



WOMEN 360

South Shore Art Center

Myrna Balk, Lora Brody, Karen Davis, Carol Daynard, Ellen Feldman,
Randy Goldberger, Felice Mendell, Kim Roderiques, Andrea Rosenthal,
Michael Seif

Andrea Rosenthal, Curator
10/28/2012

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Exhibition September 14 - October 28, 2012

**South Shore Art Center
Cohasset, Massachusetts**

Introduction

All women confront issues related to their bodies, whether biologically or culturally determined. Some issues only arise in relation to men, some are common to all humans. Artists can bring out deep truths about the female condition and express them in ways that are both specific and universal. The goal of this exhibit is to present a narrative about women's bodies that shows them in varying situations but always with strength and a kind of grace.

Just as Robert Frank carefully arranged the sequence of photographs in his book *The Americans* to imply meaning by the juxtaposition of one photograph with the next, this exhibit encourages the viewer to think about one artist's work in relation to the others. We begin with painter Carol Daynard's colorful, humorous canvases that explore old age by showing herself as her grandmothers. She takes an affectionate look at other older women, too, and has a light touch in showing their foibles. Ellen Feldman, in contrast, photographs a dancer she knows in dramatic black-and-white images that convey youth, strength, and command of one's body. Lora Brody places a pinhole cover on her digital camera to capture ballet dancers in motion. Her pictures have an amorphous, dreamy look that perfectly captures the lyricism of women dancing. Her "Tattooed Arm" is a gritty but still lyrical counterpoint.

The next series is "The McCann Family," by photographer Karen Davis. When her sister, who was born with spina bifida, died in 2006, Davis inherited the doll family her sister called "The McCanns" that she played with throughout her childhood and kept all her life, creating her own private world where she fitted "Tom" with crutches and braces just like hers. Davis writes that Cheryl cast herself as Tom: "I think she liked the idea of being the spunky and adventurous child." It is interesting that Cheryl used the doll family to give herself a boy's body and assume a boy's persona.

In contrast to Davis's directing the actions of the doll family to bring back memories of her disabled sister, Michael Seif was inspired by swimming in an abandoned quarry to photograph the bodies of swimmers highlighted by sunlight and accented by the darkness of the water, showing healthy bodies in a beautiful natural setting. He feels that he has been "fortunate to work with people who are comfortable in their own skins, who project that feeling of comfort." There is a feeling of dissolving into the water along with a sensuality and awe at the miracle of creation.

Pregnancy in Myrna Balk's work is occasion for joy and peace but also for introspection. We sense the uncertainty of what might happen and have the feeling that the future could well be shadowed. While Balk's career as a social worker and experience in Nepal inform her work, Kim Roderiques "embrace[s] . . . opportunities to document the bond between parent and child" in intimate portraits close to home. In looking at them, we are given a glimpse into an ideal world of physical equilibrium and perfect love that is a beautiful contrast to Myrna Balk's.

A close look at her own body and emotions characterizes Andrea Rosenthal's work. Her exploration of the socially and culturally engendered problems of overeating and body image can be related to Randy Goldberger's sculptures of distorted, idealized female bodies and body parts. Goldberger's soft, sensuous stones make body parts come alive and show their exaggerated power as tools of mass marketing.

In Myrna Balk's and Andrea Rosenthal's multi-media collages based on photographs and etchings, we see the evil that the sexualization of women's bodies has led to. These pieces show the worldwide pervasiveness of sexual trafficking of women and girls. The female figures by Felice Mendell emerge from fired clay, concrete, steel, and painted murals to stand tall; it's worth noting that in the first one, though there's a reciprocal relationship between the female and male figures, the male figure can't stand up unless he's connected to the woman's wide hips. Mendell's caryatids bear heavy burdens but have the inner strength necessary to enable them to survive in the face of enormous challenges. Referencing newspaper articles about sexual slavery and domestic violence and reminding us of issues raised earlier in the exhibit, the work here shows the ability of women to survive and flourish.

The diverse work of these artists highlights the issues that women face in various ways. We can all learn a lot from both the artists and their subjects about how to live our lives with courage, pleasure, dignity, and a little humor. The closing piece, "Prayer," by Randy Goldberger (1943-2012), reminds us of what a significant talent we lost recently and also of the importance of the spiritual in our lives and in approaching our problems.

We would like to thank Sarah Hannan, Executive Director of the SSAC, and Chris Rifkin, Board of Advisors, for their encouragement and help. It has been a pleasure working with them.

