnesota Artist Exhibition Program, it’s really important for me to engage with this kind of local artist. Priscilla went to China a couple years ago with a McKnight grant. She came across these apartment blocks filled with artists, who fill foreign demands from Western patrons.

The works are paid by square inch. They’re valued more by how skillful artists and in some cases, by how quickly can be shipped out.

On the right side, Patricia Briggs documents the home/studios of these artists. This shows how the work is inserted in their lives. This is how many of them work rRight next to their tea and coffee.

This is based on photo that Priscilla took on this same trip. I asked her, “It’s a beautiful photo. I can’t imagine what it would be like at the same size.” She said, “No it’s the painting.’ She took photo – same size and dimensions and churned it through painting process. She gave to painter. He made a copy - painted, stretched and sent it back to her. It was cheaper for her to do that than to print the color photograph here.

This is a painting of her photograph. The person in this photo is not the actual painter. She took a photo of the painter, which you see here. This is his home & studio and he's painting these dogs. It shows all the repetition - **like factory painting**. She took the photo. The photo was then sent back to one of these painting studios. This is what came back. This is an original painting. But it's done by one of these contract painters. It was important for her to have the photo be the artwork, but to have the photograph go through this factory process

The cost was less than having the photo printed that size. Cost of her to have the photo reproduced by painter and stretched and sent back, was cheaper than to have the print that size. I don't know how much. It's not a lot - probably under \$500. **It's one result of globalization.**

The irony – paying people very little for more output because it's cheaper. None of the money seems to be going to these people when you see the conditions they live under. She really got to know these folks and got some pretty good access to their homes. There are photos that show multiples of other paintings drying on racks – like laundry.

These paintings are often **not signed**. There's no way to tell who to attribute paintings to because often they are copying other people's work. They often are making copies of other painters' work. In this case, Priscilla didn't know the painter. She sent her photograph to one of these services and had very little contact with the painter after that. She received the painting several months later. There was news coverage on CNN about artists who found their work reproduced unbeknownst to them.

These would be made to order- bigger or smaller – in Xiamen [Chi Men]. Goggle 'paint to order in China.' She met these people surreptitiously through people who knew a little bit about factory painting, but were concerned what would happen if people knew this was going on.

Q. Hung in motels – all those reproductions. Label copy – was oil painted on top of photograph?

CA - No. **It's an oil painting of a photograph**. You can see how **flimsy** it is. Not high quality canvas or paint or canvas. It's not even stretched very well. It's actually pretty **fragile**.

"Painter #5 (Huang Wenlong)," 2011, Priscilla Briggs, American (B. 1966), oil paint over digital print on Canvas, # L2012.153.1



Gallery Label: *"I am interested in how economic systems shape identity, culture and landscape. Communist China's recent industrial revolution, spurred on by its Capitalist experiments and cheap labor,*

has created densely focused areas where the manufacturing of one product defines entire communities, towns, or regions. These works are an investigation of such a community in Xiamen where whole apartment complexes are inhabited by low-paid production oil painters. The painters share live/work spaces with other painters and their families. They fill orders for oil paintings that end up in furniture show-rooms, hotels and tourist art galleries around the world. Many orders ask the artist to make up to a hundred copies of the same image. The painters charge by the square foot and by skill level.

I photographed the painters in their live/work spaces and I commissioned editions of paintings of my portraits for close to the same cost as having inkjet prints made in the U.S. My photographs were digitally printed on canvas and then painted over. The portraits are accompanied by still life images of the painters' live/work spaces. There many-layered works address issues of art and labor, exploring notions of the "original" work of art and its value in a world of global out-sourcing."

- **Priscillia Briggs, artist**

Chris Atkins: This in many ways is one of my favorites – one of most fun to acquire. Borrowed from a local Collector in Minnetonka. Are you familiar with Thomas Kinkade. I see eyes rolling. [laughter]

It's a gesture. Kinkade has had some attention from larger museums to show all this work - paintings, sculptures, furniture and everything else. He has a very elaborate pyramid arrangement for how his work is produced and how it is valued. Something he's made is at the top of that [price pyramid]. Down to reproductions that have very little contact with Kinkade or his master highlighters, that's what they're called.

