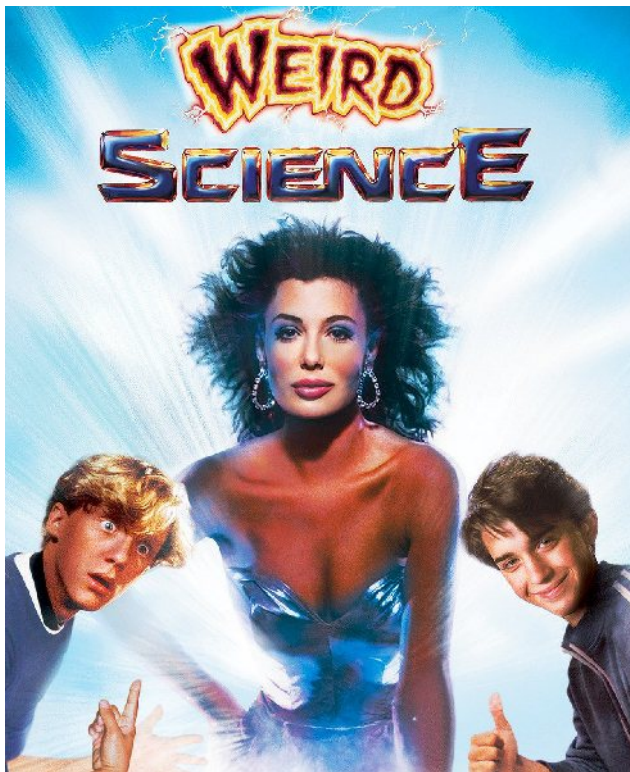




ROBOTHOUGHTS



Hollywood announced its intention to remake over one hundred previous film hits between 2019 and 2022, and one of the slated refurb was *Weird Science* (1985). Originally written by the late John Hughes, whose rebellious coming-of-age classics included *Sixteen Candles* (1984), *The Breakfast Club* (1985) and *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* (1986), *Weird Science* followed hormonally hamstrung Gary (Anthony Michael Hall) and Wyatt (Ilan Mitchell-Smith) as they horsed around on a home computer to create the perfect woman. A hack into a military mainframe and a coincidental electrical mishap turned a digital schematic into living, breathing supermodel Kelly LeBrock, who fulfilled the role of fairy godmother. With more magic than math, LeBrock whipped up cool duds, a Porsche and a snappy way to deal with bullies that inevitably allowed the nerdy two to find romance.

If the movie sent 80's audiences home with any message other than love will find a way, it was with a compelling but profoundly innocent confidence in technology's positivity. Fast forward to 2014 when the remake surfaces somewhat perplexingly as *Ex Machina*. Programmer Caleb (Domhnall Gleeson) is enlisted to evaluate the "humanness" of a robot named Ava (Alicia Vikander) which gradually reveals Ava as equal to both Caleb's and her inventor's intelligence. Early audiences were made uncomfortable by a climax in which Ava, who had been nurturing Caleb's affections, escapes and leaves him to die in a sealed room within the dead inventor's fortress-mansion. *Ex Machina* marked a significant change in the perception of AI from one century to the next. For more on where the humanoids among us may be headed, turn to page 2.

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PHSC NEWS

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Pictured above: Gary and Wyatt would have gone for the Lomography Konstruktor F Do-It-Yourself 35mm Film SLR Camera Kit. It provides avid tinkerers with all of the components needed to build their own fully-functioning camera. The kit includes instructions and a screwdriver, along with a detachable 50mm f/10 fixed-aperture lens that can focus between 1.6' and infinity. Even an optional DIY flash unit option is available. For those with the skill, patience and time, the Lomography Konstruktor is fulfilling, even if it's hardly a challenge for Ava.

PHSC PRESENTS (VIRTUALLY)

A Music Video Courtesy of Boston Dynamics



Atlas 1, Atlas 2, and Spot the robot dog, all dancing to the song Do You Love Me by the Contours. Enjoy the moves while you contemplate what else these robots might be capable of.