Andrea Rosenthal, Curator

Myrna Balk

As an artist and social worker, Myrna Balk's work has been affected by her curiosity, and her wish to experiment with new materials, as well as her need to express her feelings about the world around her. Her art has been influenced by her commitment to human rights. She was a co founder of the Iowa City Chapter of CORE in 1960 CORE (Congress of Racial Equality). A further hallmark of her work has been the use of a variety of materials. She first began as an artist sculpting in steel. Part of this venture brought her to an invitational workshop with British sculptor Sir Anthony Caro. She then expanded her sculptural work by using other materials, such as clay and bamboo. Her sculptures were often allegorical and abstract. She also began creating installations for parks, ponds and public places. The installations explored the environment in which they were shown.

She began printmaking: etchings, monotypes and woodcuts. While in China in 1995, for the UN Women's Meeting, she contacted Lu Fang, a Professor Emeritus from Zhejiang Academy of Fine Arts in Hangzhou, China who tutored her in his woodcutting techniques.

A major feature of her work has been the intersection of her social work experience with her artistic talents. This is best illustrated by her experience in Nepal. As a social worker she began working with women who had been victims of sex trafficking. She then began to create art which both reflected their experiences and informed people about the exploitation of women. While Myrna's art has dealt with such serious topics as sex trafficking, the demand factor in the exploitation of women, and the Holocaust, her work can also at times be humorous and whimsical.



Pregnant Woman with Moon



Nude with Chair



Anguished Woman

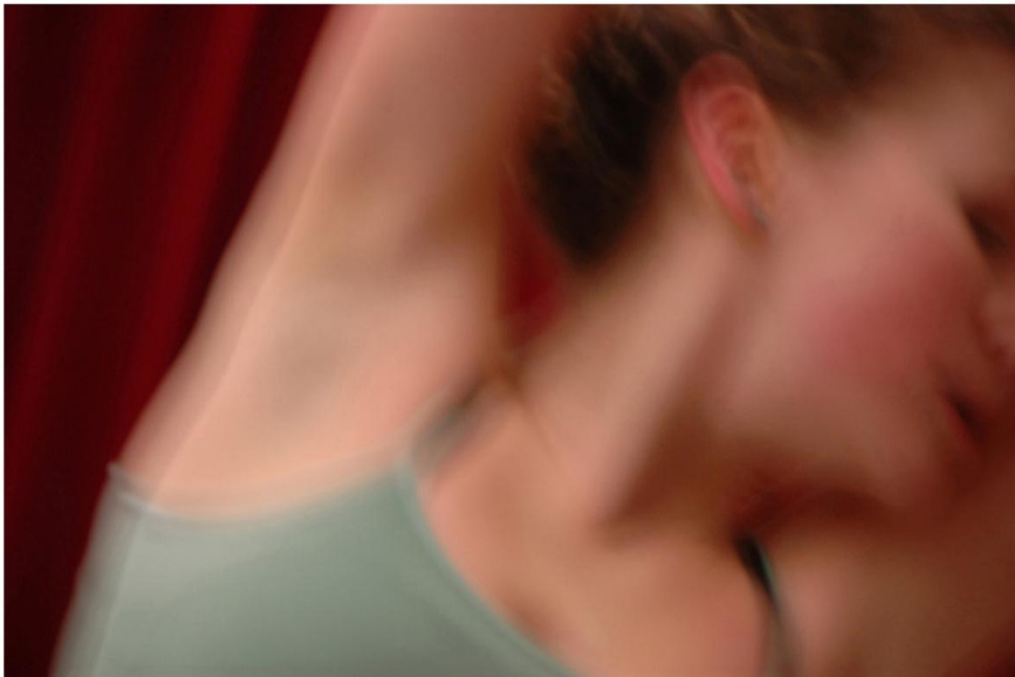
Lora Brody

I am drawn to images of people and objects in water because of the 'accidental' nature of the results. I photograph at pools, in the ocean, and at Walden Pond.

Placing a pinhole cover on my digital camera results in painterly images of strikingly intense color that move across the canvas with amorphous fluidity.

Bodies in motion glide through water the color of summer days: the Caribbean blue of a swimming pool, the quietly mysterious green of a pond. In play is the motion of my camera as I follow the swimmer, the movement of the body through the water, or observe the object (in this case the bench) as well as the constant shifting of the water itself and the light as it plays on the surface. These are fleeting movements and flashes of color distilled and captured in my attempt to record a moment of summer.