We met with someone who had a some of those lesser versions. We said, "No I think we can do better." Those didn't emphasize that kind of reproduction – the touching by humans, including master highlighters or re-touchers to one. Then the idea of one coming from Thomas Kinkade himself.

So we finally found this one – the "Guardian Castle." Went to the collector's home. They had two of these paintings. This is the best one. They also sculptures where the architectural figurines of this piece were right next to it. For us it was good to see [the process]: - This is where the painting began, which was already very fantastical. And he had objects pulled out of it in the form of these sculptures.

His work is always about trails or pathways trail – something that leads you in. Get close. You– see some of this texture, which is in line with the "master of light" attached to his business. For us this felt like really good example of proximity of the artist to the art.

Kinkade started with this piece. Through a certain kind of business mode, he's able to outsource these painters to add value to the work. In conversation, these painters also know quite a bit about his life. It's about making a connection to Kinkade –the story about his family, wife, his children>

This is a good example of his work, but also a good example of accessibility to people. For someone who has contentious relationships to fine art, the economy, production. It was an original Kinkade that this was based on. So it's a reproduction of a Kinkade – a hand-done painting done by one of his master highlighters.

This is similar to the workshop idea of workshop of Tintoretto. That means it was painted by someone in the workshop of the artist. It wasn't by a follower – someone in the area. It's all about proximity to the original person.

“Portrait of Dogaressa Morosina Morosinia,” Workshop of Jacopo Tintoretto, #24.4



CA: Kinkade was is based on the hierarchy of how much Kinkade did. The value increases the closer you get in proximity to the artist and how much he did. It was the same with Tintoretto. The value increases exponentially when it's "workshop of." This one has a match in LA at LA County Museum that was almost certainly done by Tintoretto. It also brings up question of gender. Men oftentimes didn't do paintings for paired couples. They did the men. Students did the woman with a small portion by the master.

Q- Is this kitsch less than high art?

CA – It's the production of it. Museums emphasize the singular. If it was destroyed it would disappear. I'm less interested in the formal qualities than some of conceptual ideas as they relate to arts, economy and authorship rather than is this the best Guardian Castle I've ever seen. Whether it reaches high art is up to history to decide. There are so many of these [Kinkades]. They sold like hot cakes. You can see how the pyramid creates value within them. There might be hundreds "touched" by them but only 50 by Kinkade. There is paperwork that shows how the painting is connected with him.

There's a certificate of authenticity on the back. There's also a two letter value system: **This is an LG.** You can go on the website to check where it is on the pyramid. Company is now out of businaa. Shows stratification and how many were made of those, the kind of surface it was printed on and its corresponding value.

They are reproductions. There's print. **G Plate print.** It's like ink jet that makes image underneath. Can see mostly the reds and yellows and chartreuse beneath. [Ironically] This may not be the optimal lighting. Sometimes they're shown in the darker rooms to emphasize the highlighting.** [laughter]

I think this was purchased at one of his galleries - maybe from the store they had at the Mall of America. The highlighting is done domestically in the US. Often people would fly to events. Would have advertised that a master highlighter will be in the building. They will work on your piece for 15 minutes and they will talk about Thomas Kinkade.

Debbi – If you've never been to one of these events, I recommend you go because it's all laid out for you there. Here are possible images. Here are steps in the process. Here's what you pay for each. You are totally involved in that process. Here's what you can hang on your wall. Here's what you pay for the hand of the master highlight versus the hand of another painter. Fascinating. Every step is laid out.

"Guardian Castle," Thomas Kinkade (1958-2012), 1994, offset lithograph and oil paint on canvas, Collection of Kim and David Chayer L2012.157



Gallery Label: *"I created a system of marketing compatible with American art. I want my work to be available but not common. I want it to be a dignified component of everyday life." Before he died on April 6, 2012, Thomas Kinkade was considered to be one of the most profitable artists in the world; there are estimates that on out of every 20 Americans own a Kinkade painting. Before it filed for bankruptcy in 2010, Media Arts Group aggressively marketed and sold Kinkades, "The Painter of Light," in franchised galleries in the United States and Europe. Despite being dismissed by the fine artists and collectors, Kindade's art business had a loyal popular following and profitable licensing contracts with Disney and La-Z-Boy.*

Kinkade's elaborate series of editions create ascending levels of value. Even though each digital reproduction is stamped with his signature, some of which include his DNA for verification, most of them are only accented by "Master Highlighters." Becoming a master highlighter involves extensive classes followed by exams that test their knowledge of painting and familiarity with Kinkade's personal history. The process of adding highlights to their machine copy at the point of sale gives the customer a one-of-a-kind art object. Sharing details of Kinkade's personal history is a way for master highlighters to give the impression of a personal connection with, as well as maintain the myth of, the artist at the center of this decorative art empire.