The PHSC wouldn't normally have much contact with a company like Boston Dynamics but we were intrigued by their recently released video. The company's tagline is "Changing your idea of what robots can do," and we admit that this demonstration fulfills that objective completely. Featuring Spot, the mobile robot designed for sensing, inspection and remote operation; the twin Atlases the website describes as "a research venture in creating the world's most dynamic humanoid," and the mobile manipulation warehouse robot named Handle, the video shows off some of the machines to be found on the Boston Dynamics site. Anyone shopping for battery-powered help there can click on options like available now, learn more, or join the mailing list. We wonder how many leave email addresses hoping to score a next-generation Roomba.

Fans of UK series *Black Mirror* might recall the episode "Metalhead" (fifth episode of the fourth season) where robotic "dogs" seemed to be programmed to hunt down and destroy humans after a collapse of global society. The invincible ingenuity of these mechanical predators was especially chilling as they possessed enough artificial intelligence to outwit, corner and kill the humans they encountered. Series creator Charlie Brooker, who wrote the episode, came up with the idea after watching, you guessed it, a Boston Dynamics product video introducing their BigDog robot.

It's obvious that Boston has attempted to soften the image of what they manufacture with the video offered here. Certainly, the moves these droids employ are amazingly cool and recognizably human. We bring this to you only with the intention of keeping you abreast of where technology seems to be going; how you might feel about it we'll leave entirely to you.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=fn3KWM1kuAw&feature=emb_logo

PHOTO BOOK 101

The Incredible Art of We Ourselves



Charlotte Landreau, Soloist, Martha Graham Dance Company



Charlotte Landreau, Soloist, Martha Graham Dance Company

Ted Shawn, one of the pioneers of modern dance, once described his passion as “The art of which we ourselves are the stuff of which it is made.” A few years ago, Deborah Ory and Ken Browar, the husband-and-wife team behind NYC Dance Project, decided to commit some of the best ephemeral moments of skilled movement to a compendium entitled *The Art of Movement* (2016). Bursting with Browar’s stunning portraits of over 70 talented members of the most respected dance companies today, this magnificent volume easily whets the appetite for the drama and subtlety of which only the human body is capable. Copies for the coffee table that you’re inviting no one in to sit around can be sourced on Amazon but be aware that Ory and Browar have transformed this lovely item into an ebook. Feeling lumpy in those salt-encrusted Uggs? Put some of these images on your phone to gaze at, and dream of better things to come.



Michael Jackson, Jr., Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater



Tiler Peck, Principal, New York City Ballet



Miriam Miller, New York City Ballet

THEORY INTO PRACTICE

Richard wasn't a Prince



Left: Cowboy by Richard Prince, a rephotograph of a Marlboro ad taken directly from a random magazine copy, 1989. Right: Classics-in-LEGO, Cowboy by Balakov (Mike Stimpson), 2010.

I was in a communication and culture class at the U of T when Richard Prince's name first came up. It was in conjunction with appropriation, the postmodern act of "borrowing" cultural material, often commercial advertising, to modify it in order to create dissenting oppositional meanings. Prince was regarded as a genius in the field (it was the early 2000s) and his name was almost spoken in reverential whispers. What Prince did, the instructor related with something akin to triumph, was take the meaning of the image away from the hegemony. The hegemony being, as you might guess, self-serving social and corporate entities.

She may have been talking about the image above. The photograph was supposed to depict the Marlboro man: a tough, independent, distinctly American, healthy-though-smoking frontiersman, a guy a horseless smoker might like to identify with. The company, Philip Morris, profited phenomenally mid-century by evoking American Exceptionalism with this symbol. By definition, American Exceptionalism is the notion that Americans are exceptional. Feeling at one with this assumption helped convince smokers that an addiction leading to catastrophic illness and death would not affect them because they were, indeed, exceptional. Needless to say, both the exceptionalism and immunity from harm were wholly imaginary but that didn't prevent the Marlboro man from becoming a cultural icon. Some time after, Prince came along and rephotographed the man-on-horse exactly as is, just discarding the company's advertising text and part of the sky. He then exhibited the result with his name as its creator prominently displayed on the didactic.

