

AINT — BAD



INTERVIEW: DE | MARCATION A SURVEY OF CONTEMPORARY PHOTOGRAPHY IN UTAH

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Samuel Davis, Joan, 2007

DE | MARCATION is a limited edition portfolio curated by Amy Jorgensen and Edward Bateman, and was originally conceived by Jorgensen to support the unique vision of artists in the state of Utah and to build on the rich discourse of imagemaking in the region.

DE | MARCATION surveys the contemporary photographic landscape of creative practice by artists in the state of Utah as they navigate new territory in the global dialogue of imagemaking. With the visual cue of a golden, vertical line inset into a vast swath of red fabric, the portfolio design suggests an interruption of space, and the images themselves echo this intention: they delineate new boundaries and challenge the photographic traditions of the West as a hallowed land—the landscape as a rugged vista to be conquered and tamed under the banner of Manifest Destiny and the settling of Zion. The images in this portfolio reflect the dynamics of shifting cultural narratives and our relationship to place in a richly interconnected world.

Early photographic surveys of the American West explored the physical territory; this portfolio examines the conceptual landscape of creative practice by photographic artists spanning the vast spaces of Utah. The artists have strong connections to the state and their images represent a diversity beyond geographic boundaries; they interrupt convention

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Included Artists: Kimberly Anderson, Christine Baczek, David Baddley, Edward Bateman, David Brothers, Van Chu, Samuel Davis, Daniel George, Haynes Goodsell, Mark Hedengren, Amy Jorgensen, Natalie Kirk, Karalee Kuchar, Carsten Meier, Bernard C. Meyers, Andrew Patteson, Kim Raff, Nancy E. Rivera, Fazilat Soukhakian, Josh Winegar

See more of the project on their [website](#)



David Brothers, Vans Vault, 2017

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Interview Participants

Amy Jorgensen, Project Organizer & Co-Curator / Director & Curator at Granary Arts, distributor

Edward Bateman, Project Organizer & Co-Curator

Marnie Powers-Torrey, Director of Red Butte Press, publisher

Nancy Rivera, participating artist

Daniel George, participating artist

First tell us how this project came around? What was the inspiration behind it and what was the original goal?

Amy: A few years ago I made a visit to the Center for Creative Photography (CCP) in Tucson, AZ and was able to view several photographic portfolios in their collection. Most of these were made in the 1970's when the photographic portfolio format was more common than it is now. I was inspired by what I saw at CCP and envisioned creating a portfolio collection that would speak to our region and the artists working here. Embedded in this were ideas about building the photographic community and providing a platform for Utah voices, supporting the working careers of artists, and placing the work of Utah photographers, as a group, on the national radar.