I had the opportunity to photograph young dancers during a rehearsal at The Boston School of Ballet. I sat in the middle of the floor with my pinhole camera as the dancers moved around me. The resulting images were so much like the bodies in water that including them in the same portfolio made perfect sense.



Dancer #6



Dancer #8



Pink Shoulder

Karen Davis

When my sister died in 2006, I inherited the doll family she called "The McCanns." She played with them throughout childhood and kept them all her life.

Arranging the family in scenes, Cheryl created her private world. She pretended she was "Tom McCann," spunky and misunderstood. I was "Mary Ann McCann," Mother's favorite. At first Tom could stand on his own. Later he lost his balance all the time. Cheryl diagnosed Tom with polio. She fitted him with crutches and braces just like hers. (She was born with spina bifida.)

Tom thought Mother McCann disliked having a disabled child. He was a chipper kid but he always felt bad about Mother's attitude. Father usually sided with Mother. "Listen to your Mother." One day Father McCann's leg, which had been loose, fell off. Cheryl taped the leg back on as a prosthesis. Tom felt that after Father became an amputee, he was a lot more understanding about his son.

Decades later, I place the worn four inch dolls on stage, directing their actions. I present my photographs in a large format to bring the McCanns and memories of my sister and childhood to life.



Tom Walks Alone



Close As Children



Mother Dreams

Carol Daynard

Women almost larger than life, older women, wise and experienced, fill my canvases. I learn from these women and watch them. I portray them with the signs of years upon their bodies, bodies marked by childbirth, loss, physical trauma and just plain aging. I live among them. I anticipate those changes in myself. I see my ancestors in me and transform aspects from them. I emerge having taken what I can. A Ziegfeld Follies girl, a nurturing mother and grandmother, dependent and fiercely independent, standing strong, they face the viewer head on. Don't mess with them!



Carol as Grandma Rose



Carol As Grandma Ida



Self-Portrait

Ellen Feldman

Nicole Pierce, modern dancer and choreographer extraordinaire, has been a favorite subject of mine for over 10 years. I photograph her on Sunday mornings every few months – sometimes more frequently.

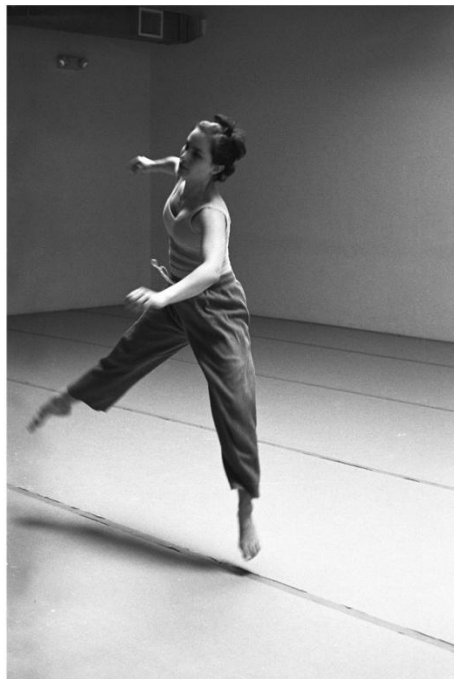
I'm free to shoot while Nicole puts together her weekly dance class at Greene Street Studios in Cambridge. She doesn't stop to pose for me, so in a sense my process is the same as when I'm photographing in city streets. I like the spontaneity of the ever-changing present, never quite sure what the next instant will bring.



