

# MAH

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## **SANTA CRUZ MAH ANNOUNCES** ***Of Love and Revelation: Learning Photography from the Land*** **May 24–September 29, 2024**

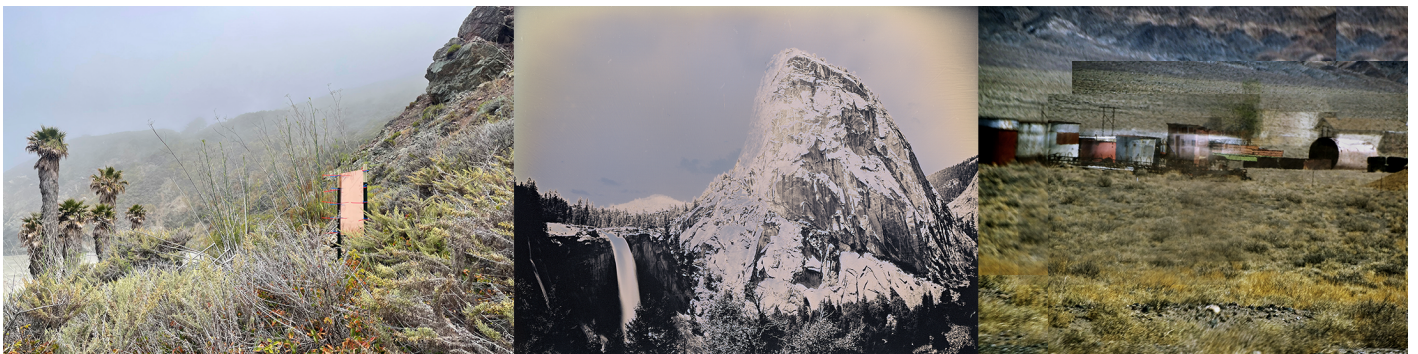


IMAGE CREDITS (FROM LEFT): KAROLINA KARLIC, FOG ALCHEMY, 2023; BINH DANH, NEVADA FALL AND LIBERTY CAP, YOSEMITE, CALIFORNIA, 2017; NORMAN LOCKS, DESERT REMAINS.

**SANTA CRUZ, CA** (April 30, 2024) — The Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History (MAH) is pleased to announce ***Of Love and Revelation: Learning Photography from the Land***, an exhibition of contemporary photographic experiments from **May 24–September 29, 2024**. The show’s title comes from a quote by Ansel Adams, who said “Some photographers take reality... and impose the domination of their own thought and spirit. Others come before reality more tenderly and a photograph to them is an instrument of *love and revelation*.”

The exhibition at the MAH explores California’s tradition of landscape photography as the outcome of relationships—between students and teachers; between the artist and the camera; and between all of us and the land. The show is guest curated by **Gabriel Salomon Mindel** and features the work of **Ansel Adams, Norman Locks, Karolina Karlic, Shelby Graham, Binh Danh, and Edgar Cruz**.

Santa Cruz and its surrounding areas have long been an epicenter of creative photographic exploration fostered by unique intergenerational relationships. This exhibition showcases new and rarely seen work by six regional artists representing four generations of photographers, each with a unique relationship of teacher and student, each with their own radical approaches to the photographic art, and each with their own personal story of learning from this place.

“The photographers in this show are revealing to us how the land has been impacted by the historical migrations of so many different people to California,” says curator Gabriel Saloman Mindel, “At the same time, they are also showing us how the land has changed them as artists.” Speaking about some of the ecological themes present in the work he offers, “I want this show to give all of us, especially those who are not indigenous to this place, an opportunity to reflect on our relationships—and our responsibilities—to the land, and to one another.”

The photographers in *Of Love and Revelation* bring the stories of their own journeys of immigration, education, experimentation, and imagination to the public, bringing to light the beautiful and complicated California that they see through their eyes. They do so through an array of both classic and contemporary experimental photo techniques including cyanotype, daguerreotype, double exposure, digital manipulation, and installation. This exhibition of new, contemporary photographic work gives us the opportunity to see the land we live in like we’ve never seen it before.