Chris Atkins . This jacket partof the 2012 US Olympics athletes unifrom. Worn by athletes coming in during opening ceremonies. I was talking with David Little, "Wouldn't it be great to havesomething like

that – a unique object that we'd never show." This is a really timely, interesting object. It's something we literally bought on internet for \$300. It was funny, the price went down by 40 percent after the Olympics were finished. We waited a little and didn't have to pay the \$795. It's a 43 Regular, so it fits me. I'll just walk home with it. This was a chance to work with an object that was not an art object. Corresponds with the video, which broadens idea of outsourcing.

It's a wool jacket with America patch and a very prominent POLO logo. It's made for men and women. It can button it either way. Also some stitching in the back. Not my favorite jacket. But as a remnant of this controversy, it felt like interesting object. We got it at the Ralph Lauren website. It was never worn. Came in the mail. Out of the bag. Left tags on. To emphasize it. The "Made in CHINA." It's right there:

Issues of nationalism, athletics. What the Olympics are - to showcase the best of a country. And how something like this becomes a news item. There was so much discussion about how people are outsourcing jobs. Can these be made in North Carolina or Los Angeles. They probably could be – given enough time. Probably could be made just as well.

The **athlete's body becomes a place where all these nationalist ideas** become legible in what they're wearing and what they're doing. Hoping it's one of those things people will say, "Oh yeah!" They'll get it because they remember the story. Only couple weeks ago.

Q. It's a jacket. But is it art?

CA - Maybe within the space of this gallery. Hoping contextually it has a relationship with some of these objects. Think there was a corresponding women's jacket that was a little shorter. The women's was about \$400. Want to stretch outsourcing term.

"20120 Team U.S.A. Double-Breasted Blazer USA," 20120, wool Ralph Lauren, American, born 1939, no number



CA- Effort to reach out beyond curatorial offices – relationship between outsourcing and flat packing – combines books, book shelves, chairs – all in these flat packs. It's easy to ship, carry. Easy to open and turn into whatever is in there

I was trying to think – how parse labor, manufacturing and pass savings onto consumer. The labor of assembly is done by the purchases.

How relate to outsourcing. Person buying is also assembler. Right now this piece – it's empty. Wanted to leave closed- won't be chair until someone buys, turn it around and assembles it. Can go online to see video – little beaver who runs around but puts it together. Time lapse. How is art, production and labor intermixed.

Conflation of person who buys also assembles. IKEA is good example of that.

Q. Jacket – how would it enhance or limit the viewer's perception. If had pic next to it – full cadre of athletes wearing. Lots of them and another picture of factory workers in China assembling.

CA- I was trying to weigh questions of contextualizing and also keep it spare. Could have crammed exhibit full. The video – Diane Sawyer's ABC coverage - puts it in context.

All aluminum. Flat. Has perforations. Have angles of the metal to bend to create the seat for your butt. It's all right there. Screw legs on. Something about flat packing – Blue Dot especially – something cool about it. No stigma attached. You get a deal. It's efficient.

Q. Also concept of packaging. Packaging done – a lot of it – in the US.

CA- In packaging for this one. They started with a pizza box.

"Unassembled Real Good Chair," 2009, aluminum, courtesy Blu Dot, American, est. 1997, no number.



