



## **There's a Place**

A Three Decade Survey of Photographs  
by J. Shimon & J. Lindemann

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OPPOSITE

*Self-Portrait Re-ringing the John Deere A,  
Whitelaw, WI, 2001 (detail)*



# On Identity

RACHELE KRIVICHI

I remember this: The first time I saw John Shimon and Julie Lindemann six years ago on our small college campus in Appleton, I knew, undoubtedly, that they were artists. They possessed a mien that begged the scrutiny of others, yet they were the ones observing us. I wondered if I would ever become their student. Today, some years graduated from their classroom and on the search for my own identity, I struggle every day to devote my life to art. More than ever, I define Shimon and Lindemann as artists for their lifelong dedication to photography.

Recently, I visited Appleton and assisted the pair in framing a silver gelatin print of *Dustin with Lacy, Valders, WI, 1996*. In the print, Dustin, a thirteen-year-old boy, and Lacy, a cow, stand in a pose of unusual affection while an ominous herd and an apparent storm loom behind them. The print is huge. Not just in scale, but in significance. Its careful construction conveys the importance of Dustin's life, his job, and his presence. He is not a minor farmhand, but a third-generation farmer hoping to sustain the family business. The weight of Dustin stayed with me on the drive home, past fields and defunct farms.



*Dustin with Lacy, Valders, WI, 1996*

This print cannot be isolated in the broad range of Shimon and Lindemann's work, however. Compare it to the photograph of Barry Lynn from the series *One Million Years is Three Seconds* (1999–2008). In several prints from this series, we see Barry standing in robes in his expansive garden. Unlike Dustin, Barry's identity is not formed by his vocation. His world appears as a lush paradise—one that he intentionally crafted so as to live and teach in harmony. A dreamy grin suggests contentment with this phase of his life.

Barry and Dustin represent two identities as they exist in a single moment, captured by the unrelenting gaze of Shimon and Lindemann's antiquated camera. Barry, an aged aesthete, who sculpted a path based on a passion. Dustin, a boy, whose path in farming is seemingly laid before him. The tantalizing mystery (the answer

to which is not revealed in the print) is where Dustin, the cattle, and the farm are today, almost twenty years after this photograph was taken. Additionally, how will Barry's idyllic world change as he continues to age? What will the camera see?

For Shimon and Lindemann, I realize, do not photograph people. They photograph constructed identities, fragile and intangible as they are. Their work is an index of the complex, inner longings that guide us as we attempt to find ourselves. Over the course of their thirty-year career, they have acted simultaneously as photographers and alchemists, transfiguring particles into matter to help us gain insight into our identities. Ultimately, Shimon and Lindemann have changed the way I see artists. It was not until they photographed me that I realized they knew me better than I know myself.

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OPPOSITE

*Dustin with Lacy, Valders, WI, 1996 (detail)*



# There's No Place Like Home

DAN LEERS

Often, in retrospective exhibitions, a photographer's work is presented chronologically to provide structure to a peripatetic career. In this model, the timeline connects disparate projects that might not have much to do with one another. While this may help audiences better comprehend the work of certain photographers, it is not necessary for understanding the photography of John Shimon and Julie Lindemann, who, for more than thirty years, have sustained a singular commitment to the people and places of their native Wisconsin. Though the artists work on a project-by-project basis, Wisconsin is always their backdrop. A timeline becomes irrelevant because their home state provides a natural organizing framework for this retrospective.

When Shimon and Lindemann were starting out, the itinerant practices of artists such as Henri Cartier-Bresson (French, 1908–2004), Lee Friedlander (American, b. 1934), and Stephen Shore (American, b. 1947), who took pictures while always on the move, was the dominant paradigm. As such, it may seem unusual that they rejected this working method and instead decided to focus exclusively on where they live. Part of their reason for doing this was an interest in saying something about Wisconsin that would transcend the trite or quaint.

Shimon and Lindemann's exploration of their home state from a variety of different angles is their way of paying tribute to its everyday places and ordinary people that generally get ignored. Past projects include photographing the elderly, taking pictures of 4-H members with their livestock, and shooting in a Manitowoc strip club. (Manitowoc is particularly important because Shimon and Lindemann maintained a studio and storefront there, which provided a crucial point of interaction with the local community for more than twenty years.)

Shimon and Lindemann use photography and other media forms to share experiences that relate to the local, in Wisconsin, but that also resonate with people participating in media culture around the world.

Though the artists distinguished themselves from photographers whose work took them far afield, they are still part of a long tradition of American photographers concentrating on a single place and population for their entire career. Some examples include William Eggleston (b. 1939), who photographs in his hometown of Memphis, Tennessee, and Bill Owens (b. 1938), who has worked primarily in Hayward, California. Another artist is Milton Rogovin (1909–2011), who spent three decades documenting Buffalo's Lower West Side and its residents for his project *The Forgotten Ones*. Rogovin moved to Buffalo from New York City in 1938 and worked from 1972 to 2002 to photograph a number of low-income families in the area and portray the ways in which they and their environment changed over time. Different

in its intent relative to Shimon and Lindemann's work—to demonstrate how society ignores people of lesser means—the series nonetheless reflects Rogovin's dedication to looking closely at his environment through a prolonged and engaged photographic project. Also like Rogovin, Shimon and Lindemann have photographed the same person in a variety of settings, including at work, at home, and in the streets, over a period of years in order to witness their evolving humanity.

Thomas Roma has also devoted most of his career to his hometown: Brooklyn, New York. Born in Brooklyn in 1950, Roma began photographing in assorted neighborhoods there in the early 1970s. Because of the size of the place and the large number of people who live there, Roma has engaged with Brooklyn through a number of different projects. He has photographed the borough's churches and elevated subways, and even the local dogs with their owners, as a way of appreciating the rich makeup of the borough. Each of these projects is a distinct body of work, yet their shared setting naturally connects them to one another. Roma, like Shimon and Lindemann, has continued to photograph his birthplace and his neighbors so that others might experience his milieu.

Judith Joy Ross (b. 1946) is perhaps the most relevant example of a photographer demonstrating a singular connection to a place through her work. Since the 1980s, Ross has been making portraits of the people of eastern Pennsylvania near her hometown of Hazleton. Ross, like

OPPOSITE

*Manitowoc Gray/Nowhere, Franklin Street, Manitowoc, WI, 1999 (detail)*



719 York Street Studio Storefront, Manitowoc, WI, 1999

Shimon and Lindemann, remains faithful to photographic equipment and materials that have been rapidly supplanted by the digital. She works with an 8 x 10 inch large-format camera and makes almost exclusively black and white gelatin silver and albumen prints. For these photographers, working with such materials means slowing down the act of looking and paying close attention to even ordinary details. Ross's dedication to photographing her surroundings in Pennsylvania is closely aligned with Shimon and Lindemann's work in Wisconsin.

Attempting to place the work of John Shimon and Julie Lindemann on a timeline would mainly emphasize its disjointed character. In the 1980s, they made portraits of prominent Wisconsinites; in the 1990s, they were interested in the rebirth of the punk rock scene; and since then, they have photographed everything from Evergleam aluminum Christmas trees to Harvestore silos, both manufactured in Wisconsin. At first glance, nothing connects these disparate projects, but on closer examination, a common theme emerges. For the duration of their thirty-year career, Shimon and Lindemann have photographed almost exclusively in their home state. As a result, their different projects combine to form one larger, overarching project that is about a commitment to place and fitting that place in a broader context.

