

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

*CHRISTOPHER HARRIS***PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE PALOUSE**

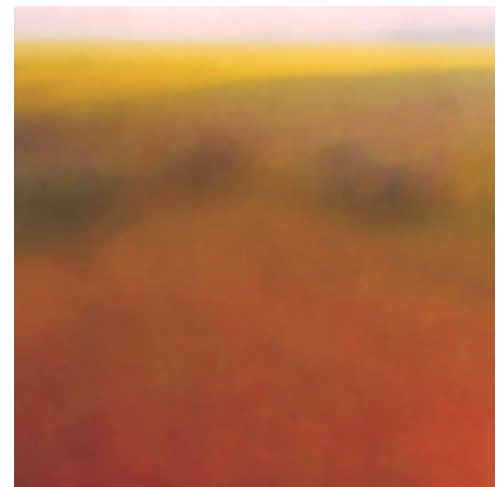
April 24 – May 31, 2003

*Artist's reception:*  
*Thursday, April 24<sup>th</sup>*  
*5:30 to 8:00 p.m.*

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ClampArt is pleased to announce "Christopher Harris: Photographs of The Palouse," the gallery's inaugural exhibition in its new space at 531 West 25<sup>th</sup> Street, Ground Floor.

The Palouse is a region of low, rolling hills in the Southeastern corner of Washington State, commonly regarded for its pristine beauty. The Palouse is an area quite familiar to photographer, Christopher Harris, who resides in the Northwestern United States. Harris, who holds a Ph.D. from Brown University in American Civilization (encompassing American literature, art, and intellectual history between 1630 and 1876), began his series of photographs of The Palouse with an important aspect of our nation's past in mind—namely the lure and promise of the West. Several decades ago Robert Adams and other photographers of the New West began to demonstrate the disparity between the Edenic wilderness that often comes to mind when Americans think of the West, and the contemporary reality of suburban sprawl. As Americans migrated West to experience the region's beauty and to take advantage of the possibilities that it promised, unsightly, damaging development followed. Those who live in the West witness the destruction everyday, which has only worsened since the documentation of Adams and his contemporaries thirty years past. Wilderness has long since become remote from modern urban and suburban life; yet, puzzlingly, the notion of the West as a Garden of Eden persists. Americans continue to consider the West, for all its problems, a place that enhances the possibilities of achieving one's dreams. While many artists have documented the sprawl, Harris's work instead concentrates on the remaining beauty, causing one to question the source of contemporary culture's continued faith in (yet neglect of) Nature. Harris's photographs, in their painterliness and ambiguity, are ethereal, like the hopes and aspirations that Americans continue to attach to the West.



The process by which Harris achieves his images is also of interest. The artist employs crudely constructed, handmade cameras of his own design, the bodies of which usually consist of pieced pieces of wood or plastic. Then, rather than simple pinhole apertures, Harris uses “zone plates”—series of concentric circles, much like targets, which further diffuse the light that enters the camera. Finally, rather than a flat focal plane for the film, the artist experiments with various convex surfaces, further distorting his images.

Harris’s landscapes address not only Americans’ relationship to their land and its direct impact on the quality of their lives; the body of work also establishes a wonderful dialogue with the history of American photography in general, and with the tradition of American landscape painting quite specifically. While the artist’s inspiration for this body of work harks back to many of the same aims of American landscape painters of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, so do his images manage to access a similar sense of wonder and sublimity.

For more information please contact Brian Paul Clamp, Director, or visit the gallery’s website at [www.clampart.com](http://www.clampart.com). ClampArt is open Tuesday through Saturday, from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.