

The Museum of Modern Art

194
For Immediate Release
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**NEW PHOTOGRAPHY 10: SHIMON ATTIE, ABELARDO MORELL,
JORGE RIBALTA, MICHAL ROVNER**

October 20, 1994 - January 10, 1995
Media viewing: October 18, 3:00 - 5:00 p.m.

The Museum of Modern Art opens the tenth exhibition in its annual **NEW PHOTOGRAPHY** series, which is devoted to important contemporary work, on October 20, 1994. Organized by Sheryl Conkelton, Associate Curator, Department of Photography, **NEW PHOTOGRAPHY 10** presents approximately thirty-five works by Shimon Attie, Abelardo Morell, Jorge Ribalta, and Michal Rovner. On view through January 10, 1995, this exhibition is supported by a generous grant from Springs Industries, Inc., and is part of The Springs of Achievement Series on the Art of Photography.

For his series *The Writing on the Wall*, Shimon Attie (b. 1957, United States) projected slides of photographs of the Jewish quarter of pre-World War II Berlin onto the buildings in the present-day neighborhood. He then makes color photographs of the scene which powerfully employ photography's capacity to make an absent subject present. Attie's overlapping of the two distinct eras, and the fusion of public place with private image, manifest the Holocaust and its devastating effects. Attie, who received a M.F.A. degree from San Francisco State University (1991), currently lives in Berlin.

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The portrayal of light and its transforming effects is a consistent theme in the black-and-white photography of Abelardo Morell (b. 1947, Cuba), who works on several projects concurrently. In one series, Morell transforms illustrated books into arresting landscapes of three-dimensional forms or shimmering negative surfaces. For each photograph in another series, he sets up an entire room as a *camera obscura*, blocking off all light except through one small aperture. The light admitted through this opening carries the inverted image of the outside world into the room and projects it onto the walls and furnishings. Using a camera set for a very long exposure inside the room, Morell photographs the scenes, creating images that explore the boundaries of perceived space. Morell received a M.F.A. degree from Yale University (1981) and lives in Boston. He is a 1993-94 Guggenheim Memorial Fellowship recipient.

Jorge Ribalta (b. 1963, Spain) photographs vignettes he has created with toys and models. Using carefully arranged lighting and even motion to enliven these scenes, he makes black-and-white photographs that appear to picture real events. The scenes are somewhat familiar: landscapes, figures making gestures, quiet interiors, crowd scenes. Yet there is an uneasiness and even vague threat in many of them, reminiscent of film noir: features of individual faces cannot be read, and the gestures of the figures are ambiguous. Ribalta is interested in how we untangle fact from fiction, and in how we create stories from these cryptic scenes. Ribalta lives in Barcelona and received a Bachelor's degree in fine arts from the Universidad de Barcelona in 1986.

Michal Rovner (b. 1957, Israel) photographs people floating in the Dead Sea for her latest series, *One-Person Game Against Nature*. Using both Polaroid and video cameras, she takes photographs from a distance to obscure

personal identity and to emphasize the figure's pose. Working with a copying machine and extensively in the darkroom, Rovner alters the color, composition and even surface texture of her works so that the resulting large-scale photographs verge on abstraction. The Polaroid negatives, when altered, produce a saturated, shimmering field of color articulated by painterly marks. The video images are transformed by Rovner's work into almost monochromatic, metallic surfaces on which lugubrious figures seem to be participating in an existential struggle. Rovner received a B.F.A. degree from Bezalel Academy of Art and Design in Jerusalem (1985) and now resides in New York.

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No. 49

For further information or photographic materials, contact the Department of Public Information, 212/708-9750.