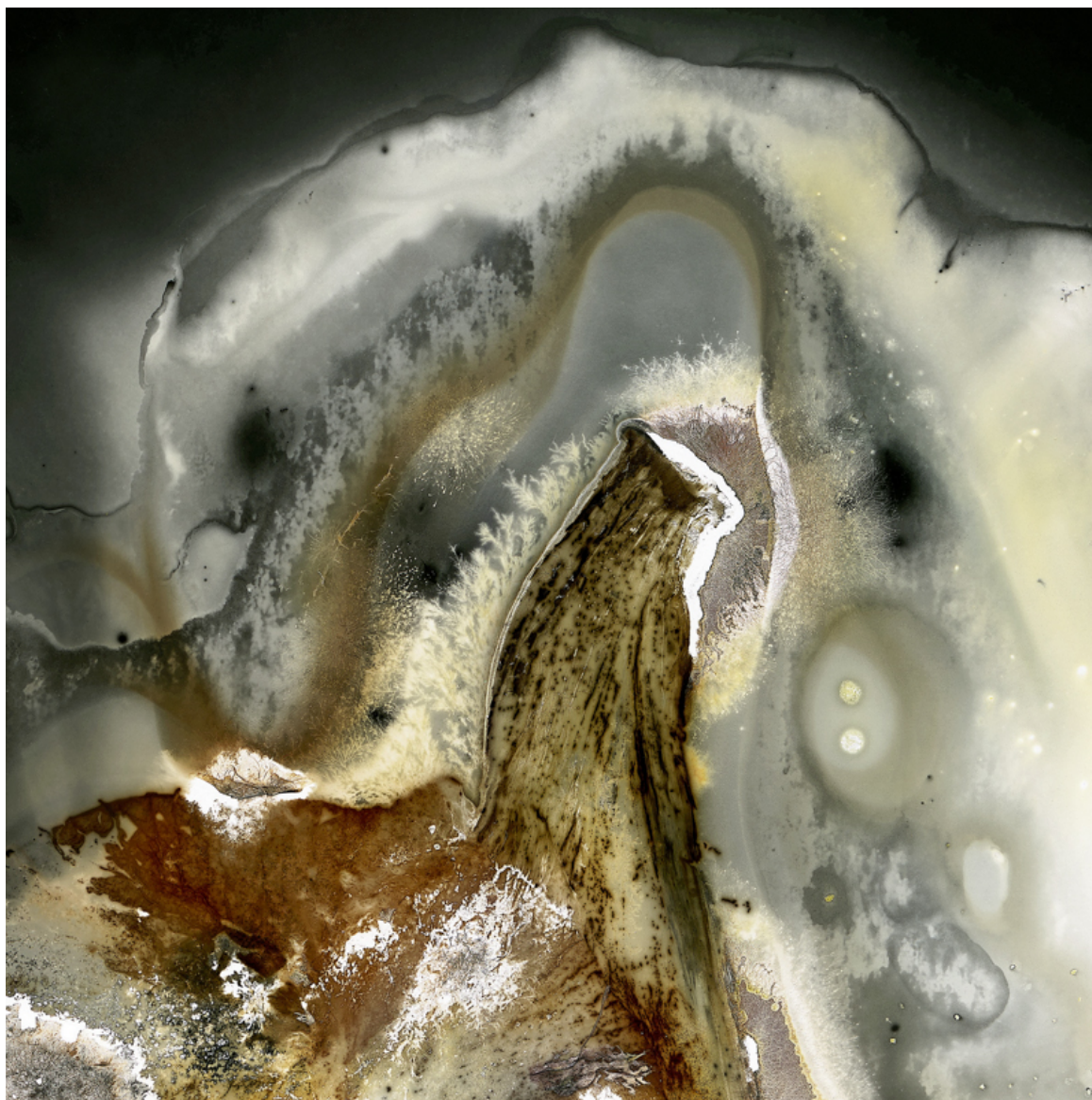
Ed: I had traveled down to Amy's school and while having lunch, we talked about the state of photography in Utah. We have a lot of talent here, but many photo artists have a tendency to only focus their exhibitions locally. We live in a big state with

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I've participated in a lot of printmaking portfolios – so I knew exactly what Amy was talking about and how portfolios build communities among artists. I knew that it would be a huge amount of work... but also that this was an important project. We were so ambitious! We set out with so many goals – more than we could ever achieve, but of course we didn't know that at the beginning. I know how tremendously busy Amy is, so the surprising thing is that she was proposing a project that was generous in its conception. Instead of putting her energy only into her own career as an artist, she was proposing a project that would benefit the entire state.

Marnie: Amy and I first met over twenty years ago on a street corner in Jamaica Plain, MA. Maybe a decade later, I was a guest lecturer at Snow College, in Ephraim, UT, and we were amazed to encounter each other again. I have also known Ed as a colleague and friend for many years. Last April, Amy contacted me as Managing Director of the Red Butte Press (RBP) and explained the collaborative nature of the project and the timeline. I spoke with our team, and immediately we were all on board. Though the RBP doesn't typically take on job work, this project provided an opportunity for our team to connect and contribute to the larger community. We easily negotiated the terms, and the collaborative nature of this project kept all of us fully engaged from start to finish.



Edward Bateman, Leaf No 25, 2017

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Amy: The artists were selected through a deep vetting process over the course of a couple of years. Through my work as curator at Granary Arts I already see a lot of work and make a point of keeping up to date on what artists are doing. However, early on it became clear the project needed to be a survey and I then began reaching out to others. With Ed Bateman as a co-curator, we contacted other curators, photographers, and educators in the state looking for suggestions as to who was making compelling work – to make sure we were expanding beyond our own circles. We were specifically looking at photographers who were working in a contemporary practice. We did studio visits, Skype calls, and spoke with many artists about their work. Broadly speaking, we were looking for a dedication to a creative practice rooted in the photographic image, a commitment to making and exhibiting work, and exceptional content; essentially, artists who were making work that pushed at the boundaries of how we interact with the photographic medium, and were bridging new perspectives into our cultural conversations.

