

Press Release

For Immediate Release Contact: David Carroll
February 14, 2003 312-344-7779
dcarroll@colum.edu

Persistence of Vision: The Art of Paul Berger, 1973 - 2003
The Museum of Contemporary Photography
Columbia College Chicago
March 12 through April 29, 2003

CHICAGO - The photographs of Paul Berger (United States, born 1948) will be on view at The Museum of Contemporary Photography, Columbia College Chicago from March 12 through April 29, 2003. Paul Berger was one of the first photographers to explore and then extensively employ digital imaging technologies. Beginning in 1981 when he acquired his first computer, he has grown through successive generations of software and hardware, often writing his own programs. This exhibition will focus on all phases of his non-digital and digital work from 1973 to 2003 and will include work of friends and students whom he has influenced.

Now that the novelty of digital imaging has worn off, and artists as well as the general public have become used to its possibilities, it is interesting to note the lasting effects it has had on photography as an art form. Initially common wisdom held that the explosion of technologies would follow an explosion of the imagination. But, of course, the mechanical manipulation of the photographic image has been around since the beginnings of photography in the 1830s. Generally, artists who simply reached for digital as another tool in their box fared better than those who let digital possibilities lead them into new, usually Baroque decorative areas.

Berger has, however, maintained his pre-digital photographic interests—the relationship of image and text that he calls the "point of notation where intelligence becomes graphic," and how the mind adapts to and is manipulated by models created by television and other carefully designed media. He uses the layering of visual information possible with digital technology as a metaphor for the mind's search through available memory, a process that is random but not haphazard, and that usually ends up with meanings we can only partially decipher.

A reception and artist's talk will take place on Thursday, March 27 from 5 until 7 pm at The Museum of Contemporary Photography. All events are free and open to the public.

Berger received his BFA from UCLA and his MFA from the Visual Studies Workshop in Rochester, NY. He has received two National Endowment for the Arts fellowship awards. He is currently Photography Department Chair in the School of Art at the University of Washington, Seattle.

The exhibitions, presentations, and related programs of The Museum of Contemporary Photography are sponsored in part by the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency; The

Kaplan Family Foundation; the National Endowment for the Arts; the City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs/Gallery 37; and American Airlines, the official airlines of The Museum of Contemporary Photography.

The museum is free and open to the public weekdays from 10 am until 5 pm (Thursdays until 8 pm) and Saturdays from 12 until 5 pm. It is located at 600 S. Michigan Avenue at Harrison Street. Phone 312-663-5554 or visit mocp.org for additional information.