Gallery Label: *"Our design process is founded on collaboration. Not just among ourselves as we play show-and-tell with concepts, but a total collaboration between pencil and paper, materials and machines, even packaging and assembly."*

- *Blue Dot cofounders John Christakos, Charles Lazor, Maurice Blanks*

Inside this box is a ready-to-assemble Real Good Chair. An Allen wrench, some screws, and the angle measures printed on the back cover are the only tools necessary to build it. The Real Good Chair is an example of flat-pack furniture, a business model that outsources the assembly of chairs and tables to the consumer. Flat-pack design is a collaboration between manufacturers and their customers; it is also smart business. The fuel costs and extra space saved when shipping small flat boxes can be passed

along to the consumer. Blu Dot, which is based in Minneapolis, is internationally recognized for creating innovative, yet affordable furniture and accessories. In addition to the satisfaction of buying the chair, Blu Dot recognizes that designing a simple assembly process for their furniture increases the consumer's sense of ownership. Good furniture does not have to be a compromise of design for price point; flat-pack furniture is affordable and cool.

DAVID LITTLE, Harrison Photo Gallery:

Strangers in a Strange Land: Photographers' First Impressions. Title comes from book "Stranger in a Strange Land."

- Very popular. Idea – main character – astronauts that go to Mars. Son of two incredibly smart astronauts. They die. He's on Mars raised by Martians. Comes back to earth. About his integration into new environment of the earth. Meetings with people. Weird things that happen.
- Photographers – how odd their work is. From late 19th c. to present day.
 - Someone has machine around neck. Take a picture of you.
 - Especially noticeable when you travel. Other people in your frame. Picture of stranger behind your wife or husband.
 - Maybe we're so used to cameras.
 - Notion of photographers traveling to foreign lands.
- Color of galleries – "Un-Teal We Meet Again." Strange feel visitors don't expect. Makes photos pop. Pleasure. A little play.
- Create maze effect. Design is spacially different.
- Angled baffle. Gesture: Things a little bit off. Cuts the reflection of light on prints. First baffle in MIA to be angled.
- Big map outside gallery showing where photographers shot the pictures. Tells the story. Photographers traveling world. Years important. Reflect older times when arrived at foreign airports. Disorienting, adventurous experience. Want to conjure that. White around dots –just design element.
- Idea: Photographers going to foreign country, arriving, taking pictures
 - How photos travel through time and become representations - markers not just of photographers' encounters - but markers of the country.
 - Especially true of Strand's work in Mexico. His pictures now OUR pictures of Mexico. So well known becomes marker in cultural memory.
 - How photography lives in the world. Reaches beyond art world and becomes part of larger cultural phenomena.

"The Great Pyramid and the Great Sphinx, Egypt," Francis Frith, 1858, 2004.24



You see this in the mid-19th century photograph by **Francis Frith**, shot around the time photography was invented. This is 1858, so a little bit later than when photography was invented

- Capturing Egypt, the pyramids and the Sphinx.
- Such a well- photograph has become part of our experience
- Old process – 8x10 – probably Collodion wet process. Big glass plates. Very messy. Difficult process to navigate, especially in middle of desert.
- Photo came from the site. Had to develop on site, when he was traveling.

"The Great Pyramids and Sphinx, 1971," Eugene Goldbeck, #89.125.1



- Same scene in 1970. Tourists. Tour buses and modernization. Would be even more dramatic today
- Two different styles of photography.
- Panoramic photograph. Modern machine

Grouping of the following to introduce a sense of humor and to show use of line. Playful series of relation - one to another

- Photographers use line as structural element
- Fence separates people from walrus
- Wall and truck

- Bottom – two trucks
- Some pictures you want people to come close. Here, from afar is what I want you to do. Always come from a distance

“New York City,: Garry Winogrand, 1964, #82.127.7



“Untitled,” Garry Winogrand, 1963, American #86.93.3



“Patty And Astor,” 1981, Sylvia Placy, American, #98.143.8



“Spanish Village,” 1971, Brett Weston, #89.11



“Canal, Netherlands,” 1973, Brett Weston, #87.42.5



DL: Want people to look at closely at Brent Westons.

- Simple composition
- Even though it is foggy, there is great detail. They are all about composition.
- Not content rich. About ideal, beautiful setting. Photographed and reproduced with great attention to values.
- What does this say about Netherlands or Spanish village – not a lot in depth.
- Captures. Can go through Travel magazines. Will see this a million times. Classic picture. Becomes a little clichéd.
- Way small fragments of places still signify what these places are.
- Fits in Theme. Westons doesn't have strong role in history. Kind might hang in your home

DL: Eugene Smith. Fascinated. When you're an artist and you're a stranger in a strange land, you still have to come back to a visual language that you feel comfortable with. Trying to translate these two countries – one his home country and one is a foreign country. In the end he only has a certain visual repertoire dealing with.

