



Opening Reception: September 9, 2011, 6:00 pm–9:00 pm

Exhibition on view at the School: September 9 through November 27, 2011; Monday–Sunday, 10:00 am–6:00 pm
1114 Avenue of the Americas at 43rd Street, New York, NY 10036

**The School of the International Center of Photography presents
Old School by Matthew Monteith**



Robert Capa in Cornell's closet,
2001 © Matthew Monteith

ICP Alumnus Matthew Monteith's *Old School* serves as a visual record of the historic townhouse at 94th Street and 5th Avenue, which housed the International Center of Photography (ICP) until the summer of 2001, and as a collective portrait of its inhabitants as they prepared to move to a new facility at 1114 Avenue of the Americas at 43rd Street. The project is also a subtle and sophisticated meditation on the changes taking place both within the ICP School itself, and in the photographic medium at large.

"This group of images may at first glance seem to be a straightforward documentation of a small community devoted to the teaching and learning of photography, as all the main characters are represented here: director, teachers, librarian, administrative and custodial staff, teaching assistants, and students," says Chair of the General Studies Program Marina Berio, "As an ensemble, the portraits are vaguely reminiscent of August Sander's anthological project, *People of the 20th Century*: democracy and egalitarianism are implicit when all levels in an institutional hierarchy are rendered with a similar sensibility. Each subject inhabits a specific space,

and communicates his or her own awkwardness, authority, or idiosyncrasy."

Alongside the portraits are interior shots of the School at ICP, as well as images of students editing, discussing, and printing their pictures. Interestingly, the pictures seem to be more dated than a mere ten years would allow, because the rapid shift in photographic technologies has radically changed photographers' equipment, process, and environment. Monteith saw the grand old mansion on 5th Avenue as a metaphor for analog photography, soon to be superseded by the shiny new digital labs of the 43rd Street facility.

On a deeper level, these images display a subtle tension between what seems natural and what looks staged. As such, they dialogue both with larger trends in the medium and with the changing approach of ICP itself, which was founded by Cornell Capa to conserve the work of photojournalists, but which has come to embrace all types of photography. Conscious of current debate and discourse, Monteith pursued a range of strategies in the making of these images: some pictures are straight documentary evidence of pre-existing fact; some events were recorded as they unfolded, with a camera and lights fixed in one spot over a period of time; and other pictures were entirely the product of collaboration between the photographer and his subjects.

The project inhabits an ambiguous space just outside the boundary of official institutional record: tender but also gently critical, ironic, participatory, and humorous, Monteith conserved an independent view of ICP throughout the realization of these images.

Matthew Monteith graduated from the General Studies Program at the International Center of Photography in 1995, and has remained active at ICP as a member of the faculty. He earned an MFA from the Yale School of Art in 2004. He was a Fulbright Scholar in the Czech Republic from 2001–02 and the resulting work was published as *Czech Eden* by Aperture in 2007. He had a residency at the Marie Walsh Sharpe Foundation in New York City in 2004–05 and received the Abigail Cohen Rome Prize in Photography from the American Academy in Rome in 2008. His editorial work has appeared in many magazines, including *GQ*, *The New York Times Magazine*, *Interview*, *W*, and *Dwell* and his artwork has been exhibited in solo exhibitions in San Francisco, Kyoto, Paris, Arles, and Cherbourg; most recently he had a solo exhibition at Morgan Lehman Gallery in New York City. He has also participated in group exhibitions in New York, Charlotte, Miami, Washington D.C., Rennes, Ljubljana, Prague, and Rome. He lives and works in Boston and New York.

About ICP

The International Center of Photography (ICP) was founded in 1974 by Cornell Capa (1918-2008) as an institution dedicated to photography that occupies a vital and central place in contemporary culture as it reflects and influences social change. Through our museum, school and community programs, we embrace photography's ability to open new opportunities for personal and aesthetic expression, transform popular culture, and continually evolve to incorporate new technologies. ICP has presented more than 500 exhibitions, bringing the work of more than 3,000 photographers and other artists to the public in one-person and group exhibitions and provided thousands of classes and workshops that have enriched tens of thousands of students.

For further information, please contact ICP Education at 212.857.0001 or visit www.icp.org/school.

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