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THE SHELDON ART GALLERIES TO OPEN EXHIBIT SHOWCASING ARTISTS USING 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY PHOTOGRAPHIC PROCESSES TO COMMENT ON CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

ST. LOUIS, MO - ST. LOUIS, MO - The Sheldon Art Galleries continues its 20th anniversary season with *Old School, New Rules*, February 15 – April 13, 2019 in the Gallery of Photography. **An opening reception is scheduled for Friday, February 15, 2019 from 5-7 p.m.** The Sheldon Art Galleries are open Tuesdays, Noon – 8 p.m.; Wednesdays – Fridays, Noon – 5 p.m.; Saturdays, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. and one hour prior to Sheldon performances and during intermission. Admission is free. For more information on exhibitions, visit TheSheldon.org. *The exhibition is made possible in part by Ryan Easley and by Kristin Peterson.*

Gallery Talk: Tuesday, April 9, 2019 at 6 p.m. Olivia Lahs-Gonzales, Director of the Sheldon Art Galleries, and artist Barbara McDonnell will speak on selected works in the exhibit. Admission free. Reservations suggested. Contact Paula Lincoln at 314-533-9900 x37 or plincoln@TheSheldon.org.



Old School, New Rules showcases artists who use 19th and early 20th century photographic processes like ambrotype, cyanotype, tintype, platinum/palladium and other early light-reactive mediums to comment on contemporary issues and subjects. Included in the exhibit is work by David Emmitt Adams, Binh Danh, Jill Enfield, Mark Katzman, Annie Lopez, Barbara McDonnell, Eric Omori, Keliy Anderson Staley and Will Wilson.

Some of the earliest and most basic forms of fixing images are featured in the works of Binh Danh and Annie Lopez. **Binh Danh** uses the building blocks of photography—the ability of light to alter a substrate and record the presence of an object (or living being)—fixing shadows, as it were. Danh uses a plant's ability to photosynthesize to fix images from negatives onto leaves, which he encases in resin, thereby making reference to the indelible impact of the Vietnam War on his home country. **Annie Lopez** prints photographs on tamale wrappers using the cyanotype process, a medium discovered by Sir John

Herschel in 1842, to speak to meaningful events and experiences in her life. Her dresses are metaphors for the multi-dimensionality of the issues she discusses, and the materials she uses connect back to her culture as a Mexican-American.

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The built environment is the subject of bodies of work by David Emmit Adams, Mark Katzman and Barbara McDonnell. **David Emmit Adams** uses the wet collodion process, printing on the lids of 55-gallon oil drums, to comment on the social, political and environmental landscape of the American oil industry and reveals the industrial landscapes that have shaped our way of living. The wet collodion process, used in ambrotypes, tintypes and glass plate negatives was invented in 1851 almost simultaneously by Frederick Scott Archer in England and Gustave Le Gray in France and became, in photography's early years, the main medium with which photographers were able to fix and duplicate photographic images. **Mark Katzman's** ambrotype (wet collodion on clear glass) landscapes show the perpetual struggle of mankind and nature against each other with neither winning. Platinum/palladium, a process popular with late 19th and early 20th century Pictorialist photographers, is the medium of choice for **Barbara McDonnell**, whose images of strip malls and landfills are an interrogation of how we use and abuse our suburban and exurban landscape.

Portraits, which are the format most familiar to us thanks to old family photographs and antique shop finds, are the method of expression of several of the artists in the exhibit. **William Wilson**, a Diné photographer who spent his formative years living in the Navajo Nation, documents the people of the First Nations with the tintype process. Updating and continuing the project undertaken in the late 19th and early 20th centuries by William S. Curtis, Wilson supplants the "settler gaze" and works from the viewpoint of a 21st-century indigenous practitioner. Both **Keliy Anderson Staley** and **Jill Enfield** celebrate America's immigrant communities in their portraits, which are produced with the wet collodion process. **Anderson Staley's** haunting tintypes of immigrants, whose eyes meet the viewer with a candid and unflinching gaze, use the medium not only to celebrate her sitters, but also to make an historical reference to the many immigrants who came before. **Enfield's** candid images, originally made as ambrotypes, upend our idea of 19th century portraiture by presenting her sitters full of movement and spontaneity. Her photographs of immigrants to the United States use the currency of the process and its formidable history to elevate and celebrate her subjects. **Eric Omori** references the works of 19th century war photographers like Mathew Brady, Timothy O' Sullivan and Alexander Gardner, and in fact, if one doesn't look carefully, one might think they were images from the Civil War era rather than images of 21st century paintball players. Like Enfield, Omori uses the ambrotype process to render images of the contemporary warriors, using his car as a darkroom. Collectively, the artists in this exhibition use the elements of the past to reflect on the present and the future, showing us that the palimpsest of history can be a conduit to a meaningful exchange about today's issues and concerns.

From its founding in 1998 to this winter's opening of four new exhibitions, the Sheldon Art Galleries have made their mark on the arts landscape for the past 20 years with some of the most unique, thought-provoking and diverse exhibitions in St. Louis. In this time, the Sheldon Art Galleries has organized or hosted 327 exhibits, and presented countless educational programs for young people and adults, which are offered free to the community.

Financial Assistance to the Galleries are provided by the Missouri Arts Council, a state agency and by the Regional Arts Commission and the Arts and Education Council.

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Image Caption: Annie Lopez, *Memorial*, 2015, cyanotype on tamale wrapper paper, thread, zipper, 46 inches h x 35 inches w x 15 inches d, courtesy of the artist.