Much academic analysis was devoted to Prince's *raison d'être*. American art professor Abigail Solomon-Godeau, for one, spoke of Prince's work's "integrity" as seeking to "counter the manipulated and often synthetically composed advertising image with a comparable degree of simulation"; establishing, as theorist Jean Baudrillard liked to say, a "real

without origin or reality." This was summarized as Prince's way of rejecting "traditional notions of authorship." So the art pundit consensus was that Prince's act would herald a utopian rethink of culture. Mendacious corporate advertising could be turned against itself, the closely-guarded visual property of wealthy multi-nationals could be common use without cost or reprisal, and punitive copyright laws that the business world abused could be tossed aside.

As is often the case, utopias are just dystopias that hire PR firms. As academic institutions praised Prince's practice as a blow struck for fair use, giving impoverished artists the advantage, Prince printed Marlboro men and sold them for millions. However, hegemonic Philip Morris didn't suffer from Prince's success, as academia had predicted, because Prince kept the image before the public, granting the tobacco company free advertising. Furthermore, most people who shuffled past the man-plus-horse in gallery spaces also thought only of the Marlboro ads and not at all of the 'noble' reason for which Prince was said to reprint them. And the photographer who originally took the photograph, Sam Abell? Paid a modest sum by the agency hired by the corporation, he had no rights to the millions Prince made. Because the utopia in which Abell's property became Prince's ruled the appropriation fair use.

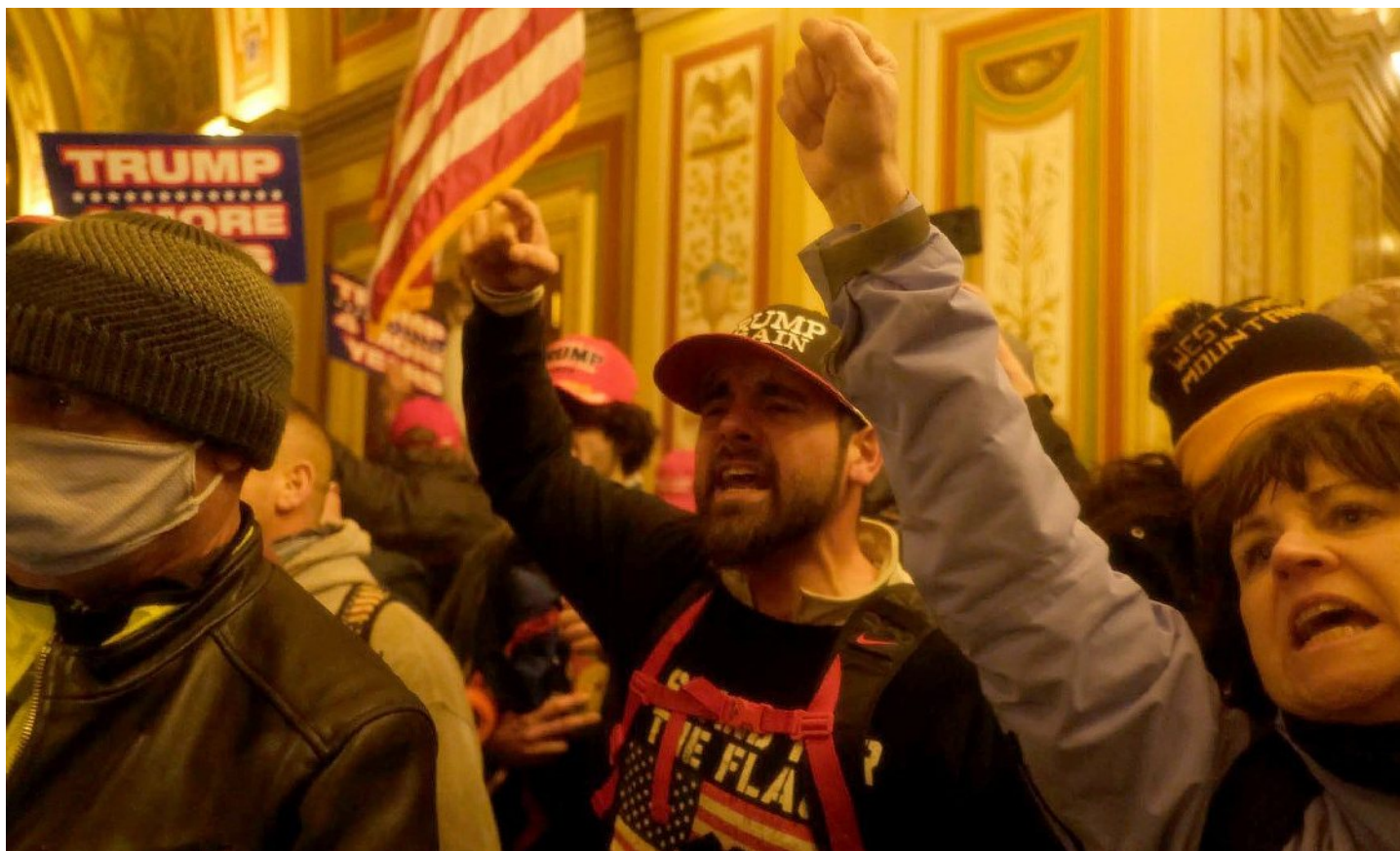
Prince has "disowned" the art he used to make before making "borrowing" his practice and profession. This might have less to do with housekeeping and more to do with hiding his utter lack of personal aesthetic capacity. Therefore, Mike Stimpson's (aka Balakov) reassignment of Prince's Marlboro man as LEGO man is an appropriate last word. Diminishing the aggrandizement of Prince's reprints by comparing them to playtime, Stimpson's borrowing is not only fair use but fair play.