Shimon and Lindemann explore Wisconsin with their cameras in order to better understand and appreciate the state, and also to share that appreciation with others. In the classic film *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), Dorothy is relieved to find that, after her psychedelic journey into the Technicolor world of Oz, she has safely returned to her normal, black and white existence in Kansas. For Shimon and Lindemann, like Dorothy, there's no place like home.

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*Manitowoc Gray/Nowhere, Franklin Street, Manitowoc, WI, 1999*



# Picturing the Continuum

GRAEME REID

We carry devices around that offer us access to an almost infinite amount of information. This ability to readily explore the world with the mere swipe or touch of a finger is as remarkable as it is taken for granted. Yet there is a pushback to such easy globalism: a renewed appreciation for a particular region, state, city, or town is tangible in such things as locally sourced food or staycations. It is as if in struggling to digest the vastness of human activity, people are coping by concentrating on those things closer to home. It seems the greater access we have to the world, the deeper the appreciation of “the local.”

John Shimon and Julie Lindemann are Wisconsinites. Both were born in rural Manitowoc County on the western shore of Lake Michigan. For them, concentrating on what they found on their doorstep in Wisconsin—the local—became central to their photographic project. But the word “local” has often implied a lack of sophistication, a view that is, in its own way, guilty of the same charge.

In the 1930s and 1940s, critics such as Thomas Craven dubbed Thomas Hart Benton, John Steuart Curry, and Grant Wood (from Missouri, Kansas, and Iowa, respectively) “regionalists” and praised their realist and anti-abstractionist styles and obvious lack of European modernist tendencies. Their images celebrated people

and places in their particular states in ways that were both laudatory and critical—and often in sophisticated ways that went unnoticed. For example, when Wood painted *American Gothic* in 1930, many misinterpreted it (and still do) as a satire on Iowa’s rural population. On the contrary, the house’s window reminded Wood of gothic architecture he had seen while studying in Europe in the 1920s, and his precise, almost severe brushwork reflects the brushstrokes in paintings by fifteenth-century Flemish artist Jan van Eyck whom Wood admired. Indeed, it was the house that first appealed to the artist, and the people (posed by his sister Nan and his dentist Dr. Byron McKeeby) were the kind of people Wood was familiar with and imagined might live there: serious, straightforward, upstanding folks. Wood took his knowledge of European art and architecture and applied it to his own work in a way that was subtle and refined.

Shimon and Lindemann’s work has suffered similar misunderstandings. Some have misinterpreted it as gently mocking the provincialism of their subjects and their small-town lives and activities. Nothing could be further from the truth. Like Wood, they are very cognizant of art history and in tune with their community and environment, and each image is a planned exercise in concern for and fascination with other people and their place in the world. Ultimately, Wood abhorred the term “regionalist,” feeling that it was patronizing and that the rural parts of America had as much to offer as urban centers. In short, for Wood and for Shimon and Lindemann, the local was/is valid, genuine, and,

at the same time, important. For art to show the idiosyncratic nature of a place, to tell its stories, realism trumps the modernist trope of being universal and non-representational.

Shimon and Lindemann are regionalists par excellence in the truest “Woodsian” definition of the term. Their work is assuredly “local” yet still deals with issues that transcend space and time, such as belonging, marginalization, social status, sexuality, relationships, nostalgia, community, and technology. However, a more accurate term may be “neo-regionalist,” because when the term “regionalist” was first coined, Wood felt it negatively “pigeonholed” him and his colleagues in the Midwest. Shimon and Lindemann proudly embrace their midwestern Wisconsin origins, making no apologies for being rooted in a particular place. For example, in *RJ as Glade Boy in Abandoned K-mart Parking Lot, Manitowoc, WI, 1996*, they befriended a young man who, chafing against his own seemingly humdrum reality, adopted a fantasy alter ego as a household cleaner—huffing wonder boy—punkish rebellion on the cheap and convenient. Confiding in the artists in 2000, RJ acknowledged that his drug use was a contemporary version of the 1980s glue-sniffing craze, and that further drug experimentation and a growing awareness of the potential for life-threatening results prompted him to quit shortly thereafter. As “neo-regionalists,” the artists present their subjects in a straightforward manner without excuses, and therein lies their strength—local knowledge breeds strong work; their pictures could not be taken by an outsider.

OPPOSITE

*RJ as Glade Boy in Abandoned K-mart Parking Lot, Manitowoc, WI, 1996* (detail)



Henry Hamilton Bennett (American, 1843–1908),  
*H.H. Bennett at Sugar Bowl*, photograph, not dated.



Charles Van Schaick (American, 1852–1946),  
*Sarah Spaulding Castle and Maud Cooper in Garden*,  
photograph, not dated.

Shimon and Lindemann are both deeply knowledgeable and an integral part of Wisconsin's remarkably rich photography history. Henry Hamilton Bennett worked in what would become the Wisconsin Dells in the late nineteenth century, pioneering the instantaneous shutter and creating a body of work that has defined that particular place as an internationally renowned tourist destination. In the early twentieth century, Oshkosh's Lewis Hine developed the concept of the "photostory," interweaving subject and narrative, focusing on people at the margins of society. Charles van Schaick's images from Black River Falls in the 1890s and early 1900s formed the basis for writer Michael Lesy's book *Wisconsin Death Trip* (1973), establishing a portrait of a place that is as compelling as it is disturbing. Around the same time, Edward Steichen picked up his first Kodak box camera in Milwaukee, before becoming a giant of the medium in the early twentieth century. He was succeeded as curator of photography at New York's Museum of Modern Art by Ashland-born John Szarkowski, an accomplished photographer and seminal writer on the subject who was instrumental in establishing photography as a legitimate medium.

More recently, in 2001, Madison's Lewis Koch launched his *Touchless Automatic Wonder* project, with images of "found words" in the landscape, in which, though no people are pictured, the human presence is tangible. The influence and reputation of these artists have not remained just within the state's boundaries, far from it, these artists are renowned nationally

and internationally. Shimon and Lindemann are undoubtedly influenced by these artists, yet they have created a body of work that is very much their own. It is focused, thoughtful, connected, place-specific, and wide-ranging, and it has a readily identifiable aesthetic. Few artists in the state have created such a complete body of work, and that deservedly places them in the company mentioned above.

This appreciation of the past and the melding of the old and the new is clearly seen in *Dylan and Brett Downtown, Manitowoc, WI, 1994*. This portrait echoes the work of August Sander (German, 1876–1964) and Diane Arbus (American, 1923–1971) in its form and directness, yet is distinctly a work of Shimon and Lindemann. The two young men, in an act of defiance with their rock and roll antics and Warholian art projects, left Manitowoc for fame and better times, only to return disillusioned and defeated. *Angela with Kit (Blue Velvet Prom Dress), Reedsville, WI, 1997* is an elegant counterbalance to this image, with Angela as fully committed to the farm community she grew up in as Dylan and Brett were to severing all ties with their hometown and its lifestyle. Angela, who studied Dairy Science at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, served as the County Farm Bureau Queen, the Fairest of the Fair, showed dairy cattle, judged awards, and participated in local 4-H and FFA (Future Farmers of America) organizations, here, exudes pride—of self, of community, of her skill with animals, with her place in the world. These photographs

demonstrate the depths to which Shimon and Lindemann penetrate their community and understand its diverse inhabitants.