### **ABOUT THE CURATOR**

**Gabriel Saloman Mindel** is an interdisciplinary artist, musician, and scholar. His recent curatorial work focuses on artistic experimentation, landscapes, and the trouble of settler colonialism. As a musician he has performed internationally, composed for film and dance, and produced nearly 100 recordings. His current scholarly research focuses on the relationship between noise, protest, and power. He is completing a PhD in the History of Consciousness at the University of California Santa Cruz, and will be joining the faculty at Minneapolis College of Art and Design in the Fall of 2024.

### **ABOUT THE ARTISTS**

**Ansel Adams** (1902-1984) is known around the world for his dramatic photographs depicting the California landscape. In 1967 he was invited to document the recently established University of California Santa Cruz campus. Adams was enamored by the social life of learning embedded in this unique landscape. Many of his photos highlight the remnants of Cowell Ranch’s limestone quarry. In their striking depiction of shadow and shape, these photos might seem like love letters to the landscape, but they also reveal the impact of industries that have radically reshaped the land.

**Edgar Cruz** is a Oaxacan ecologist, naturalist, and photo-based artist from South Central Los Angeles. His photography explores an array of experimental film and processing techniques including cyanotypes and in-camera double exposure. His work is inspired by his experience of eating, sleeping, and living in the landscapes of the Mojave Desert, Sierra Nevada Mountains, and Big Sur where he currently works as a Watershed Steward. Included among the photos in this exhibition are handwritten field notes Cruz composed during visits to UC reserves as a student of Norman Locks and Karolina Karlic.

**Binh Danh** is an arts educator and photographer who got his start as a student of Shelby Graham at Gunderson High School in San Jose. Danh’s work often explores landscapes in the U.S. and in his native Vietnam through chlorophyll prints and readymade assemblages. He also

uses daguerreotype, a photographic process from the mid-1800s, to depict anachronistic landscapes and city spaces that layer the past and the present on top of one another. He and his audience see themselves reflected in his photographs: where do we fit in this time and place, and how did we arrive here?

**Shelby Graham** has a 35-year career as an educator and conceptual photographer. Her work explores the entangled relationships between humans and our environment through surreal portraits of plants, stones, insects, seaweed, and plastic. In addition to her work as an artist and teacher, Graham is a prolific curator who directed the Sesnon Gallery on UCSC's campus from 1999-2021. One of her earliest exhibitions at the Sesnon featured the work of Binh Danh who she had taught as a high school student, and one of her final exhibitions as curator there featured the photographs of Edgar Cruz.

**Karolina Karlic** is an Associate Professor of Art and the Art + Science Faculty Director of the Norris Center at UCSC. Through her documentary photography research practice, Karlic tells stories about people and places affected by industrial transformations, often touching on her family's own stories of labor and migration. She has researched and photographed the social impact of the Bakken oil fields in North Dakota, and rubber manufacturing, from plantations in Brazil to the Detroit auto industry. More recently she has founded *Unseen California*, a collaborative research initiative that engages the public land of California as an outdoor artist studio and classroom laboratory.

**Norman Locks** completed his MFA at San Francisco State University in 1973 and became the Director of the Ansel Adams Gallery Workshops in Yosemite. He continued in that role until he joined UCSC as the Art Department's first photography teacher in 1978. Now a professor emeritus, Locks continues to lead students on annual field quarters to Big Sur and the Mojave (his student Edgar Cruz and his colleague Karolina Karlic have also joined these trips). Each digital photo in this exhibition comprises as many as 20 blended images shot from a car moving at 70 miles-per-hour on the highways between these landscapes and Santa Cruz.

### **ABOUT THE MAH**

The MAH is a thriving community gathering place that offers a full slate of art and history exhibitions, visual and performing artworks, public festivals, education and outreach programs, and cultural celebrations in collaboration with its many partners. It maintains a permanent collection of regionally significant art and artifacts, a research library, a historical archive, and historic sites including the Evergreen Cemetery, Octagon Building, and Davenport Jail. It is also home to Abbott Square, a vibrant public plaza on the museum's doorstep that offers food, social events, and year-round creative happenings.

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