Sources

"Winning the Game When the Rules Have been Changed" by Abigail Solomon-Godeau, 1983.

THE CROSS-BORDER FILE

What the World Saw on January 6, 2021



Ron Haviv, a photojournalist who has covered wars and coups across five continents for thirty years, followed the mob vandalizing the Capitol building in Washington, DC. "I was surprised," said Haviv, "they didn't realize they were committing crimes and that we were photographing them."

Contrary to the way a democracy is supposed to work, the world saw a mob, emboldened by the lies of a self-indulgent instigator, refuse to accept the legitimate outcome of a legal election. That mob, supporters of a supposedly law-and-order president, broke windows in the Capitol building, damaged and stole property and had fist fights with police like pathetic thieves and petty criminals. They planted bombs just like the terrorists they claim to detest.

Once they were on the premises, many demonstrated they had no idea of what to do. They had no manifesto, had compiled no list of demands and did not ask to speak or negotiate with any of their legal representatives. The world saw aimless, clueless louts posing for their phones. However, what truly frightened the rest of us were the vigilantes: people in paramilitary gear carrying rope, zip cuffs and semi-automatic weapons, intent on doing serious harm.

Many of the people rioting that day had announced their aggressive intentions days before in pro-fascist tweets. Even with the certainty that violence would erupt, rioters brought small children with them. Aside from being unfit parents, these cowards blamed the violence on an imaginary Antifa. Apparently, this was a group not bright enough to realize that

all the video and selfies taken that day would be combed by the FBI to identify those in attendance.

The mob breached the seat of government to show loyalty to their leadership. The joke, in the end, will be on the mob. The man they hold in esteem, in a recorded speech, has disowned the very people he incited to riot. The 45th President of the United States has been nothing other than habitually disloyal to loyalists. You know that rousing address he gave in which he said he would march with his followers? He didn't get down from the podium and join the crowd; he got in his chauffeured vehicle and drove away. How stupid do you have to be to think that a selfish man can be anything but selfish? You have to be the mob of January 6, 2021.