As contemporary artists, Shimon and Lindemann embrace modern technology. Digitizing their photographs and engaging with social media have enabled their work to be seen far beyond the confines of Wisconsin. Yet, since reading *Keepers of Light* (1979) by William Crawford in the early 1980s, they have been using antique equipment and printing methods such as platinum, palladium, gum bichromate, and cyanotype, appreciating the distinct personality and characteristics these techniques give individual prints. And this gets to the very heart of their work: using a medium with inherent possibilities for mass production, they relegate that aspect in favor of the individual—and oftentimes unique—print, perhaps, I would argue, to bestow greater emphasis on the individual person or place depicted. The antique cameras and processes also do something that is resolutely at odds with much of contemporary image-making. With practically everyone having a camera in their phone, the act of taking a picture has become fast in action, fast of thought, and often devoid of meaning beyond documenting the here and now, thus creating an almost instant nostalgia for what just was. Shimon and Lindemann's work is the opposite: slow, measured, contemplative, a visual meditation.

Compelling art often has a signature aesthetic, idiosyncratic technique, insight and connection to the subject matter, a cohesive vision over a



*Dylan and Brett Downtown, Manitowoc, WI, 1994*

period of time, and the ability to arouse within the viewer a feeling of understanding or, even better, connection. John Shimon and Julie Lindemann have accomplished this. Over the past thirty years, their body of work has eloquently described a place through its people and their environment. In the annals of Wisconsin—nay, *American*—photography, Shimon and Lindemann have made images that are as authentic as they are intimate. The pictures are always of their time, but it is the very passage of that time which will reveal something as to who we are, how we lived, and how we coped with the world in a time of constancy and change. They are images for the ages.



*Angela with Kit (Blue Velvet Prom Dress), Reedsville, WI, 1997*

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# Where Is Wisconsin Anyway?

DEBRA BREHMER

Although J. Shimon & J. Lindemann have perused the archive of photographic history with a far-flung intellectual hunger, it is August Sander (1876–1964) who hovers over their thirty years of production.

Sander's lifelong project was to photograph various types of people in Germany. Coming from working-class roots (his father was a carpenter in the mines), he had an egalitarian interest that was deep and sincere in its own quiet, typological way. From the early 1900s until after World War II, he photographed farmers, intellectuals, the persecuted, and the disenfranchised.

John Shimon and Julie Lindemann have likewise focused on place and people. Perhaps more accurately, they have focused on no-where and no-one; Wisconsin, after all, doesn't exist to the larger art world, and the individuals they've been drawn to—farmers, the elderly, 4-H kids, skateboarders, punk rockers, drive-in carhops, and small-town strippers—are modest if not marginal. One might ask why? Why did these two extraordinarily gifted, smart photographers, who have tirelessly studied history as well as contemporary theory and plied steadily at their craft, and who look like movie stars and carry the grace of royalty, sequester themselves in Manitowoc County for all their working lives thus far?

OPPOSITE

*Self-Portrait with 30 x 36 Camera, Whitelaw, WI, 2009 (detail)*

To listen to John intricately explain the digestive process of a dairy cow is to answer that question. One must also listen to Julie share her fascination with the role of the photo postcard in rural America during the pre-telephone era, or hear them both recite the nuanced history of the Harvestore silo originally manufactured in Wisconsin by Milwaukee's A. O. Smith Corporation. Their intellectual curiosity, often focused on the undervalued or overlooked, would have been compromised had they stayed in New York City (1983–84) to compete within a cloistered art world. They needed room to graze and think more freely and openly about their personal histories as country kids, about what “place” means to the core of who you are and what you become, and, most importantly, to contemplate the theoretical central theme of their work: time. Geological, historical, and Sunday, 5 p.m., August 10 at the corner of 7th and Washington Streets—the epoch and minute, compressed inside an antique camera and embedded into emulsion on cotton rag stock in a way that holds onto the simple record-keeping functionality of a picture, but seasons it with the gray fog of existential slippage.

Like Sander, Shimon and Lindemann have a heightened awareness of the intersection of what a camera mechanically does (stops time) and the restless temporality of our lives. The ceaseless “letting go” that is the condition of life, as well as the evasive fluidity of time and identity, pairs beautifully within the essence of photography. Just imagine: a mechanical apparatus that STOPS TIME. Then imagine

this machine being born at the same time that the world was speeding up beyond belief, in 1839, when Western civilization began churning with inventions that would leave no life untouched. Shimon and Lindemann wrote in their Milwaukee Art Museum catalogue, *Unmasked and Anonymous*, that “Our photographs appear as a nostalgic look at the present: a longing for all time objectified and interrelated” (Hostetler, Shimon, and Lindemann 2008, 17).



August Sander (German, 1876–1964), *Young Farmers*, 1914. Gelatin silver print, ca. 1980s. Milwaukee Art Museum, The Floyd & Josephine Segel Collection, Gift of Wis-Pack Foods, Inc.

Over the last few decades, artists have become detached from the legacy of modernism, opting for a post-modern pastiche of unidentifiable sources and a release from the dulling weight of things like linearity, objectness, and authorship. Within a speedy global world, time did seem to fold in on itself. Distances shrank. Access to information bled from every motherboard. Shimon and Lindemann grappled with how to be anchored to historic photographic technique, address a non-glamorous subject like rural Wisconsin, and still maintain a theoretical bearing within contemporary art discourse.

One way Shimon and Lindemann addressed and defined their interest in both history and contemporaneity was via the “Neo-Post-Now,” a conceptual orientation of their own invention that included a storefront gallery (1992–97) under that name, which was part of the nineteenth-century warehouse in Manitowoc that was also their studio and home, and a zine, *Art\$lut*, to catalog the shows. Whether they fully knew it at the time, Neo-Post-Now is the perfect self-inscribed categorization of their work, a place where time flows, bends, and overlaps, where the act of taking a picture and the picture itself bring past, present, and future into conscientious and expandable terms.

Shimon and Lindemann’s use of antique cameras and printing processes not only slows their engagement with the making of the picture, but also unites subject, artists, and viewer in conversation with the medium’s history and, by association, the history of the modern world.



*Julie with Michael and Natalie, Neo-Post-Now Gallery, Manitowoc, WI, 1995*

In portraiture, Shimon and Lindemann pair this historic referent with a unique, contemporary subject, but one who also often has a timeless disposition and role. Like with Sander, we see the farmer, the farm kid, the haircutter, the small-town rebel, the cousins, and the auto mechanics as both universals and individuals. Even their series of portraits of Lake Michigan have this duality. The artists notate specifics on the back of each print: date, place, time of exposure, and printing process, and yet the picture itself could be any time and, often, any decade. While the “neo” and “post” seem fully operative, the “now” is often the most elusive component of their work, as it is in life. In their photographs, the elusive “now” translates as an underlying tension or anxiety. Many of their subjects, especially in the 1990s, were either going somewhere or coming from somewhere, landing tenuously in Manitowoc, Wisconsin, while dreaming of the beyond. Often, the cyanotype or platinum used to make the print casts a tonal atmosphere that further masks time of day or era. And yet, whether they



are photographing the Capri Steak House in Columbus, a Harvestore silo in New Holstein, Herman’s barn, or Marcia Harms with her feeder pig, the picture is essentially about contemporaneity, change, and loss. The subject of their work is the residue of modernism, what is left after the onslaught and demise of the industrial age.

