**Text and Label Copy | Something In The Way and Kenneth Josephson**

**SOMETHING IN THE WAY**

**A BRIEF HISTORY OF PHOTOGRAPHY AND OBSTRUCTION**

This exhibition is about the visual language of photography and how that language is different from other forms of picture making. Unlike painting or drawing, in which the author has total control over every element in the picture, a photograph gives equal weight to everything in front of the camera. When photography was first introduced to the world in 1839, the most astonishing aspects of a photograph were often the least expected: tiny, incidental details that were not the intended subject, but were nevertheless preserved in the photograph. The public quickly came to value photography for its ability to capture everything the photographer wanted, as well as things they might not. The acceptance of the photograph, therefore, meant an acceptance of the world as it was, and often parts of the world obstructed others. Based on NOMA’s vast permanent collection, this exhibition brings together fine art photographs, documents of performances, anonymous snapshots, conceptual works and much more to explore the various roles obstructions play in photography.

At first, obstructions often appeared in photographs as a matter of necessity, when bulky nineteenth century camera equipment restricted photographers to views that might include impediments. Soon, however, photographers began to seek out obstructed views that highlighted photography’s contingent relationship to the world it recorded. The busy installation of this gallery visually traces a chronological arc from isolated early experiments with photography’s language to the full embrace of that language in the modern era, resulting in an explosion of images that echo the shifting perspectives and layers of modern life. The gallery concludes with a wall devoted to photographs of windows, a recurring phenomenon in the history of photography that poses questions about inclusion and exclusion, the world and its representation, and obstruction and revelation.

The subsequent galleries demonstrate how obstructions can define the relationships in photographs: between objects in space, between the photographer and their subject, or between performance and accident. They can be invoked in the creation of abstraction in photography, emphasizing the flatness of the photographic plane. Finally, when the obstruction is another photograph, they can remind us how photography, or even the act of taking a photograph, can get in the way of our experience of the world around us. In the age of social media, when image types like the selfie (in which we are in the way) and the photo bomb (in which something else is in the way) consume our attention more and more, this exhibition provides a historical context for the phenomena in photography that engage us today.

Something in the Way is organized by the New Orleans Museum of Art. Support is provided by Tim L. Fields, Esq. and the A. Charlotte Mann and Joshua Mann Pailet Endowment Fund. Please also visit a companion exhibition, *Kenneth Josephson: Photography Is* in the Pailet Gallery on this floor.

William Henry Fox Talbot (English, 1800–1877) ***View of the Paris Boulevards from the First Floor of the Hôtel de Louvais, Rue de la Paix***, 1843, Salted paper print from a paper negative, Museum purchase, 1977, Art Acquisition Fund Drive, 77.66

In May of 1843, Talbot traveled to France to try to sell his invention of paper-based photography to the French. He made this photograph from the window of his hotel room. Talbot was probably most interested in the horse-drawn carriages and the façade of the building across the street, and yet the only view he had was interrupted by the streetlamp in the foreground. The resulting picture, therefore, exists only because Talbot decided to accept everything that the world provided. Made only four years after photography was introduced to the world, this picture demonstrates how quickly photographers began to accept, and even embrace, photography’s omnivorous vision.

Alphonse Le Blondel (French, 1814–1875) ***Untitled (Family Group in a Garden)***, ca. 1855, Salted paper print, Museum purchase, General Acquisitions Fund, 79.5

As a group portrait, this photograph is almost useless. The faces are distant and indistinct. We can only assume, therefore, that the photographer who made it and the people in it were all charmed by the novelty of the composition, which reveals an early attempt to play with the frame of photography. Not to be beholden to the process of photography itself, these sitters have imposed their own frame, in the form of occluding tree trunks.

Alphonse Delaunay (French, 1827–1906) ***View Towards Giralda Bell Tower and Cathedral of Seville***, 1854, Albumenized salt paper print from waxed paper negative, Private collection, courtesy Charles Isaacs, New York

It was probably not impossible to position the camera between the columns here for an unobstructed view, so this picture is likely about the relationship between the architecture in the foreground and the rest of Seville. Here, a talented photographer takes what exists in the world, and composes the photograph to provide information about one structure’s proximity to others.

Timothy H. O’Sullivan (American, 1840–1882) ***Apache Lake, Sierra Blanca Range, Arizona***, ca. 1873, Albumen silver print from a glass negative, Museum purchase, Women’s Volunteer Committee Fund, 83.130

This kind of picture is almost impossible to find before the invention of photography. An eighteenth century painter would very likely have erased, or at least rearranged, the trees blocking our view of the lake, in an effort to make the picture more visually pleasing. After photography, paintings like this do appear, but obstructions have become so entrenched as an important part of the language of photography that when we see a painting that includes an obstructing element, it is natural to assume that a photograph was somehow a part of its origin.