Sources

"A War Photographer Embeds With the Capitol Hill Mob" by Bob Moser and Ron Haviv, *The New Republic*, Jan 7, 2021, [newrepublic.com/article/160822/war-photographer-embeds-capitol-hill-mob](https://www.newrepublic.com/article/160822/war-photographer-embeds-capitol-hill-mob)

"The Pro-Trump Mob Was Doing It For The 'Gram" by Elamin Abdelmahmoud, *Buzzfeednews*, Jan 7, 2021, www.buzzfeednews.com/article/elaminabdelmahmoud/trump-mob-social-media-insurrection

EQUIPMENT REVIEW BY DAVID BRIDGE

Darkroom Automation: The Timers of Our Lives



Timer Timeline: (clockwise, of course, from top left) the Lektra, the GraLab Classic, the tongue-twisting Chromegatrol, the Samsung Developer, the Photostat, and Ray Bradbury's choice, the GraLab 451.

With jars of dead sourdough cultures and time on their hands, the PHSC labs' collectors began to muse on the similarity between darkroom endeavours and cooking. Temperature, chemical make-up, and time all are measurables in both worlds, and marketing has targeted, albeit in its lamentable gender-focussed way, those to whom gadgets offer a fine diversion from actual skill development. Let us celebrate the timer in all its variety.

The generous face of the GraLab Universal Timer is perhaps one of the primary icons of darkroom religion, second only to suspended clothes pins holding drying prints seen in so many Hollywood movies. Easy to read, easy to set, and with the circular analogue version of the status bars we watch while downloading files, it's not hard to see why GraLabs still command a few bucks at PHSC fairs. No owner will forget the urgency of the GraLab timer buzzer.

Like all hobby groups, the International Stove and Darkroom Timer Collectors Club rejoices in the technically diverse, and are much impressed with the Lektra Electronic Interval Timer. This grey hammertone beauty has a single

vacuum tube (no doubt audio experts would say it creates a superior mellow look for the prints). Perhaps one of the few darkroom timers that need a warm-up before use, it is a welcome friend in a chilly basement darkroom space.

Inevitably, the digital world would express its discrete-valued imperative on darkroom timers, and units like the GraLab 451 (amusing model number!) would use the inevitable italicized LED displays. In this case the display font clashes with the stylish, nicely-ribbed control panel and knobs. Of course miniaturization meant pathetically small switches poorly suited for use in the dark.

While on the subject of questionable usability, the PHSC old-timers revile that bane of human-machine interaction: the touch-screen, and supporting darkroom apps. However, many will praise the utility of a portable device that will control your oven, pacemaker and your queue for donuts and vaccination, as well as time your D-76ing. No doubt the programmable sequences on these devices of develop, agitate, and fix will prove equally useful in the kitchen for roast, baste and turn!

WEB LINKS

COMPILED BY DAVID BRIDGE

'It was just a free-for-all': my day photographing the Capitol attack *The Guardian*, Saul Loeb, Fri 8 Jan 2021, 11.00 GMT.

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/jan/08/my-day-photographing-capitol-attack>

I had gone to take pictures of the joint session of Congress – I had no idea what was coming our way.

On the morning that the US Capitol was stormed by Trump supporters, I knew it was going to be a pretty big day. Agence France-Presse (AFP) had photographers all over the city and my job was to be inside the Capitol, photographing the joint session where the vote counting would occur.

But I had no idea what was coming our way.