Beyond subject matter, their pictures are beautiful “things.” These hand-wrought prints culled from the intricate mechanics of old cameras with finicky shutters and irreplaceable parts absorb the love, care, and precision put into the process. Shimon and Lindemann’s approach to “home growing” artisanal prints is not unlike Phil and Bart’s (Julie’s brothers) approach to making their award-winning Pine River horse-radish cheddar cold pack spread. (Julie’s father founded the cheese factory fifty years ago). Some of the prints were exposed on the roof of the couple’s studio in Manitowoc, courting just the right amount of sunlight to harvest an image. They have used a wheelbarrow to transport a banquet camera into the farm field for shoots.

Velvety when they are platinum/palladium, murky and inky when gum bichromate, veiled and watery when cyanotype—each style of print has its own recipe of presence, as tenderly wrought as a dollop of crème fraîche.

Shimon and Lindemann's care in making pictures goes far beyond choice of camera, chemistry, and type of paper, however. They embrace each subject with a unique engagement. Eschewing the "hit and run" momentum of photographers such as Bruce Gilden (American, b. 1946) or Martin Parr (English, b. 1952), Shimon and Lindemann stay in touch with nearly everyone they photograph, either via a friendship or at least annual handwritten postcards. These relationships mean a great deal to them, and no matter how poorly some of these assorted misfits, intellectuals, and self-attuned mystics behave on occasion, Shimon and Lindemann hold tight. Photographer, writer, and former photo curator Tom Bamberger once wrote, "They are compulsive sharers of experience. Quaint values like honesty matter, as do the people in their photos, people who fuel their desire to conserve something of purpose" (Bamberger 1988). The pictures then are not so much about individuals, but individual relationships—the human-to-human exchange.

In "Pictures of Non-Famous People," an essay on the artists' blog ([shimonlindemann.com](http://shimonlindemann.com)) about their project *Non-Famous People*, Shimon and Lindemann state, "The people we photograph are extraordinary in their ability to stop and be in these pictures. There is a fearlessness



*Jeri with her 1956 Pink Cadillac, Green Bay, WI, 2013*

about how they present themselves. These photographic situations evolve out of adversity, transition, or doubt. There's something about our collective state of mind that inspires and makes the picture happen."

Take, for example, the last collaborative photograph the artists made for this exhibition, *Jeri with her 1956 Pink Cadillac, Green Bay, WI*, a 50 x 40 inch inkjet print. Using an 8 x 10 Deardorff view camera, Julie and John both work to set up the shot, moving in tandem. While John fidgets with gear, Julie chats amicably with the subject. Her voice, soft and buttery, carries a quiet, inclusive, generous intelligence. John is less chatty, though still personable, with an ironic disbelief punctuating his stories. "The view camera slows everything down," they once said in an interview for the French magazine

*Galerie-Photo*. "Making these portraits enables a feeling of mutual disclosure" (Filliquet 2006). And as the photography curator Lisa Hostetler observed, "The extensive preparation and attention to detail required to make a portrait with a view camera creates an acute awareness of time in their subjects" (Hostetler, Shimon, and Lindemann 2008, 10).

John first met Jeri in 1979 when she was a teenaged girlfriend of a punk musician from Manitowoc. Jeri started cutting Julie's hair in the 1990s and has been cutting it ever since, despite the fact that Jeri is now in Green Bay. Over the years, Jeri had a daughter and several bouts with cancer. Julie had learned, on the day of this shoot, that her own cancer was no longer in remission. Shot in the alley behind her hair salon, Jeri sits rather formally on the trunk of her vintage car. She's pretty, with strong features and a tumble of red hair. She looks off and slightly up, decidedly not making eye contact with the camera. Brick and grit and an overcast day mix with the creamy pink and shiny chrome of the Cadillac.

Jeri is dressed like a 1950s character, with saddle shoes, rolled up jeans, bobby socks, and a shop-shirt. It takes a while to notice that her feet are resting on a dented, rusty corner of an otherwise pristine car. The building's windows are boarded up. Telephone wires crisscross the sky, clunky markers of a technology that will soon be anachronistic. Everything has been stilled in the image, and yet everything seems whacked out of any particular time reference.

There is nostalgia in the best sense, nothing maudlin like a longing for the past, but rather a funky disconnect, like in a film by Werner Herzog, whom Shimon and Lindemann name as an important influence (see Herzog and Cronin 2014). Like in *Stroszek* (1977), to be specific, where the characters, in an attempt to imagine better lives outside of Berlin, stand around an atlas and say “Where is Wisconsin anyway. I don’t think it’s on the map.”

In Shimon and Lindemann’s pictures, place and person cannot keep pace with the advances of clean, shiny capitalism. Place and person are operating on a slower speed, such as the 45 rpm records in the artists’ Appleton home jukebox. The small towns and people in them seem to write their own histories, and they are often tragic. Youthful rebellious dreams of escape do not materialize. Spirited self-invention erodes into jobs at convenience stores and second shifts at the few lingering factories, and, sometimes, suicide. Maybe Shimon and Lindemann’s real theme is people who find something to love against the odds. Be it for Glade or cows, skateboarding, another human being who you know isn’t good for you, an old car or a farm tractor’s engine, Elvis Presley or Bob Watt, or svelte young girls, their subjects seem to have small, tender flames burning alongside abandoned storefronts. But it’s almost never enough. Shimon and Lindemann earnestly relate to the people they photograph. They too returned to Manitowoc and needed to figure out how to hold their own against this kind of gravity.



Eugene Von Bruenchenhein (American 1910–83), *Untitled*. Gelatin silver print, ca. 1940s.

Shimon and Lindemann often wrote a “story text” to display with their photographs such as *Holly with Ada, Kiel, WI, 1996*, “To us, it’s really a picture about the kind of isolation you feel growing up in a desolate area, and the place you get to be in when you’re detached and ignored. Sure, there are rural people who overcome great obstacles and set the world on fire. But often enough your background will betray you by giving the outside world the idea that you’re simple and irrelevant if you let down your guard.”

In some ways, their work resonates best when it is exported. A show in 2006 at Sarah Bowen Gallery in Brooklyn, New York, or one in 2005 at Wendy Cooper in Chicago, amplified the clash of urban and rural, historic and contemporary, dark room and digital, and allowed all the conceptual weirdness of their undertaking

(the mixing of video, sound, and hand-printed stills) to rise in its distraught trans-historical urgency and let multiple modes of cultural record-keeping start to sing like a chorus.

The tone of Shimon and Lindemann’s work feels bookended by two other Wisconsin photographers, who earned their own strange fame: Eugene Von Bruenchenhein (1910–1983) and Charles Van Schaick (1852–1946). Von Bruenchenhein lived in West Allis, and besides making paintings and chicken-bone thrones and crowns, he photographed his wife, Marie (Evelyn Kalka), scantily dressed and posed against patterned backdrops. He shares with Shimon and Lindemann an investment in homespun glamour, as well as the awareness that a photograph is an invitation to perform one’s identity. He gave Marie a stage and they collaborated in enacting movie-star/pinup girl tableaux. The camera allowed a kind of escape from their humble lives, and it defined and preserved a spirit of possibility and self-invention.