Ed: This is so hard to answer in a simple way, because it was an evolving, multi-year process. We knew that this project would be asking a lot of the artists who would be participating in it. We initially sent out many, many emails asking artists to share their work for consideration, as well as for their willingness to commit. We also included Rebecca Ross in Arizona as an additional voice to help us review artists and add an outside perspective. Ultimately, it was lot of very hard decisions made after many long conversations to create a consensus. We were trying to identify artists who achieved a balance of being grounded in this place and whose work also spoke to the wider world. We knew that we wanted this portfolio to be valuable to museum collections beyond our state borders, so we started with a pool of artists who were already establishing wider reputations. But we also wanted this project to support and encourage a newer generation of artists who were just beginning their careers. And we relied on a bit of serendipity to make discoveries of people who weren't originally on our radar.

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Nancy E Rivera_Plasticus syngonium podophyllum, 2016

For me what I found most interesting is the great diversity in the styles and genres of photography within the portfolio. It feels like every artist stands alone within this box that gathers a conceptual idea. Can you tell us how you feel about this aspect and why was it so important for this project?

Ed: Utah is well known for its geographic and natural diversity, but to outsiders, it is often incorrectly perceived as being culturally homogenous and somewhat insular. While some artists in this portfolio indeed have generational roots in this

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The end result is a beautiful 17×22 inch portfolio box – What was the reason behind displaying the project in a limited edition portfolio box rather than traditional book format?

Amy: It was always intended to be a portfolio – the concept of a traditional book format was never really part of the discussion. Driving that decision was a desire to place the work of Utah artists directly into collections, thereby raising their cachet through institutional recognition, and fostering a patron base for fine art photography in the region. Personally, I am drawn to beautiful objects, and the handmade portfolio with original prints and letterpress inclusion was an irresistible format. There is an upcoming exhibition of the work planned at Granary Arts in May 2019, in conjunction with the show we will publish a catalog and include multiple images from each of the artists.

Ed: You really have to see this portfolio in person to appreciate its scale. My friends in Europe who I have shared this project with were immediately struck by its size... much like when one travels across this place! The scale of the prints gives them the presence as objects that goes beyond seeing the images as depictions. It has a gravitas that is more at home in a museum than on a bookshelf.



DeMarcation Portfolio, Granary Arts

I'm interested in the decision that went in to making the portfolio itself – from size to materials to overall design – what were the most important elements in this project you wanted to enhance? What was the hardest part of making the portfolio? How was the creative process behind the scenes?

Amy: In terms of design, every aspect of the box is carefully considered and intentional, there were many discussions between the curators and the Red Butte Press team during the design/build phase. Paramount to the process was building correlation between the narrative arc of the prints and the design of the box. The design needed to speak to the context of place, the conceptual narrative of the images, and the future we envisioned for the collection in the portfolio. It had to be more than just a pretty container. More specifically, there were over-arching themes we wanted to address in the design: _____

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Ed: As we got further into this project, we had a growing sense that what we were making was important – not just for this moment in history but as a document for the future. We had set ourselves a pretty tight timeline (which seemed very reasonable when we made it!) But every aspect of this projects took much longer than anticipated. We had estimated that half of a day would be required to collate the prints – but it took three days! The smallest decisions were weighed out and debated – we asked ourselves a lot of questions. This project meant many all-nighters and missed opportunities to stay on track. But that is true of any project in the arts that you deeply care about.

There are several people who made this project happen, from the curators, to the participating artists to the publisher etc. – how was it to work creatively with so many people at once?

Amy: I can't heap enough praise onto the Red Butte Press folks – they did an extraordinary job of translating the vision into physical form. Great work looks effortless in its completed state, holding few visible remnants of the labor involved. I think we pulled that off with DE | MARCATION. This project took 3 years, dozens of people, and thousands of hours to create – meetings were convened at all hours of the day and from all corners of the planet. The great thing about working with so many people is that creative collaboration has a genetic component – how you spend your time today influences future time. The project has already spawned multiple collaborations and opportunities to work with people again. When you are able to work with thoughtful and creative contributors, it doesn't feel like work, it's exciting.

Ed: Everyone was so generous, patient and supportive in this project. The younger artists were especially excited to be a part of this. From the beginning, many people believed in us – and we felt that we had one shot to get it right to honor our collaborators in this huge undertaking.