Headless



Hair Flying



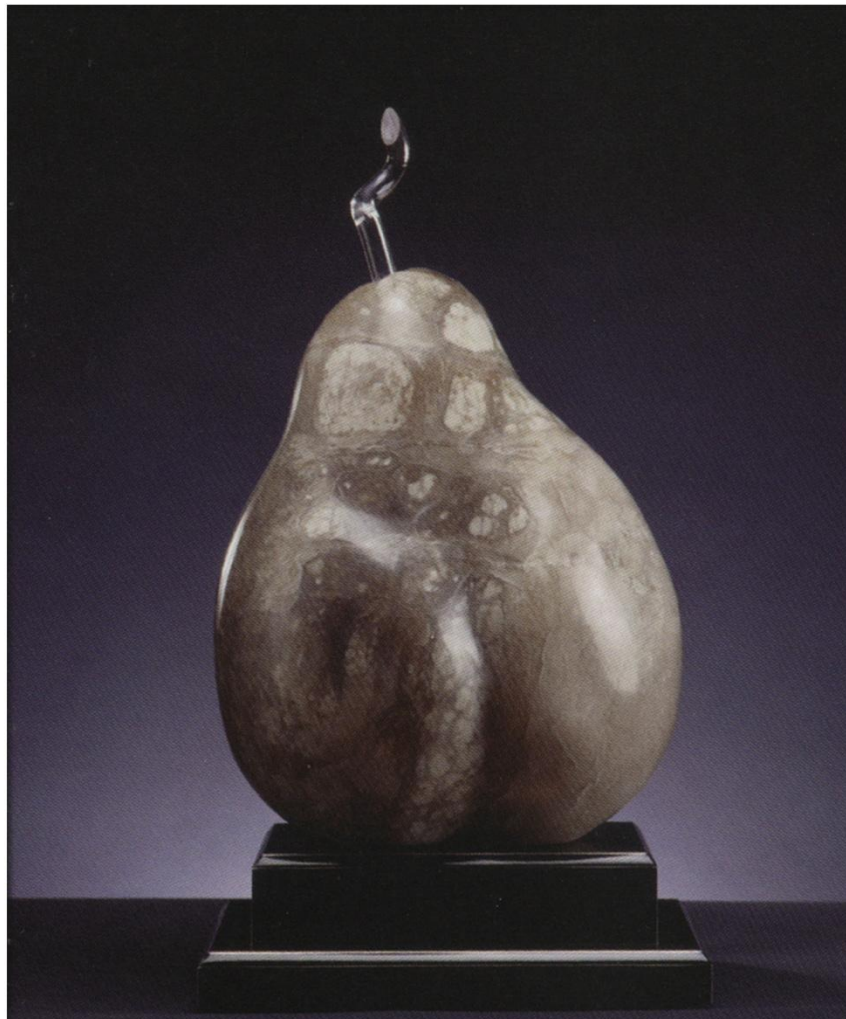
Jump

Randy Goldberger

There is something about the solidity of stone, the inherent beauty that is hidden in its depths, just waiting to be released, that makes stone carving, for me, an act of pure joy.

Stone to me is soft, sensuous and organic. That is why many of my sculptures are based on the human form. It is important to me that people touch my work since sculpture is a truly tactile art form. Many of my pieces have openings in them so that you have the solid mass of the stone poised against the lightness of the surrounding air. The play between light, air, and stone is very important since I want you to see how my sculptures interact with the world that surrounds them.

Sculpture thus becomes a question of contrast and balance. Although most of my sculptures are highly polished, I purposely leave some of the raw stone exposed to remind people of the stone's beginnings. I want the interplay of the rough and the smooth in my work to elicit surprise from the viewer and expose them to the inherent beauty of the stone.



Pear Bottom



Prayer

Felice Mendell

I have worked with homeless women, who, burdened by their own histories of trauma and domestic violence, juggle conflicting responsibilities to support their families financially and emotionally. I read accounts of women around the world who endure unthinkable violations of human rights and find the courage to help each other. And I am drawn to images of women bearing their burdens with exquisite dignity.

Those images bring to mind the ancient Greek Caryatids, sculptured columns that, for millennia, have supported the stone roof of the porch on the Erechtheion temple on the Acropolis in Athens.

My sculptures emerge from fired clay, concrete, cast paper, plaster, steel, found objects and other materials, silently standing for the strength of human beings to survive and flourish in the face of enormous challenges in their lives and community.



Caryatid: Tall Burden



Mask



Connecting

Kim Roderiques

As a portrait photographer, I am passionate about capturing the expressions and emotions of children of all ages. Not having children of my own, I embrace the opportunities to document the bond between parent and child as you can never create a false impression to get a great image; it is either genuine or it ceases to exist.

With toddlers, getting down to their level and creating a good rapport with them enables me to reveal their true personalities. Whatever is revealed through the lens, whether a belly laugh or a giggle, the connection with the child is heartfelt .

Documenting the lives of the children over the years is a pleasure for me that cannot be easily articulated. This process continues to fuel my passion for child photography. Nothing else artistically could be more rewarding.



Summer Embrace



Quiet Interlude



Hand

Andrea Rosenthal

Self-portraiture to me is revealing of issues of identity in relation to familial and cultural norms. That is why many of my photographs are based on my life experiences and show how I've dealt with issues that arose from my family background, interaction with cultural influences, and personal development. Turning the camera on myself has enabled me to examine problems that are particular to me but also universal, and using masterpieces of fine art has helped me conceptualize the process of connecting myself and my body with the cult of thinness in the modern world.