The mob, encouraged by Donald Trump, breached security and entered the Capitol as Congress debated the 2020 presidential election electoral vote certification. Photograph: Saul Loeb/AFP/Getty Images



The outside of Nikon's Sendai Factory

Report: After more than 70 years Nikon ends domestic camera production, planning move to Thailand, *Dpreview*, Gannon Burgett, published Dec 21, 2020.

www.dpreview.com/news/4548503988/report-41-years-nikon-ends-domestic-camera-production-move-thailand

Japanese publication AERAdot has reported Nikon is ending domestic camera production in Japan. According to the report, Nikon will be moving camera production from its Sendai Nikon factory in the Tōhoku region North of Tokyo to its Thailand factories in an effort to reduce costs.

Paul Strand – an introduction, Victoria & Albert Museum, produced as part of *Paul Strand: Photography and Film for the 20th Century*.

www.vam.ac.uk/articles/paul-strand-an-introduction?fbclid=IwAR1KDvVa1YK9iRKGj7coOykqurhu0tY84lxHegv7AZpOK2V1I7xng55YOLE

In a career that spanned almost the entire 20th century, Paul Strand is famous for delving in to the heart of small communities, capturing a sense of authenticity and telling the stories of the people and places that he visited through his photography. Martin Barnes, senior curator of photographs at the V&A, discusses the significance of Paul Strand's work.



Wall Street, New York, 1915, Paul Strand © Paul Strand Archive, Aperture Foundation

MORE ZOOM SHOW & TELL

Wednesday, January 20 at 8pm



Back by popular demand! One more chance to captivate a COVID-confined audience with your cabinet of camera curiosities!

It seems like only last month that enthusiasts were entralling us with images, instruments and artifacts that would otherwise be lying under dusty piles of Maclean's magazines. Well, we're doing the Zoom thing again because we know there's more great stuff out there, just dying to have its moment on screen. If you're new to this event, remember you don't have to be an academic or expert to talk about something photographic you're excited about, and presenters do not have to be Toronto or even Canadian residents. If you've already presented, we won't stop you from doing it again as long as you change it up. Presentations can be anything from that camera that even a mother couldn't love (though your mother tried), to the finds you dug out of the dumpster behind Henry's, to that blurry image your weird cousin swore was a UFO.

Rest assured we won't do the Annual General Meeting again because, hey, it should stay annual.

To participate, book your FREE tickets on Eventbrite (<https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/zoom-tell-virtual-programme-tickets-136032977297>), and we will send you a ZOOM link and password!

While we're at it, let us just encourage you TO JOIN THE SHOW AND TELL with that special (or not) object in your collection. Email us at info@phsc.ca with Virtual Show and Tell 2021 on the subject line, and we'll include you in the lineup.

Who's ZOOMing who? Find out at the ZOOM Show & Tell!



IVY & IZZY

The Conceptual Burden of Being Chris Burden

Izzy: Social media, babe. I've been trying to sort out its evolution. I mean, it seemed to start out as an experiment in democracy and now it's a tsunami of cat videos, selfies and peanut-butter donut-burger hacks.

Ivy: Iz, you need to think back to the origins of performance art.

Izzy: I'm thinking dumbest things ever posted on the internet and you're thinking art?

Ivy: Actually, I'm thinking about the precursors for types of communication that have become so commonplace they are paradoxically invisible while they're everywhere, and momentary while they're eternal. And it starts before the internet becomes broadly accessible to the public in the 1990s.

Izzy: Performance. I take it this isn't about Masterpiece Theatre?

Ivy: Gee whiz, Iz. In the 70s, a genre of artists emerged from the avant-garde seeking to expand the definition of human expression beyond painted surfaces, sculpture and scripted theatre. Working with time, space, the limits of the human body and assumptions regarding viewership, artists such as Yoko Ono, Vito Acconci, Marina Abramovic and Chris Burden shocked the public with improvised and planned performances captured with stills or video. They were intended as conceptual interpretations of the human condition or as social critique. My personal favourite of those performance innovators was Chris Burden.

Izzy: Isn't he the guy who arranged for someone to photograph him while being shot? A trifle unusual, no?