Connecting with Red Butte Press here at the University of Utah was one of those serendipitous moments in this project that made us feel that we were on the right track. They too approached this project with a spirit of generosity and took it to a new level. Artists do have opinions! But the remarkable thing is the amount of respect that everyone involved showed for the opinions of others. Decisions that we thought might take an hour or two often would consume an entire day while meanings and options of every aspect were sorted out. I can't help but feel that everyone who worked on this was so patient because they sensed the importance of this project.

Marnie: The portfolio as concept and container fuses multiple traditions with collective, contemporary concerns. The process of building this portfolio, from curation to implementation was, in my mind, an incredible, community-building celebration of both geographic specificity and diversity of perspective. Though the RBP joined the creative team after the majority of the artists and images were selected, the humble and visionary curators invited our full participation in the ongoing design and production conversation. The mutual respect of all collaborators was clear from the object's conception. In making group decisions, collaborators remained circumspect about conceptual, aesthetic, technical, and budgetary concerns. We are all very pleased with the resulting, editioned object—a complex narrative of combined visions.

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Karalee Kuchar, Bearing Weight, 2015



Van Chu_Landscape, 2009

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The project is a very small limited edition of only 35 copies how did this decision come about? What were the reasons behind the exclusivity of its edition size?

Amy: This was a balancing act between the cost of production, the number of participants, and maintaining an edition run that would still be desirable to collectors. The edition size was largely based on the number of participating artists, twenty in total, every artist has a copy of the portfolio. Because it is a self-funded project we needed to be able to cover expenses ourselves. Artists made an initial monetary contribution towards production costs and Ed and I decided to use our personal funds to cover the remainder. Before the project was finished, I was able to place enough portfolios using pre-purchase agreements so there ultimately was no need to dip into our personal funds. Taking on a project of this kind was a new experience for me and there certainly was a learning curve. I did a lot of research, asked questions, and worked on building a marketing strategy for the project that would facilitate early sales. I began speaking to collectors and institutions very early, and have a fantastic team at Granary Arts that helped to facilitate the marketing materials for the project.

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Marnie: If the edition-size were much larger, the RBP would likely not have been able to complete the work within the allotted time period. The size of the boxes presented multiple challenges in production including technical concerns as well as more basic aspects like the strain on the work space and workflow of the RBP and Book Arts Program, which share the same staff.



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Daniel George Expanding Foam Insulation, 2016

This question would mainly be for participating artists – what does it mean for you to take part in this project?

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content all around us. For this reason, for me, having my work included in this project is a form of validation that encourages me to persist as an artist.

Daniel: I will echo Nancy on this. Getting your work out can be both challenging and daunting, and recognition or validation for one's work requires a lot of persistence. Inclusion certainly provides encouragement, but it also is a resume builder. The portfolio has already been placed in several collections, and there is an upcoming show in 2019. As a person who would be classified as an emerging artist and who works in academia where this type of recognition is highly valued, being a part of the project is huge.

Marnie: For the RBP, this was an opportunity to blend fine press with photographic processes while engaging meaningfully with creative colleagues in Utah. Our team feels incredibly grateful to have worked with the curatorial team as well as with the image-makers, both directly and indirectly. The collaborative design and production processes were exceedingly fulfilling, both creatively and physically.



Amy Jorgensen, Body Archive, 12-13-2007

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What do you hope people from Utah take from this project? And what people from different states would?

Ed: I feel that this project is in some ways like a mirror – it allows us to see ourselves and hopefully understand our own complexities at this moment in time. And also, to see the ability of photography to grapple with ideas that are both personal and extend beyond our own borders. I hope that from an outside perspective, this portfolio will defy people's expectations of what this place means. This project should demonstrate that Utah is a remarkable place to practice the art of photography.

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In some ways you created a small box of a community of people who share not only the passion for photography and art but also a geographical link. As a featured artist – how was your experience seeing the final result and seeing other artist’s work within the box that share this experience with you?

Daniel: Seeing the final result was a revelatory moment—in terms of who is living and making work around me. When Amy approached me about participating in the project, I had been in Utah for less than a year and only knew a handful of artists in the area. I was still finding my place. I definitely consider it a huge honor to be recognized as part of the community, and to have my name and work associated with so many talented, intelligent image-makers. I will admit that I didn’t know the breadth of work that was being created in the state prior to seeing what was to be included in the portfolio. And I don’t think that’s uncommon. I feel like artistic communities in this part of the country are generally less-visible on the radar when compared to those in larger cities that more obviously associated with the arts. There is a lot of strong, exciting work being made in Utah, and this portfolio is evidence of that.