A kinship exists between Eugene and Marie’s collaborative portrait staging and Julie and John’s ongoing series of self-portraits. Often using themselves as “test” subjects to prepare for a shoot, the artists have accumulated a large body of playful self-portraits over the years, in all media, from platinum/palladium to inkjet prints to ambrotypes. Since 1996, they’ve also consistently documented themselves on their farm in Whitelaw, Wisconsin, where they grow much of their own food. Weegee (American photographer, b. Poland, 1899–1968) meets



*Self-Portrait in Studio, Manitowoc, WI, 2002*

*Green Acres* (sitcom, 1965–71) is how they describe these images. When Julie is the subject, like Marie, she embraces the role, digging into her large closet of vintage black lingerie, fetish-wear, and cocktail dresses, often posing in their domestic environment. The quiet routines of folding underwear, drying dishes, or mulching squash are staged dramatically through light and pose. These are chores that wouldn't normally be considered worthy of documentation. These images, in an almost auto-body shop pinup calendar style, become an ironic nod to a re-imagined notion of "farm wife" or farm life. Imagine *American Gothic's* female model in a black leather bustier. As in all their work, the self-portraits both reveal and retool clichéd notions of country life. The true poignancy and power of the images, however, comes from the fact that they attest to the couple's closely shared lives. When they turn the camera toward themselves, the intimacy of their thirty years of collaborative vision and values, squash soup and class preparation, enters sweetly into the

pictures. They have only sparingly showed this work, perhaps not wanting the self-referential to overshadow the importance of their broader projects. The only exhibition dedicated to their self-portraits was *Decay Utopia Decay* at Portrait Society Gallery, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in 2012.

Von Schaick was a small-town photographer in Black River Falls, Wisconsin. He left behind thirty thousand glass plates, images taken between 1890 and 1910. The writer Michael Lesy paired these images with excerpts from the town's newspaper in the now famous book *Wisconsin Death Trip* (1973). Post-mortem pictures, awkward family portraits, strange looking people posed in farm fields in their Sunday best, sadness, premature death, and eccentricity were all dutifully absorbed and recorded. The reality of a place is far different than the quaintness we imagine. Suicide, diphtheria, insanity: "Henry Ehlers, a Milwaukee butcher, dies from a nosebleed." "A wild man was captured in the woods...and has lost nearly all resemblance to a

human being." "Fred Maresh committed suicide at his home in Manitowoc by shooting himself through the temple." And parallel to these newspaper excerpts, the photographs magnify human hope and frailty in the most beautifully direct way, without much imposition of artistry.

Lesy wrote, "No matter how prosaic a photographer Van Schaick was, he still practiced an art based upon compressions and elisions; he still presided over archetypal images that were originally created at the secret heart of this culture as silently and thoughtlessly as the blink of an eye" (Lesy, Van Schaick, and Susman 1973).

Like Lesy, who adds a layer to Van Schaick's work via his selective context, Shimon and Lindemann add layers to the noble lineage of the small-town photographer. They've stepped out of the commercial studio role, yet hold onto much of the record-keeping emphasis of that endeavor. They are performing Van Schaick, while adding a self-awareness, a knowing sense

of what a photograph is and what it does and how it lingers in history, like wet leaves on a barren ground trying to remind us of what was.

On their blog (posted August 21, 2012), Shimon and Lindemann stated that “invention, persistence, deterioration, obsolescence, and wisdom accumulate on the surface where they were available to the camera.”

Lesy’s last paragraph in *Wisconsin Death Trip* talks about the photograph in such a way that speaks to what would be its “neo-post-now” quality. He described it as a “flexible mirror” that:

if turned one way can reflect the odor of the air that surrounded me as I wrote this; if turned another way, can project your anticipations of next Monday; if turned again, can transmit the sound of breathing in the deep winter air of a room of eighty years ago, and if turned once again, this time backward on itself, can fuse all three images, and so can focus who I once was, what you might yet be, and what may have happened, all upon a single point of your imagination, and transform them like light focused by a lens on paper, from a lower form of energy to a higher.

Shimon and Lindemann, through dedication, persistence, and organization, kept their focus and have created a thirty-year legacy from a single place in time, all of it coming from that “secret heart of culture.” In a recent email, Julie summed it up like this: “Look, look, this is something...and no one else cares, but we do.”

---

*Debra Brehmer is the owner and director of Portrait Society Gallery in Milwaukee, a contemporary art venue. She is an art historian who writes about art locally and nationally.*

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Lesy, Michael, Charles Van Schaick, and Warren Susman. *Wisconsin Death Trip* (New York: Pantheon, 1973).

## Plates

Note: The plate section includes some stereo version photographs. These are shown as color, double-image photographs set against a black background. To see the 3-D effect, use a standard stereo Lorgnette viewer, which is widely available on the Internet. Stereo Realist cameras were manufactured in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, from 1947 to 1971 and are one of the camera types with which Shimon and Lindemann have experimented.

All images reproduced in the book are from scans of original negatives and transparencies.