In this case of Welch miners, you see the miners in the foreground, their faces blackened with coal. Then this mid-ground. Then this beautiful series of houses –the miners’ house. It’s where they live, where they work. The land moves up around them. These are their resources, their earth and place. Their **whole lives** are right here in this particular image.

“Welsh Miners,” W. Eugene Smith, 1950- 2003.15



DL: In the case of the Spanish soldiers working for Franco. He’s positioning these soldiers with this background. They are within this wall. It is much more oppressive space. But it gives a feeling for their personalities.

35-40 percent of the works in this gallery have never been seen.

“Madrid” 1933, Cartier Bresson, # 95.6.36



DL: Image harbors a quirky dreamlike quality of the Surrealists. He does this with the vast white wall, speckled with tiny irregular windows, the large scale of his subjects and the angle of the view combines to create a slightly off-kilter effect, punctuated by a constant rhythm of black and white.

Cartier-Bresson said in photography “You have to come on tip toes.” How does working invisibly address the notion that photographers cannot be objective?

For Cartier-Bresson the camera was a tool to immortalize an instant; a tool that was much faster than a pencil or paint brush. He preferred the quiet speed of a 35mm German engineered Leica, but in 1975 he gave up photography for painting and drawing.

“Guardia Civil, Spain 1950 ,” Eugene Smith: - 2000.110.3



DL: Migrant Mother is so important. Put her in a quiet spot. But near Consuelo Kanago, who trained under Dorothea Lange. One more interested in class, the other more interested in race. But both using the same techniques

“Migrant Mother,” 1936, Dorothea Lange, American, #92.136



“Mother and Son, Florida,” 1950, Consuelo Kanaga, #2002.152.1



DL: What I love about the Strand – and there are about 25 of them in the portfolio – is that he’s trying to get a sense of the place.

- The people, the faces of Mexico.
- The Christ figure – the religion, the iconography. The people. The faces.
- The postures of the figures. This figure, with his hands crossed
- The graffiti
- The Architecture.

Consider how difficult it is in any place. If you want to take 10 photographs and represent the culture of any place. Strand is giving us a sense of the culture. When you look at these photographs there isn’t the feeling that he’s telling you the whole story. He isn’t all the sudden a Mexico because he’s there. There’s a distant, a mystery. But a deep feeling of respect for the people and this culture.

When Strand finished this series, the Mexican government was so delighted they commissioned him to make a film, as well. It’s a film about the workers. Strand was very involved in the worker movement.

It’s pretty compelling that Strand comes as a visitor to depict the country, then is adopted by the country to represent it in a moving film of the country.

"Mexican Portfolio," works from Paul Strand's # 68.23 etc.



DL: Boris Mikahilovis is different in technique, but also his subject. "Stranger in Strange land" is about finding the strangeness in your own home. True also of Arbus. They show up something completely unfamiliar in a place that we think we know.

It's all about self-consciousness and awareness of face painted mask. Arbus gets so close; it almost makes the viewer uncomfortable.

"Puerto Rican Woman, New York," 1964, Diane Arbus, #90.10



“Luriki,” 1981, Boris Mihailov (Ukrainian), #2010.13.2



DL: Mikahilov is looking through old photographs in what he called the Luriki Series. He picks out photographs, blows them up and paints them. If you go up close, you’ll see it’s a painted photograph. But it’s a painted reproduction of a photograph.

The reason this subject was so compelling for Mikahilov, as someone who grew up under extreme political and social repressive circumstances, it makes fun of, it contradicts many of the party lines of the Communist Party.

The two soldiers with the teddy bear here look sweet soft and humorous. Mikahilov started out as a civil engineer and was fired when KGB found nude photos of his wife. He was let go. He dedicated himself to photography after that. He won what is called the **Hasselblad Award**, the top international **photography prize** a photographer can receive – for a whole body of work.

At the point he was fired, he worked for a photo studio. He colored and fixed image – before Photoshop. In Ukraine where he grew up, if you had a colored photograph it was a sign of wealth and authority. He did this often for lower class people, so they would feel they had this cherished item.