Ed: Even after seeing the finished portfolio and living with it for a time, I still find the portfolio to be simultaneously daunting and breathtaking. (I can feel the hours and hours of so many people and their amazing work in it!) Its size alone means that you can’t approach it casually. It is a presence that makes its own demands of you.

Nancy: Seeing the portfolio for the first time I was in awe of how beautiful and regal the box is. It’s apparent that every element was thoughtfully chosen and created.

Also, Ed touches on an important point which is that the act of viewing the portfolio is a unique experience. Unlike a book, you can’t leaf through the portfolio, you must carefully slide each page to unearth the next image, allowing you to thoughtfully spend time with each work.

I was familiar with the work of many of the featured artists because a number of them have been my mentors, professors, and artists whose work I admire, so seeing my work included among theirs was a humbling experience.

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Josh Winegar, Untitled from Burst Apart – Burst A Part, 2014

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Any advice – publishing or production, artistic, curatorial or more – that you would like to give our readers?

Ed: These things are probably true of any multi-year collaborative art production. First, I would have to say: work with good people who you respect. And know that it will take much more time and commitment than you could ever imagine. It helps to really understand why you are undertaking a project like this. It is a labor of love and as such, generosity is an excellent foundation for patience and listening to those you work with. And you have to believe in the project, because even when you try your hardest, you likely won't be able to please everybody—so knowing that you aren't alone in the work is what will get you through it.

Marnie: Though our involvement in the project had a shorter timeline, my RBP colleagues and I are in complete agreement with the curators. This laborious project was born of a shared commitment to excellence and innovation with a deep knowledge of and profound respect for historical practices. The time spent discussing details large and small was imperative, and in my experience, the opportunity to work with talented individuals who are devoted to respectful and generative communication is rare. Collaboration requires careful listening and considerate, thoughtful contributions from individuals toward a shared goal. This was a dream team—all photographers, Amy Jorgensen, Ed Bateman, Emily Tipps, and Crane Giamo—made this project happen. Teamwork is dreamwork!

Amy: If there is anything this project has brought to light, it is the spirit of collaboration. There are so many dynamic voices to bring to the table and skill sets that can be layered and staggered into something larger than you can accomplish on your own. The relationships built and fostered in collaboration extend far beyond the project at hand—they translate into

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Andrew Patteson, Untitled 1227 from the series 78th South, 2012

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Carsten Meier, Glen Canyon Dam Topo-Satl, 2017

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Kim Raff, Indoor Weapons Training, 2015

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Christine Bazcek, UMFA1951-074 Francois Duquesnoy Manner Allegory of Astronomy, 2011

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Kimberly Anderson, Salt Ramp and Pile Great Salt Lake Utah, 2011



Haynes Goodsell, Huigneider 7 Years, 2011

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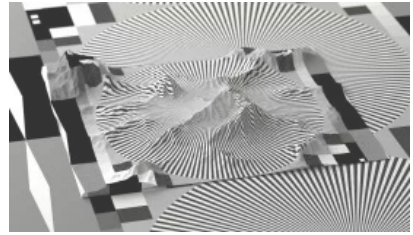
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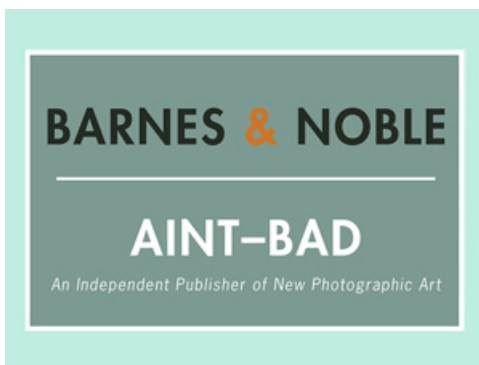
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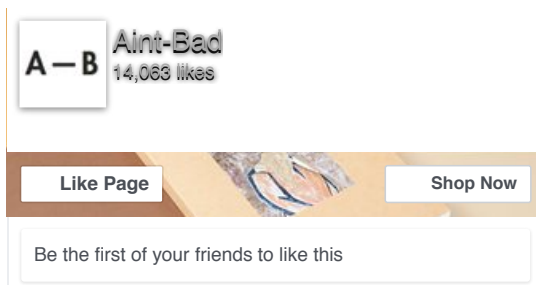
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