

OUR PICKS OF THE MONTH

NOVEMBER 2012

EXHIBITION

New Photography and Re-Photography at MOMA

When the judges for this year's Deutsche Börse Photography Prize chose to give one of the medium's biggest awards to collage artist John Stezaker, who doesn't shoot his own photos, they inspired both grousing and lively discussion about what art that uses photographs as raw materials can teach us about how photographs communicate. The Museum of Modern Art enters the fray with its "New Photography 2012" show, which highlights five artists who "speak to the diverse permutations of photography in an era when the definition of the medium is continually changing."

Michele Abeles pieces together her own photos, objects, fragments of newspapers, wood and material in camera, producing art that has the complexity if not the texture of collages. Anne Collier photographs photographs, taking a sometimes ironic view of how images are used in ads, postcards and museum calendars. Shirana Shahbazi, the first Iranian artist included in the annual "New Photography" show, treads a line between photography and other media, turning her still lifes, landscapes and abstract works into photorealistic paintings and knotted rugs, made with the help of artisans she enlists.

Birdhead, the Shanghai-based photography duo of Ji Weiyu and Song Tao, takes lots of photos: They've gathered their collection of black-and-white snapshots of friends and daily life in contemporary Shanghai, and organized them into wall-size installations at the MOMA show. Zoe Crosher is exhibiting The Michelle duBois project, a collection of self portraits from the 1970s through the 1980s made by an Oklahoma-born woman who, Crosher says, worked as an occasional escort; according to Crosher, she was bequeathed the photo collection by duBois. The photos show duBois in a variety of guises and smiling poses. Crosher adds to the poignancy of this mysterious woman's attempts to create a glamorous persona by re-photographing her photos and then crumpling them, cutting creases and wrinkles through the surface of the images.

"New Photography 2012"
October 3, 2012, to February 4, 2013
Museum of Modern Art
11 West 53rd Street
New York, NY 10019
www.moma.org



"Pitcher, Paper, Arm, Scuba, Lycra," 2011,
by Michele Abeles.

EXHIBITION

Icelandic Lore

A new exhibition at New York City's Scandinavia House: The Nordic Center in America visualizes the landscapes of medieval Icelandic lore through the photographs of Einar Falur Ingólfsson and the nineteenth-century watercolor paintings of British artist W.G. Collingwood. Using Collingwood's romantic watercolors as inspiration and guide, Ingólfsson photographed the sites of the famous Icelandic sagas, which Collingwood had depicted in 1897. The dialogue between these two artists, which spans more than 110 years, reintroduces the importance of the Viking-era narratives, called *Íslendingasögur* or Sagas of Icelanders. The exhibition, "Saga-Sites," shows the changes to these legendary settings, and also serves as a scene-setter and jumping off point for several talks about the history of Iceland and the sagas.

"Saga-Sites: Landscapes of the Icelandic Sagas"
Through January 12, 2013
Scandinavia House: The Nordic Center in America
58 Park Avenue
New York, NY 10016
www.scandinaviahouse.org



"From Mt. Helgafell (27.06.2009)," 2009.

BOOK

New Development

Based as we are in a city of perpetual renewal (New York City), the sight of construction projects is nothing new to us. Yet through Brian Finke's new book, succinctly titled *Construction*, we see the craft of building large edifices in a way we never can through the cracks in the plywood barriers that commonly protect construction areas. Finke's look is all-access, and his brightly lit, almost hyper-real images make the workers and the work quite beautiful. Finke's sense of color and composition—the results of which are often playful and intriguing—engage us with patterns of I-beams, dotted with workers, reaching into cerulean skies; with bright blue valves and tangles of yellow ropes; with muscular (and not-so-muscular) workers sporting well-decorated and -worn hardhats; with yellow earth movers and green re-bar; and even piles of rock and fill. As he has with previous projects on flight attendants and on high school cheerleaders and football players, Finke encourages us to look again at something quintessentially American that we think we know. Finke's construction is not the loud, gritty, dirty, traffic-menacing headache we experience from the outside. It's a world of wonder, and it's actually quite lovely.

Construction
By Brian Finke
Essay by Whitney Johnson
Decode Books
Hardcover, 80 pages
59 photographs, \$55
www.decodebooks.com



"Untitled (Construction #9)."