He’s interested in the **kitschy** aspects of culture. In Ukrainian – the **sots**. This is a straight photo. He took this photograph. Not one he found and reproduced. Come across these soldiers and asked them to pose – in these gas masks. They are volunteering to masquerade, but he’s clearly in control. Anti-authoritatriangesture. He can make these soldiers dress up for him for a work of art.

- **Sots** =artist has hand-painted
- **Luriki** = photos found in albums, Artist selects, reproduces and hand-colored. Found images.

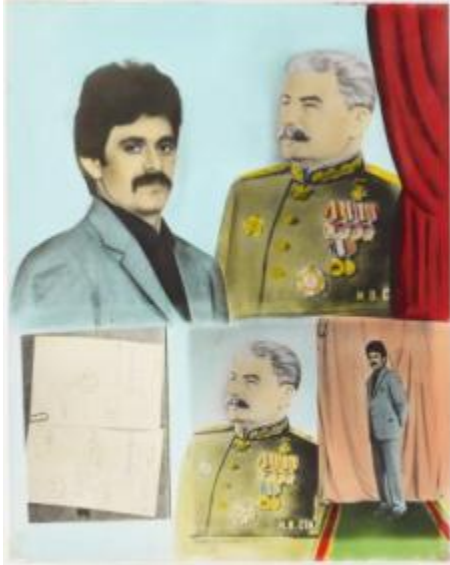
Also showing the tension in this classroom the tension where children are being taught by day. And in the evening is used for military meetings. Conflation of military and government is seen in images – Lenin image and pix of a child on the wall. Text by kid’s picture says, “Sit up straight

when you're in your seat" – disciplining of the society. He's capturing all this in frame of the picture. Then he goes in and colorizes.

"Sots Art," Boris Mikhailov, 1981, # 2010.13.4



"Luriki," 1981, Boris Mikhailov (Ukrainian), 2010.13.1



- Another portrait photograph – a combination of the sots and Luriki where a pastron came in and wanted his picture taken. But he wanted his picture taken as Stalin. Most people – most absurd thing ever heard. But Mikhailov said sure. So he had to get a picture of Stalin. See this guy very proudly having his picture taken and then M adds the copy of Stalin and duplicates it up here. Adds documentation of the contract they signed.
- This is when he was working in portrait studio. Does art concurrently with working in the studio

“Merseyside” (from “Last Resort series), 1983-1986, Martin Parr.



DL – This is from a series called “Last Resort.” It’s clearly an old married couple that has had dinner together too many times. He has this cigarette dangling from his mouth. He’s looking over here. God knows what he’s looking at. She’s looking down at her hand, but what she’s looking at is her wedding ring. It’s as if she’s questioning whether she made the right decision many years ago. One of our trustees who is British I showed him this. He said, “Oh, no this is the way the Brits behave we can talk for many hours and not talk to one another.”

[Addition from audio recording of David Little]:

Stayed in Ukraine and lived there and in Berlin after break-up of Soviet Union. Goes back and forth. Travels around the world. Six months of the year, lives in Berlin. Had a chance to meet him in Berlin three years ago. I was able to get these photography then. Because all hand-done, they are multiple but unique.

Q. Relationship with Alec Soth?

DL – Alec has traveled with him a bit. It’s a small community. Dan Denihey also traveled with M. for a photo shot. Martin Parr and Alec very close. Part of same organizations. That’s a great picture. Funny picture on line. Quirky personality.

“Patty And Astor,” 1981, Sylvia Placy, American, #98.143.8



DL: As we were going through the files to write the wall labels for this piece Sylvia had been in contact with Ted for years, going back, probably to the 1980s. She shot for the Village Voice. You'll still see her work in the New Yorker. As I was going through all the sudden I saw these pictures of a famous actor – Adrian Brody - dressed in a funny costume at probably at 18 or 19. He's in his car and in a Santa outfit. I thought, "This woman has this weird obsession with Adrian Brody." Of course he's her son!

All the sudden, Adrian Brody wins the Oscar. It turns out Sylvia is his mother. He would dress up as Santa every year; that was their holiday card. We have all these pictures of Adrian Brody.

