

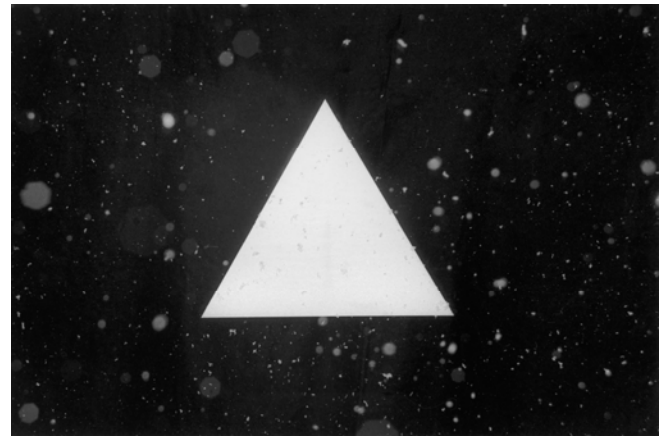
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Stepan Grygar, Untitled, 1994

NEW VISUALISM **ABSTRACTIONS IN PHOTOGRAPHY**

ŠTĚPÁN GRYGAR
FERNANDO LA ROSA

FEBRUARY 5 – APRIL 25, 2009
FotoFest, Houston, Texas

Opening Reception:
Thursday, February 5, 2009 6-9pm



Fernando La Rosa, *Cuatro Cuadranos*, Jamaica, 1987

(February 2, 2009) **FotoFest** presents ***NEW VISUALISM***, a newly created exhibition of contemporary photographs by Štěpán Grygar (Czech Republic) and Fernando La Rosa (Peru/USA); curated by FotoFest co-founder and Artistic Director Wendy Watriss. The ***NEW VISUALISM*** exhibit is on view to the public **February 5 – April 25, 2009** at **FotoFest, 1113 Vine Street in Downtown Houston.**

The works of both artists reflect their ability to recognize the extraordinary in the ordinary. They compose and extract magical and humorous imagery from otherwise banal scenes. Some works seem to show methodical preparation and obsessive experimentation while others seem like random strokes of luck. Whether carefully studied or fortuitously found, all of the works show sophistication and virtuosity.

Štěpán Grygar refers to his work as primarily intuitive, often unplanned, and directed at the commonplace or near at hand. In his photographs one sees familiar aspects of everyday life – falling snow behind a window pane, a half-filled glass of beer, a building's roof and gable, or a car parked on the street. The seeming "snapshot" quality seems to convey at first an unconsidered casualness that, in fact, is later revealed as carefully planned casualty engineered by the artist.

"I am interested and have always been interested in the freedom of imagery... I don't want to be too tied down to the object itself... I am interested in the process of visual searching" - Štěpán Grygar

Fernando La Rosa's works are more openly rooted in philosophical concepts, many of which emanate from the intellectual ideas of the Bauhaus. La Rosa's images wander far from home and juxtapose a grandiosity of form and scale alongside the more mundane. Under the tutelage of famed photographer/philosopher Minor White, Mr. La Rosa developed his own philosophy about image-making, directed to the physical world and the physiological process of seeing.

Mr. La Rosa is concerned with *"orchestrating pieces of reality and playing with the language of vision... building structures of perception and exploring the ambiguities of seeing... harvesting the world's data in fragments and fields of focus."*

Curator Wendy Watriss has been interested in these artists' work for some time. *"Despite the fact that the subtle interweaving of form, space, darkness and light constitutes the primary element of photographic image making, few photographic artists explore the inter-connection of these elements as the primary principal subject matter of their work."* says Ms. Watriss. *"In the history of photography, these concerns were more visible in the experimental, avant-garde work of the 1920s-1940s in Europe than they are in most photography today."*

Štěpán Grygar was born and works in the Czech Republic. He is Professor and Director of the Studio of Creative Photography at FAMU, the Film and Television School of Performing Arts, in Prague. He has been exhibited and published widely in the Czech Republic. **NEW VISUALISM is Mr. Grygar's largest exhibition in the United States to date.**

Born in Peru, Fernando La Rosa was the founder and director of the first gallery exclusively dedicated to photography in South America. He has taught at the Parsons School in New York and currently teaches at Wesleyan College in Macon, Georgia. He is the recipient of awards from the National Endowment for the Arts and has exhibited widely in the U.S. and Latin America. A monograph of work from Mr. La Rosa has just been published and is available for purchase at FotoFest. **A book signing is scheduled for Saturday, February 7, 2009 as part of the Saturday Matinee Artist Talks.**

The *NEW VISUALISM* exhibition opens February 5, 2009 6-9pm and is on view through April 25, 2009, Monday – Friday: 10am-5pm; Saturday: noon-5pm at FotoFest, 1113 Vine Street in Downtown Houston. Admission to FotoFest exhibits is free. For more information the *NEW VISUALISM* exhibit and all FotoFest programs, please contact FotoFest, 713.223.5522 ext 19 or info@fotofest.org.

NEW VISUALISM and FotoFest's 2008-2009 programs are sponsored by: Houston Endowment, Inc.; The Brown Foundation Inc., Houston; City of Houston through the Houston Arts Alliance; The Wortham Foundation; FotoFest Board of Directors; Judith and Gamble Baldwin; Vine Street Studios; Howard Maisel; William and Rosalie Hitchcock; The Oshman Foundation; iland Internet Solutions; Houston Press

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For related programming including artist talks, and exhibition tours with the artists or curator, please visit the FotoFest website at: www.fotofest.org,