HELLO  
my name is  
wiley.  
KIT



**Rebellion**



PREVIOUS

*Dylan and Brett Downtown, Manitowoc, WI, 1994  
(detail)*

*Trish and Matt Downtown, Manitowoc, WI, 1995*



*Fay and Ken at Home, Milwaukee, WI, 1994*



*Timbi with Costumed Canines, Mishicot, WI, 2000*



*Debra at Home Revealing Tiger Tattoo, Sturgeon Bay, WI, 1999*



*RJ as Glade Boy in Abandoned K-mart  
Parking Lot, Manitowoc, WI, 1996*



*Norb with Wrestling Costume, Green Bay, WI, 2003*





*Amber and Brad Cooking Ribs, Manitowoc, WI, 2004*





OPPOSITE

*Amber Sitting on Car, Manitowoc, WI, 2001*

*Amber and Brad as the SuaveMotherFuckers, Manitowoc, WI, 2001*





Rich Krueger with his Liquor Store, Manitowoc, WI, 2005



*Chuck and Chuck with .22 Rifle, Blanchardville, WI, 2007*



*Roy on Lincoln Boulevard, Manitowoc, WI, 2000*



*Dylan and Brett Downtown, Manitowoc, WI, 1994*



*Jimmy Von Milwaukee (Burt Reynolds Pose), Milwaukee, WI, 2006*



*Ting Ting and Dylan in their Favorite Spot, Manitowoc, WI, 2004*



*Caitlin and her Date on Prom Night, Sister Bay, WI, 2005*



*Nigel and Erin Chugging, Manitowoc, WI, 1997*



*Jerome and Dana in Loft, Milwaukee, WI, 1995*





OPPOSITE

*Carrie and Nigel with Drunk Drawing,  
Manitowoc, WI, 1994*

*Carrie and Nigel in their First Apartment,  
Manitowoc, WI, 1994*

CADILLAC

JERI  
BOMB



144946  
WISCONSIN



**Machines**



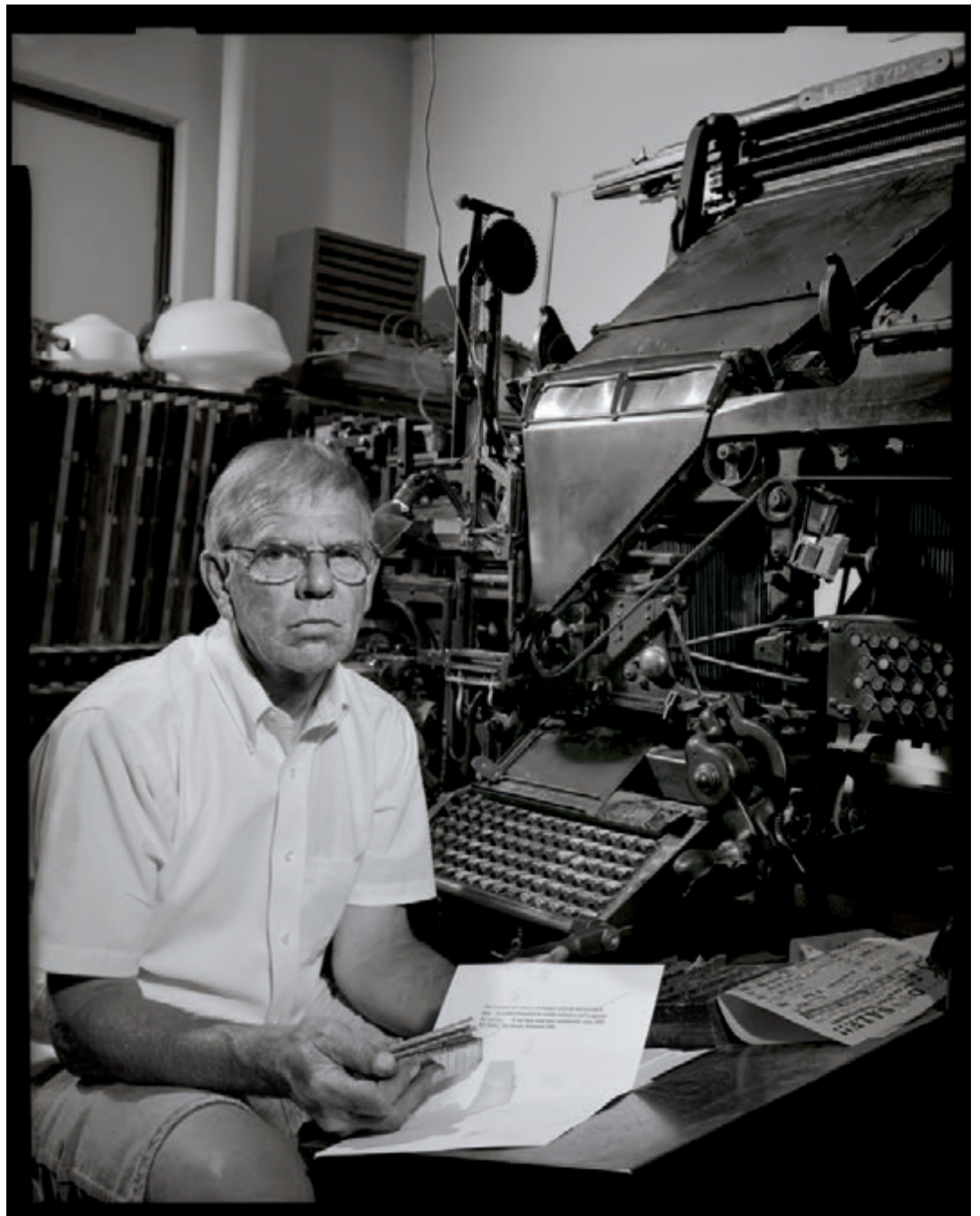
PREVIOUS

*Jeri with her 1956 Pink Cadillac,  
Green Bay, WI, 2013  
(detail)*

OPPOSITE

*Bill Malley Holding Linotype Slug,  
Two Rivers, WI, 2003*

*Bill Malley with Linotype Machine,  
Two Rivers, WI, 2003*







*Tourists Along Lake Michigan, Kewaunee, WI, 2003*



*Jeri with her 1956 Pink Cadillac, Green Bay, WI, 2013*



*Nancy Visits Lisa and Puffy, Oconto, WI, 2003*





*Rich in his Airstream, Two Rivers, WI, 2008*



*Lloyd Gosz with the Accordion from his Father  
Romy Gosz, The Palace, Reifs Mills, WI, 2007*



Tom with his Model A, Fall Creek, WI, 2009





OPPOSITE

*Eric Lunde with Sound Recorder, Whitelaw, WI, 2004*

*Eric Lunde with Sun in his Ear, Whitelaw, WI, 2004*





OPPOSITE

*Wilson and Carolyn with 3D Camera, Whitelaw, WI, 2000*

*Wilson Photographing Carolyn (No. 2), Whitelaw, WI, 2000*





OPPOSITE

*Jan and Julie with Rolleiflex Cameras and the 12 x 20, Whitelaw, WI, 2001*

*Jan and Julie with Rolleiflex Cameras, Whitelaw, WI, 2001*



A close-up photograph of a woman's neck and shoulders. She is wearing a large, ornate necklace with a central pendant that features a circular, textured design. The necklace is made of dark, possibly black or dark blue, beads and has a wide, decorative band. The woman has blonde hair and is wearing red lipstick. The background is a blurred green, suggesting foliage. The word "Farms" is written in white text across the center of the image.

**Farms**



PREVIOUS

*Angela with Kit (Blue Velvet Prom Dress),  
Reedsville, WI, 1997 (detail)*

*Jon with Calf, Collins, WI, 1996*



*Dustin with Lacy, Valders, WI, 1996*





OPPOSITE

*Angela in Blue Velvet Prom Dress with Kit,  
Reedsville, WI, 1997*

*Angela with Kit (Blue Velvet Prom Dress),  
Reedsville, WI, 1997*



*Liz and Adolf on their way to a Funeral, Two Rivers, WI, 2002*



*Rosalie and Randy Geiger, Farmers  
(American Gothic), Reedsville, WI, 2006*





*Karl Klessig with Cattle Crossing, Cleveland, WI, 2006*





**Landscapes**



PREVIOUS

*Renew, Highway 57, Hilbert, WI, 1993 (detail)*

*Burying Modernism, Quay Street, Manitowoc, WI, 1998*



*Shades of Paradise/Dead Zone, Mall, Manitowoc, WI, 1999*





OPPOSITE

*Kornely's Drinkatorium at Sunset, York Street, Manitowoc, WI, 1994*

*York Street, Manitowoc, WI, 1999*



*Herman Resting in Front of his Farmhouse,  
St. Nazianz, WI, 2002*



*Herman's Barn with Baler, St. Nazianz, WI, 2002*



*Renew, Highway 57, Hilbert, WI, 1993*

*Weedy Corn, Whitelaw, WI, 1999*







**Sages**



PREVIOUS

*Barry with Lotus Blossom (No 1), Chalice Stream, Ladysmith, WI, 1999 (detail)*

*Jerome with his Mom, Marshfield, WI, 2004*



*Michael and Natalie with the Bamboo Fence, Minneapolis, MN, 2001*





*Herman with Stones, St. Nazianz, WI, 2005*



*Liz, Miekal and Liazon at Dreamtime Village,  
West Lima, WI, 1994*



Otto Bouc with his Perpetual Motion Machine,  
Newton, WI, 1993





OPPOSITE

*Heidi in Swimming Pool with Corn Field, Valders, WI, 1998*

*Heidi Suffering, Valders, WI, 1998*



*Bob Watt Photographing Annie,  
Milwaukee, WI, 2009*



*Dick, Milwaukee, WI, 1998*





OPPOSITE

*Barry with Lotus Blossom, Chalice Stream,  
Ladysmith, WI, 1999*

*Barry with Lotus Blossom (No 1), Chalice Stream,  
Ladysmith, WI, 1999*





OPPOSITE

*Jan and Kim with Plastic Roses, Whitelaw, WI, 1998*

*Jan and Kim with Plastic Roses, Whitelaw, WI, 1998*



*Paul Hefti with Girlfriend Tree, La Crosse, WI, 2001*



*Bill Owens Visits the Farm, Whitelaw, WI, 2007*



**Decay Utopia Decay**





PREVIOUS

*Self-Portrait in the Garden at Dusk,*  
Whitelaw, WI, 1998 (detail)