Ivy: Yes, but you have to see his performance in the context



of the day. The 70s was all about a transformation of thinking about violence in the United States, one that would turn out to affect us well into the future. In those days, American gun laws had, for the most part, been considered necessary for civil society. Then a member of the National Rifle Association, Kenyon Ballew, was shot during an arrest for stockpiling illegal weapons. From that point on, the NRA went full bore on interpreting the Constitution's Second Amendment as every American's right to carry firearms.

Izzy: Wait, I've read the Second Amendment. When it talks about "the right of the people to keep and bear arms," it uses the word 'people' to stand in for the state. It's talking about a nation having its own militia or army because Britain didn't want their former colony to have any defensive capability. It never meant that every guy should have a gun.

Ivy: Unfortunately, so few bother to read this important document that others can convince them of what isn't there. So Burden was acting out what he thought would eventually become every American's grim reality, getting shot. At the same time, he and other performance artists managed to grant subsequent generations the rather liberating notion that everyone was entitled to an audience. And that's social media.

Izzy: Such a burden to be ahead of your time.



Shoot, live performance by Chris Burden, Gagosian Gallery, New York, 1971.

Sources

"When the NRA Supported Gun Control" by Arica L. Coleman, *TIME*, July 31, 2016

THE CLASSIFIEDS

Contest



One of last year's winners: Slightly Suspicious by Ania Avadanei.

ROM WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR CONTEST

The ROM Wildlife Photographer contest returns for a sixth year! Whether you're an amateur or professional photographer, the ROM invites you to share your images of the natural world for a chance to win some amazing prizes and have your photograph on display at the museum. Open to all residents of Ontario, both youth and adult categories. Read on to find out about this year's incredible prizes, rules and how to enter:

www.rom.on.ca/en/exhibitions-galleries/exhibitions/wildlife-photographer-of-the-year-2020/

Deadline: March 21, 2021

Online Exhibitions



Mines #19, Edward Burtynsky, 1985

EDWARD BURTYNSKY Collection

The Ryerson Image Centre announced a multi-year donation of photographs by celebrated Canadian photographer Edward Burtynsky. The first instalment of this gift is made up of 142 rarely-seen photographs from the artist's early career. Explore the collection at: ryersonimagecentre.ca/collection/the-edward-burtynsky-collection/

Online Exhibitions



Fox River, Gaspé, Quebec by Paul Strand, 1936.

PAUL STRAND AND CANADA *Travels to the Gaspé Peninsula*

Ann Thomas from the National Gallery of Canada presents images done by Paul Strand along with information about Strand's many visits to Canada. On view at:

www.gallery.ca/magazine/your-collection/paul-strand-and-canada-travels-to-the-gaspe-peninsula?utm_source=National+Gallery+of+Canada+Newsletter&utm_campaign=f136d31746-Magazine_December_2020_EN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_f15bbe4739-f136d31746-23080013



Apache Junction by Phil Bergerson

PHIL BERGERSON *Retrospective, In Search of Meaning* Stephen Bulger Gallery on until Jan 30, 2021

This exhibition coincides with the release of Bergerson's third monograph, *A Retrospective*, published by Daylight Books. The publication and the exhibition are a survey of his career, which started in the early 1970s with an exploration of drawing and painting before Bergerson moved on to embrace photography exclusively.

View some of the works online at: www.bulgergallery.com/artists/54-phil-bergeson/works/

Contest



CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS "DISCOVER DUKE" PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBIT

DUKE Heights BIA would like to invite all aspiring photographers: young and seasoned, amateurs or pros, students, professionals or retirees, from our community and beyond, to explore the BIA and submit unique photographs that capture the essence of our business community. More information at dukeheights.ca/discover-duke/ Submit photos at dukeheights.submittable.com/submit Deadline: Monday, January 25, 2021 at 4.00 PM.

Call for Images



MAKE US LAUGH

PhotoED Magazine seeks photographic puns, jokes, and images that share the JOY found in photography.

Submit online:

photoed.ca/submit-your-work

Deadline: Monday, FEBRUARY 1, 2021