Unidentified photographer, ***Le Pont au Change a Le Palais de Justice***, ca. 1880, Albumen silver print, 1999 Discretionary Purchase Fund, 99.90

Despite the impressive visual sweep from foreground to background in this photograph, no composition can escape the flatness of the photographic plane. As evidence of this, notice how the distance between the man in the foreground and the streetlamp behind him collapses to form a seamless figure that looks like something out of a Dr. Seuss story

Lewis Wickes Hine (American, 1874–1940) ***Empire State Building, Laying a Beam***, 1931, Gelatin silver print, Museum purchase, 74.106

Hine is well known for his images of the construction of the Empire State Building. Here, two men sit on a beam high above the New York skyline, pointing at buildings that would soon be dwarfed by the Empire State Building. The structure and crane in the foreground tower over the city behind it, an effect desired by those who hired Hine to document the construction of what would soon become the world’s tallest building.

This display, pulled almost entirely from NOMA’s permanent collection, demonstrates how popular the window has been as a subject in photography. Like a photograph, a window is a surface that divides us from the world we see through it, but that world is framed and conditioned by the surface of the window. In a photograph, a window becomes a frame within in a frame, a surface on a surface, posing questions about inclusion and exclusion, the world and its representation, and obstruction and revelation. We might consider a photograph of a window as a kind of uberphotograph, an image that engages with issues central to photography while mirroring the form and function of a photograph.

1. Jean Boucher (French, born 1908) *Étude Expérimentale* *(Cathedral Spire and Fish Lures)*, 1945, Gelatin silver print, Gift of Clarence John Laughlin, 83.59.41
2. John H. Lawrence (American, born 1951) *Landscape with Screen*, Lake Bistineau, Louisiana, 1999, Gelatin silver print, Gift of the Artist, 2000.513
3. Edward Grazda (American, born 1947) Landi Kotal, *Pakistan*, 1980, Gelatin silver print, Museum purchase through the National Endowment for the Arts, 81.129
4. William Henry Jackson (American, 1843-1942) *Pike’s Peak from the Garden of the Gods*, 1880, Albumen print from wet collodion negative, Loan from a private collection, courtesy of Charles Isaacs, New York, EL.2016.37.2
5. Edward Serotta (American, born 1949) *Untitled from the Series, Survival in Sarajevo: How a Jewish Community Came to the Aid of its City*, 1989-1993, Gelatin silver print, Gift of Joshua Mann Pailet in memory of Alma Beran, Josef Mann, and Jiri Mann
6. Thomas R. Schiff (American, born 1947) *Barbershop, Detroit*, 1981, Gelatin silver print, Gift of Thomas R. Schiff, 81.431
7. Shelby Adams (American, born 1950) *Untitled (Hand and Screen Door)*, n.d., Gelatin silver print, Gift of Clarence John Laughlin, 83.59.3
8. Debbie Fleming Caffery (American, born 1948) *May Van’s Camp,* 1987, Gelatin silver print, Gift of L. Kyle Roberts, 2016.13
9. Unidentified photographers, *Untitled*, twentieth century, Gelatin silver prints, Gifts of Peter J. Cohen
10. Lois Conner (American, born 1951) *Greenhouse – Bird of Paradise*, 1980, Platinum palladium print, Museum purchase through the National Endowment for the Arts, 81.158
11. Harold Allen (American, 1912-1998) *Vandalism, Robert Todd Lincoln House, Chicago*, 1960, Gelatin silver print, Gift of Clarence John Laughlin, 82.281.81
12. Jean Boucher (French, born 1908) *Étude Expérimentale (Statue of Female),* 1945, Gelatin silver print, Gift of Clarence John Laughlin, 83.59.32
13. Josef Sudek (Czechoslovakian, 1896-1976) *Out of the Studio Window*, 1950, Gelatin silver print, Museum purchase, 1981 Deaccessioned Funds, 82.36
14. Leslie Gill (American, 1908-1958) *Studio Window; West 56th St., New York*, 1938, Gelatin silver print, Gift of Frances McLaughlin-Gill, 83.157.3
15. Howard Bond (American, 1931) *Drape, Hornby from the Light Motif’s Series*, 1982, Gelatin silver print, Gift of Howard Bond, 84.12.1
16. Lisette Model (American, born Austria, 1906-1983) *Window Reflections*, *Fifth Avenue, New York City*, Part of Portfolio of 12 Photographs, 1945, Gelatin silver print, Museum purchase, Mr. and Mrs. H. Blumenthal Fund, 77.384.12
17. Eliot Elisofan (American, 1911-1973) *877 Window Reflections*, 1935, Gelatin silver print, Museum purchase through the National Endowment for the Arts and Museum Purchase Funds, 79.240