*Julie Drying Dishes, Manitowoc, WI, 2000*



*Julie Chopping Carrots, Whitelaw, WI, 1997*



*Julie Sweeping, Manitowoc, WI, 1997*



*Julie Folding Laundry, Manitowoc, WI, 2000*



*Self-Portrait in the Garden at Dusk, Whitelaw, WI, 1998*



*Self-Portrait with 30 x 36 Camera, Whitelaw, WI, 2009*



*Crab Apple Harvest, Whitelaw, WI, 2009*



*Self-Portrait Re-ringing the John Deere A, Whitelaw, WI, 2001*

## BIOGRAPHY

John Shimon (born July 10, 1961) and Julie Lindemann (born September 14, 1957) are American artists who work together as the collaborative duo J. Shimon & J. Lindemann. They were born in Manitowoc, Wisconsin, and are best known for their photographs about human existence in the Midwest that they make using antiquarian photographic processes.

### Early Lives and Education

Shimon and Lindemann grew up in rural Manitowoc County, Wisconsin, and met as undergraduates at the University of Wisconsin–Madison (1979–83). Shimon majored in art; Lindemann, in journalism. Shimon and Lindemann’s first collaborative project was the band Hollywood Autopsy, which they formed during college with student friends Bob Wasserman and Cyndee Baudhuin. Performing mainly at nightclubs in Madison, Hollywood Autopsy played shows with touring bands such as The Replacements, Killdozer, Hüsker Dü, X, and The Gun Club. Before Hollywood Autopsy disbanded, they recorded a self-titled LP record in 1983. Butch Vig at Smart Studios in Madison recorded the vocals and completed the sound mixing. Little Big Chief Records reissued the LP in 2014 due to growing public interest in private press records.

### Early Projects (1983–1988)

Shimon and Lindemann moved to Jersey City Heights, New Jersey, in 1983 and spent their free time exploring New York City’s art museums and galleries, bookstores, and the East Village art scene. In 1984 they relocated to Milwaukee,

Wisconsin, to pursue photography and writing projects about their native Wisconsin. Their first collaborative photography project as **J. Shimon & J. Lindemann** was *St. Nazianz*. It focused on prominent citizens of the rural village of St. Nazianz, Wisconsin, near where Lindemann grew up. A selection of these black-and-white portraits and architectural studies, made with a Rolleiflex and a 4 x 5 view camera, respectively, together with artifacts collected from the subjects, were installed at the Madison Museum of Contemporary Art in 1988. Subsequent photography projects included *The Elders* (1988) and *Salon Portraits* (1989), consisting of studio and on-site portraits of creative types and cultural leaders in Milwaukee. The artists frequently contributed photo essays to the Milwaukee-based *Art Muscle Magazine* (1987–94) and also *Milwaukee Magazine* (1987–93), where they collaborated with journalist Jim Romenesko. Based on these projects, Shimon and Lindemann were admitted to the master’s program at Illinois State University in Normal, Illinois, where they worked with the photographer Rhondal McKinney and contributed to the university’s *Rural Documentary Project* (1988–89).

### Manitowoc Years (1989–2011)

Upon completing their master’s degrees in 1989, Shimon and Lindemann returned to Manitowoc, Wisconsin, where they established their studio in a nineteenth-century warehouse/storefront building near Lake Michigan. This studio and living space, with a downtown location, became the focus of their lives and art practice. Using the storefront to show contemporary art, they

operated Neo-Post-Now Gallery (1992–97), featuring artists from the region and the rest of the country. The large warehouse portion served as a formal studio, office, and living area. They photographed Manitowoc teenagers interested in punk rock and art and teenagers living on farms in nearby rural areas. They used 8 x 10 Deardorff and 12 x 20 Banquet view cameras. These photographs were exhibited as *Midwestern Rebellion* (1994), *Town and County* (1997), and *Pictures of Non-Famous People* (1998).

Throughout the 1990s, in addition to their own work, Shimon and Lindemann did editorial portraiture on assignment for *Fortune*, *The New York Times Magazine*, *New York*, and *People*. They further contributed cover and interior photographs for the memoirs of native Wisconsin-based author Michael Perry, including *Population 485* (2007), *Coop* (2010), and *Visiting Tom* (2013).

In 2000, the artists set about making an experimental documentary film, exhibition, and book using a Bolex and outdated gelatin silver paper. The result, *One Million Years is Three Seconds*, examines how the technological changes of the twentieth century affected four Wisconsin men who lived through them. In 2004, their book *Season’s Gleamings: The Art of the Aluminum Christmas Tree* renewed public appreciation for the aluminum Christmas trees mass-produced in Manitowoc in the early 1960s.

In the 2008 exhibition *Unmasked & Anonymous: Shimon & Lindemann Consider Portraiture* at the Milwaukee Art Museum, organized in

collaboration with photography curator Lisa Hostetler and with an accompanying catalogue, Shimon and Lindemann's portraits of Wisconsin people were juxtaposed with portraits from the Museum's collection. The artists' interest in collecting and studying real photo postcards led them to use vintage postcard photographic equipment to make studio portraits, which resulted in the *Real Photo Postcard Survey* exhibition, blog, and catalogue, presented at the Portrait Society Gallery, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in 2010. A related series of landscapes and architectural studies formed *The Wisconsin Project*, for which Shimon and Lindemann posted "found" and "made" postcard images on a blog.

#### **Academic Career**

Shimon and Lindemann began teaching photography courses collaboratively at the Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design in 1989. They also taught at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, and Lawrence University in Appleton, Wisconsin, where they were granted tenure in 2008. They received the Lawrence University *Excellence in Creative Activity Award* in 2012.