"Migrant Mother," 1936, Dorothea Lange, American, #92.136



DL: You know about the "Migrant Mother." I won't tell you about that. You've heard me speak about this piece. It's important to bring out not only the icon of the Migrant Mother, but the way this woman – Florence Thompson - has lost her identity as an individual. We don't really know her as a person. She ended up living in Modesta, Ca., in a camper. Fortunately she was stubborn and was able to get money for cancer really late. She never profited by this image.

While it has been an incredibly powerful image in terms of sympathy and attention, and the tragedy of this period, there's the other side of the coin on that. It's important to bring up the strangeness that she doesn't even know Dorothea Lange. Dorothea Lange comes, takes these five pictures. And she becomes part of history but she doesn't have a connection to that history or to the photographer at all.

"Mother and Son, Florida," 1950, Consuelo Kanaga, #2002.152.1



DL: I wanted these two photographs [Migrant Mother and Mother and Son, Florida] together. They are really about the mother and child. Kanaga is a very wealthy Californian who becomes a photographer. Not as well known. Huge archive of her work at Brooklyn Museum. She did an amazing job of documenting African Americans in the 1940s/50s. Wanted these two images together.

Look across the way here, more Lewis Hine.

DL: There's a connection to these figures, but there's also surprise in the small boy.

"Untitled (Newsboy, Waco, Texas),) 1913, Lewis W. Hine, #74.13.4



"Untitled (Millworkers, North Carolina)," 1908, Lewis W. Hine, #74.39.31



"Untitled (Newsgirls, Connecticut)," 1909, Lewis W. Hine, Lewis W. Hine, #74.39.7



“Untitled (Glass Workers, New Jersey),” 1909, Lewis WS. Hine, #74.39.34



“Untitled,” 1910, Lewis W. Hine, #74.39.9



DL: For most of us, when thinking about Hines- taught about tenement houses and being in the basement. You think New York. But going through the collection is the realization he’s traveling all throughout the U.S – Virginia and N. Carolina and document the full scope of the exploitation of children. I wanted to broaden the idea of his role as a traveler and his efforts to advocate for this important issue.

Over here – comparison of Irving Penn with Arbus. Figures both in their environments. Both wearing costumes. This gentlemen is wearing the costume of democracy. The other man is wearing ritualistic costume of his own culture.

“A Patriotic Boy with Straw Hat, Buttons, and Flag, Waiting to March in a Pro War Parade, N.Y.C., { 1867, Diane Arbus. #72.109.6



“New Guinea Man with Painted on Glasses,” 1970, Irving Penn, #2001.182.1



DL: Arbus was taking shots in the street. This is a photo in the studio. What is really striking is that Irving Penn was capturing this man from New Guinea. Penn travels all the way to New Guinea. What does he do when gets to New Guinea? He set s up a studio and takes a photograph. Classic Penn: He controls everything – the controlled environment. At same time as he creates this style for himself and for Vogue, the fashion magazine that he is often shooting for, he completely de-contexturizes this figures, as if he’s in a Halloween costume. Especially in this strange situation, it is **disturbing visual colonialism** at its extreme.

“Carbondale, Illinois,” 1982, Carl Robert Pope, Jr. #89.76.3



DL: African American. Paul Robert Pope Jr. capturing small town outside of Chicago. Really straight documentary of African Am town. Right outside of Carl Pope Jr.’s college. Struck by how distant – who was at the college. What happening at the university and what was happening within a mile from the town.

DL: The history of photography is tricky - very predictable. Most of the history of photography books are divided/organized in predictable ways: Photo documentarian, Robert Frank in America, traveling photographers.

One thing I tried to with this show, is to take these photographs out of their comfortable categories and rec-ontextualize. Irving Penn, nine times out of 10 would, you would see his

work in a fashion show or see in portrait show. Very little is said about what that photograph really does to the sitter in that photograph.

Creating these different categories allows us to pick our new meaning. With that, create new dialogues with our audiences, especially at MIA where so much about global art and globalization. This work = precursor to more contemporary work. From the very beginning, idea of going to foreign place and taking a picture was right at the heart. Pre-TV. People couldn't travel to these locations. That picture stood in for the place. That's what I'm hoping people will start to think about.