**Gallery 2**

**RELATIONSHIPS**

The photographs in this gallery illustrate the ways in which obstructions can define the relationships between things, be it objects in space or the photographer’s relationship to their subject. In the first half of the gallery, the work of well known art photographers and anonymous snapshot photographers alike highlight how a photograph can collapse multiple layers to tell a singular story, articulating for example the ominous relationship between a steel mill and a cemetery (Walker Evans) or the serendipitous appearance of a cloud that resembles the form of crumbling concrete (Heinrich Riebersehl). In the second half of the gallery, the obstruction takes on the veil of voyeuristic vision, emphasizing the photographer’s active participation in, or passive observation of, a group or event. Danny Lyon joined the Chicago Outlaws Motorcycle Club to document their activities in words and images. His images on display here represent how deeply embedded in the club he was. Conversely, Yasuhiro Ishimoto’s photographs reveal the perspective of an outsider, removed from the very American activity of purchasing hotdogs at a concession stand in Chicago. Collectively, these photographs draw attention to photography’s duel dependence on the world as it happens and the photographer, who determines what version of that world we get to see.

Manuel Álvarez Bravo (Mexican 1902–2002) ***Carrizo y Tele (Reed and Television)****,* Gelatin silver print, Gift of Mr. R. Demasi, 79.417

Manuel Álvarez Bravo (Mexican 1902–2002) ***Vantana a los Magueyes (Window on the Agaves)*,** Gelatin silver print, Gift of Mr. R. Demasi, 79.416

Álvarez Bravo was a central figure in Latin American photography in the twentieth century. His interest in the surrealist movement is apparent here, as he uses the dramatic forms of the agave plants and reed to create a somewhat unsettling pair of compositions in which the plants appear to take on menacing, encroaching, gestures.

William Wylie (American, born 1957) ***Carrara, Italy***, 2002, Pigment print, Promised gift of Richard Press, EL.2016.19

William Wylie has extensively photographed the rough hewn marble blocks from the Carrara quarries in Italy. In this image, our view of the town is blocked by the ponderous raw product that was probably used in the town’s buildings.

Unidentified photographers, **Collection of snapshot photographs** taken from windows and in and of landscapes, 27 photographs, various processes Promised Gift of Peter J. Cohen, EL.2016.104.18-.33 and EL.2016.104.79-.90

This collection of photographs made throughout the twentieth century demonstrates how much photography has become a way of marking our relationship to something in the world. We might use it to prove that we witnessed some event from the comfort of our own car, or to document our conquering a landscape for pure recreation (note the image of the ski polls blocking a mountainscape.) Together, through the inclusion of obstructing elements, these photographs visually embody the words “I was there.”

Yasuhiro Ishimoto (Japanese, born United States, 1921–2012) ***Untitled***, 1949-50, Seven gelatin silver prints, Gift of Teresa and Klem Ceputis, 2015.74.12-18

Yasuhiro Ishimoto first took up photography when he was interned at a concentration camp for Japanese Americans in Colorado during World War II. These photographs, made later while he was a student at Chicago’s Institute of Design, reveal Ishimoto’s keen sense of observation, a sense perhaps heightened by his conflicted status as both part of and apart from American culture. Here, he photographs people coming and going from a concession stand on one of Chicago’s beaches. The low vantage point lends the pictures a subtle humor and makes them feel like surreptitious snapshots taken quickly from a hiding spot, while the figures are momentarily engrossed in their hotdog order.

Susan Meiselas (American, born 1948) ***Lulu and Debbie***, 1974, Gelatin silver print, Gift of Ron Beller, 2006.75.3

Susan Meiselas (American, born 1948) ***Teen Dream***, 1973, Gelatin silver print, Gift of Ron Beller, 2006.75.5

Between 1972 and 1975, Susan Meiselas documented the lives of striptease artists in small town carnivals. In these two pictures, she shows the audience reaction from behind the performers, giving us a glimpse of the dancer’s perspective and also revealing how thoroughly embedded Meiselas was in their lives.