#### **Later Projects and Archive**

Shimon and Lindemann's subject matter has continued to center on people and places in Wisconsin, obsolete technologies, and vernacular photographic forms. In 2011, they moved their art practice and photographic archive from Manitowoc to Appleton, Wisconsin. They produced an exhibition called *Decay Utopia Decay*, installed at the Portrait Society Gallery in 2012, featuring self-portraits they made at their farm property with a 30 x 36 large-format camera that Shimon built. Just days before the exhibition opening, Lindemann was diagnosed with metastatic cancer. Despite this, they completed work on *We Go From Where We Know*, an exhibition consisting of photographs, paintings, sculpture, and found objects at the John Michael Kohler Arts Center in Sheboygan, Wisconsin, in 2013. Their installation included a 1949 Wisconsin-made Nash Motors Ambassador filled with 1,400 hand-cast concrete corn cobs and hundreds of vintage postcards of Wisconsin. Since 2012, they have been working to organize the *J. Shimon & J. Lindemann Archive Trust*. The archive consists of approximately 65,000 negatives and transparencies and 5,500 signed prints made by Shimon and Lindemann using analog photographic processes including ambrotype, Cibachrome, cyanotype, gelatin silver, gum bichromate, platinum/palladium, and tintype. They were named **2014 Wisconsin Artists of the Year** by the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*.

#### **Publications**

*Visiting Tom* by Michael Perry, Harper Collins, NY (2012)

*Real Photo Postcard Survey Project* (essay by Debra Brehmer), Portrait Society Gallery, Milwaukee, WI (2010)

*One Million Years is Three Seconds*, Lulu.com, NC (2008)

*Unmasked & Anonymous: Shimon & Lindemann Consider Portraiture* (introduction by Lisa Hostetler), Milwaukee Art Museum, Milwaukee, WI (2008)

*What We Do Here* (essay by Michael Perry), Lulu.com, NC (2008)

*Observations are Not Knowledge*, Lulu.com, NC (2006)

*Season's Gleanings: The Art of the Aluminum Christmas Tree* (afterword by Tom Vanderbilt), Melcher Media, NY (2004)



*The Manure Lagoon, Hilbert, WI, 2006*

### Select Exhibitions

#### SOLO

*There's a Place*, Museum of Wisconsin Art, West Bend, WI (2015)

*We Go From Where We Know*, John Michael Kohler Arts Center, Sheboygan, WI (2013)

*Decay Utopia Decay*, Portrait Society Gallery, Milwaukee, WI (2012)

*Real Photo Postcard Survey*, Portrait Society Gallery, Milwaukee, WI (2010)

*Unmasked & Anonymous*, Milwaukee Art Museum, Milwaukee, WI (2008)

*Pictures of Non-Famous People*, Wisconsin Academy Gallery, Madison, WI (1998)

*St. Nazianz*, Madison Museum of Contemporary Art (formerly Madison Art Center), Madison, WI (1988)

#### GROUP

*Rural Documentary Project*, Illinois State University Galleries, Normal, IL (2013)

*Facing the Lens*, Minneapolis Institute of Art, Minneapolis, MN (2012)

*Wisconsin Labor: A Contemporary Portrait*, Watrous Gallery, Madison, WI (2011)

*New to View*, The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL (2003)

*Only Skin Deep*, International Center of Photography, New York, NY (2003)

*Wisconsin Then & Now*, Wisconsin Historical Museum, Madison, WI (1997)

#### Public Collections

The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL

Chazen Museum of Art, Madison, WI

Falconer Gallery, Grinnell College, Grinnell, IA

Illinois State University Rural Documentary Photography Collection, Normal, IL

Madison Museum of Contemporary Art, Madison, WI

Meadows Museum of Art, Shreveport, LA

Milwaukee Art Museum, Milwaukee, WI

Museum of Wisconsin Art, West Bend, WI

Orem Public Library, Orem, UT

Racine Art Museum, Racine, WI

Samuel Dorsky Museum of Art, SUNY, New Paltz, NY

Wisconsin State Historical Society Visual Materials Archive, Madison, WI

Wriston Art Center Galleries, Lawrence University, Appleton, WI

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

LAURIE WINTERS, MOWA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR | CEO

For more than thirty years, J. Shimon and J. Lindemann have collaborated to make photographs that respond to Wisconsin as both a place and a state of mind. *There's a Place: A Three Decade Survey of Photographs by J. Shimon & J. Lindemann* is the first museum retrospective and the largest exhibition of their work to date. Blending historic and contemporary photographic techniques, the artists have created a compelling, at times melancholy, body of work that stands as a record of their time.

A retrospective of Shimon and Lindemann's work was an obvious choice for MOWA. Their work is original and thought-provoking, and an exhibition that would position them in the larger context of American photography was definitely overdue. Long before regionalism was hip or the word "place-making" had become fashionable in the art world, Shimon and Lindemann had quietly been making photographs of the people and places they cared about in and around their hometown of Manitowoc, Wisconsin. Although rooted in Wisconsin, their images are neither regional nor documentary but deeply personal. The artists talk at length about the people they have photographed and how their lives have progressed since their photographs were first made, often decades earlier. Shimon and Lindemann's photographs are slow, thoughtful meditations on relationships that reveal the human experience.

A project of this magnitude would not have been possible without the collaboration of a number of individuals who generously gave their

time and talent. Our greatest debt of gratitude is to the artists, who enthusiastically agreed to the exhibition at a time when they were confronting personal challenges. Not only were they involved and supportive, but they even undertook the selection of photographs and worked tirelessly with Graeme Reid, MOWA's director of exhibitions and collections, to create this compelling exhibition.

Several gifted writers contributed to the exhibition catalogue. They not only articulated the vision of the artists, but also helped place them within the broader context of American photography. For their insightful essays and their help in countless ways, we offer special thanks to Debra Brehmer, Rachele Krivichi, Dan Leers, and Graeme Reid. Thanks also go to our talented book designer Dan Saal and editor Christina Dittrich, and to the many MOWA staff members whose hard work made it possible for this project to come to fruition.

This catalogue is the second in an ongoing series of museum publications that are offered as free downloads on the museum's website ([wisconsinart.org](http://wisconsinart.org)), a reflection of the institution's commitment to making Wisconsin art accessible around the world. Printed deluxe hardcover and softcover versions are available for purchase from Blurb.com.

For their generous support of this exhibition, I would like to extend my gratitude to lead sponsor Dennis Rocheleau and to additional sponsors James and Karen Hyde, Joseph and

Helen Lai, Pick Heaters, Inc., Quarles & Brady LLP, Horicon Bank, and the Greater Milwaukee Foundation. We are genuinely grateful to these sponsors for helping us share Shimon and Lindemann's unique vision. On behalf of the artists, I would also like to extend a special note of thanks to Lawrence University, Appleton, Wisconsin, for its ongoing support of Shimon and Lindemann, who are associate professors of art in the University's Department of Art and Art History.

MOWA is proud to present this exhibition, and we hope it touches you as it has all of us.



*Blossom Stalkers, Whitelaw, WI, 2000*



*Broken Lawn Mower with Apple Blossoms, Whitelaw, WI, 2000*





*Bowl of Cherries, Whitelaw, WI, 2009*

This catalogue has been published on the occasion of the exhibition *There's a Place: A Three Decade Survey of Photographs by J. Shimon & J. Lindemann* organized by the Museum of Wisconsin Art from April 11 to June 7, 2015.

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Front cover: *Jeri with her 1956 Pink Cadillac, Green Bay, WI, 2013* (detail)

For more than thirty years, J. Shimon and J. Lindemann have collaborated to make photographs that respond to Wisconsin as both a place and a state of mind. *There's a Place: A Three Decade Survey of Photographs by J. Shimon & J. Lindemann* is the first museum retrospective and the largest exhibition of their work to date. Blending historic and contemporary photographic techniques, the artists have created a compelling, at times melancholy, body of work that stands as a record of their time.

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