In the section of my ongoing "Stations of the Scale" project that is on exhibit here, I have chosen to combine self-portraiture with well-known works of art to express emotional truths. Although I've set up the photographs in different ways, patterning some directly on the famous works and, in one, using a print of the painting directly in the photograph, I purposely leave some ambiguity to encourage people to interpret the images on their own and bring their own experiences to the work. I want the interplay of the iconic paintings and my own interpretation of them to elicit surprise from viewers and expose them to the humor and pain inherent in my narrative.



Yearning (After Wyeth)



Choice (After O'Keeffe)



A New Day (After Hopper)

Michael Seif

In the first session of the human anatomy lab, where we were to begin our group dissection, the instructor had us gather around the draped cadaver. He explained that the body before us had been home to the person who lived there. Although the person was no longer there, we must respect that person and the body, and be thankful for the gift of knowledge that person was bestowing on us.

I have always been thankful to that anonymous donor, and the instructor's words have stayed with me for more than 40 years. Today, as I photograph the human body, very much alive, I wonder at and am enthralled with the life within it. I aim to convey through my photographs of nudes my own sense of wonder and joy at seeing "the person within" the body, in motion, strong, healthy, at once both a creature of nature and also something very special - an intelligent, complex and individual human being.

My first attempt at photographing the nude began in 1969, as a result of a workshop with Lisette Model at the New School in New York. When Ms. Model saw a photograph I had made of a friend's feet, she said "Flesh. You should be doing flesh." I did some "flesh," but when I compared my first nude photographs with the photographs of Edward Weston and Ruth Bernhard I didn't feel I was contributing anything new, so moved on in different directions with my photography.

More than 30 years after that first attempt, I was swimming in an abandoned quarry where everyone swam and sunbathed nude. Set deep in the woods, the quarry is now flooded with water darkened by leaf tannins. The bodies of swimmers and sunbathers are highlighted by the sunlight, accented by the darkness of the water, and stand in contrast to the various textures of granite. The setting and the people presented beautiful images that brought back to me the words of Lisette Model, and I once again began photographing "flesh."

Some of the photographs are taken with the figure on land, in woods, against natural or quarried granite. Other photographs include one or more figures in water.

By creating images that are sensual and lyrical, I encourage all viewers to enjoy and take delight in seeing the human form. When the models are in water, photographing from above changes the normal perspective, so figures appear to soar, fall, dance, weave in and out of each other's paths. They become schools of fish, or falling angels, a corps de ballet, or a whole other organism comprised of multiple bodies.

Water, sunlight, and motion combine to make each photograph unique. It is always exciting to look through recently taken photographs to find the ones in which the composition, light, and motion combine in a rich and dynamic way.

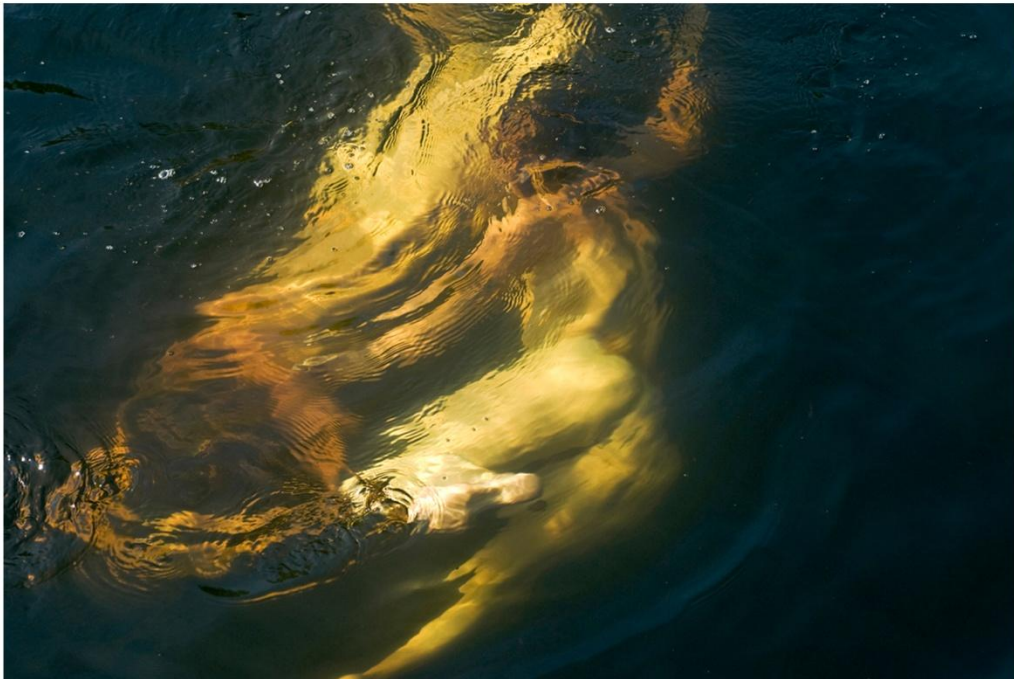
Since I began photographing the figure in nature, I have been fortunate to work with people who are comfortable in their own skins, who project that feeling of comfort, and who have made me feel privileged to photograph them in beautiful natural settings. Our photography is very much a collaboration, with all models bringing ideas, past experiences, and the joy of being alive and at home in their own bodies.



Optical Axis



The Descent



I Become You

Myrna Balk and Andrea Rosenthal

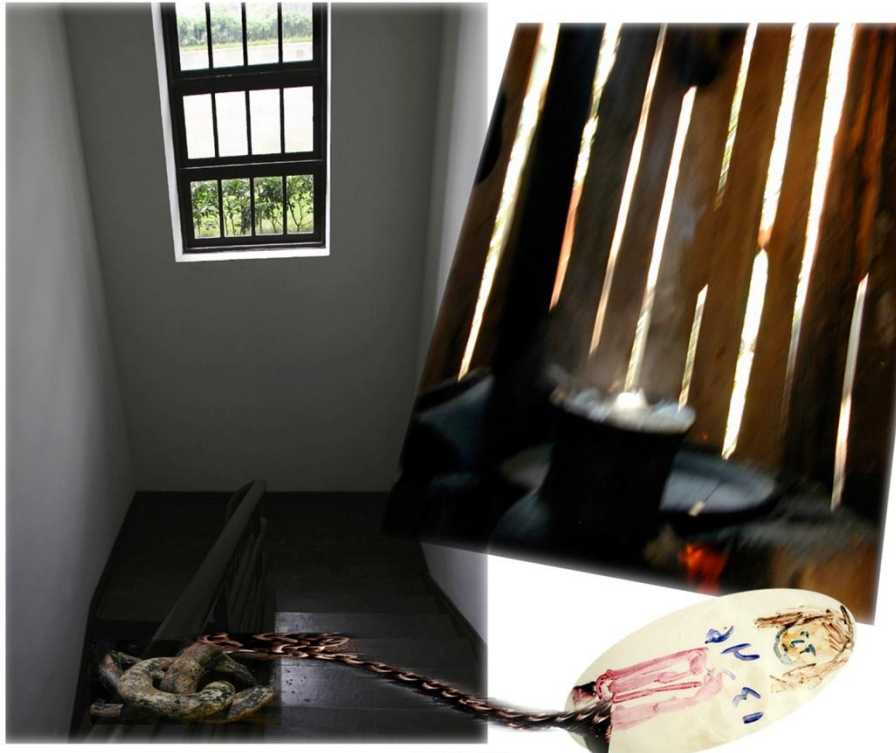
Freedom and Enslavement offers a window into pressures and choices most of us face to a greater or lesser degree, blurring the line between autonomy and slavery. The collaborative photographic montages of the exhibit are made from Andrea Rosenthal's personal photographs and Myrna Balk's prints and photographs that reflect on the continuum between freedom and slavery that can be seen in the deplorable situation of sex trafficking.

Balk was unexpectedly confronted with issues about sex trafficking when she worked in Katmandu, Nepal. To contain and channel her outrage and horror, upon getting home she immediately went to her studio to tell the story of what she had seen. After exhibiting this work for a number of years, Balk wanted to reframe the message by combining multiple images and sought Rosenthal's help because of her creative photographic skills.

The collaboration between the two evolved to focus on struggles of power, autonomy, and exploitation and highlights the universality of these wrenching issues. It is their hope that the art will allow viewers to reflect on these issues with openness and empathy.



Trapped



No Way Out



Our Neighbors

ARTISTS

Myrna Balk
Lora Brody
Karen Davis
Carol Daynard
Ellen Feldman
Randy Goldberger
Felice Mendell
Kim Roderiques
Andrea Rosenthal
Michael Seif

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