**Gallery 3**

**INCIDENT, COINCIDENT, ACCIDENT, AND PERFORMANCE**

Sometimes an obstruction is the result of a split-second change in the world, something shifting momentarily before the shutter is released, and altering the picture. Sometimes, it is the product of an intuitive photographer, who waits patiently for unlikely things to align within the frame. And sometimes it results from the slip of a finger, whose blurred presence in the photograph erases part of the picture or ruthlessly decapitates its subjects. The works in this section trace the incidental, coincidental, and accidental presence of obstructions in photographs in both fine art and vernacular images. Many of these works are humorous and playful, representing the world as a series of improbable instances: Rudy Burckhardt’s image of an older woman, staring disapprovingly into the lens while passing a poster of a young woman; Gary Cawood stumbling upon a cow crossing sign that seems to amble into the frame; and dozens of anonymous snapshots in which the photographer’s shadow or finger has interrupted the picture plane. Ray K. Metzker’s artful answer to this last phenomenon (one that is disappearing in the digital age) is his *Pictus Interruptus* series, in which he would shove small objects that he created in the studio in front of the camera lens just before taking a picture. The result is part chance and part performance, leading into the second half of the gallery, which includes staged performances for the camera that play with the way the photographs flattens out space, or make use of props and tools to achieve a fictitious image that purports to be real.

PaJaMa (American) ***Paul Cadmus and Margaret French, Provincetown****,* ca. 1947, Gelatin silver print, Museum purchase, Tina Freeman Fund, 2015.126

In the 1940s, Paul Cadmus, Jared French, and Margaret French formed the collective PaJaMa after the first two initials of each of their names. In a playful set of photographs, they carried out various surreal activities that often directly address the aesthetic conditions of photography. In this one, for example, Paul stands in a white rainsuit behind Margaret, who wears all black, in front of the sand dunes of Provincetown. The effect is that Margaret is easily mistaken for Paul’s shadow, as if cast on a flat mural.

Winston O. Link (American, 1914–2001) ***Hot Shot Eastbound, Laeger, West Virginia***, 1956, printed 1999, Gelatin silver print, Gift of Blaine Gutermuth, 2014.59

This image, Link’s masterpiece, is almost entirely contrived. Link knew when the train would pass, and there was a movie playing at the drive-in theater, but he had to set up large flashlights to illuminate the train (visible as black circles in the background of the picture) and his exposure could not capture an image on the movie screen, so he printed it in later in the darkroom. In one final act of direction, Link also paid the couple in the foreground to cuddle in their convertible.

Unidentified photographers, ***People in Bushes,*** Seven photographs, various processes, Promised Gift of Peter J. Cohen, EL.2016.104.11-.17

While each of the subjects in these photographs no doubt thought their position, in the middle of or obscured by a plant was a novel idea, this collective display proves that it was common practice throughout the twentieth century.

Tseng Kwong Chi (Canadian, born China, 1950–1990) ***New York, New York***, 1979, printed 2001, Gelatin silver print, Gift of Steven Maklansky, 2001.351

Tseng Kwong Chi first donned his Mao suit on a family outing when he discovered it was the only suit he had available. He was surprised to find that this common suit was mistaken for royal attire, a confusion that he quickly exploited. Paired with reflective sunglasses and a fake ID badge, Tseng gained entry to exclusive parties in New York City, and took his own portrait with various socialites and celebrities. He also traveled the world and made self-portraits in front of the world’s best-known landmarks. Here, he stands in front of the World Trade Center juxtaposing two symbols of different cultures.

Calum Colvin (American, born 1954) ***Heroes I***, Cibachrome print, Promised and Partial Gift of H. Russell Albright, M.D., 95.578

Calum Colvin (American, born 1954) ***Heroes II***, Cibachrome print, Promised and Partial Gift of H. Russell Albright, M.D., 95.579

Colvin created these works by painting over objects and furniture, and then positioning other things to stand in for parts of the composition. The photograph of his assemblage collapses the depth in the room and presents the three-dimensional piece as a flat picture. Colvin destroys his sets after recording them, making the photograph the only lasting product of his labor. Here, he borrows two figures from different paintings by nineteenth century artist Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, but reinterprets them as slightly cartoonish forms, paired with other references to art, comic books, and empty beverage cans.

Ray K. Metzker American, 1931-2014, From the series ***“Pictus Interruptus***,” 1978-1980, Gelatin silver prints, Promised Gift of Ray K. Metzker Archive, EL.2016.70.1-10

Metzker’s *Pictus Interruptus* series, in which he puts things in front of the camera just before snapping the shutter, is a playful look at the line between fine art and vernacular images. Even the Latin-sounding title speaks to a jocular, pseudo-intellectualized endeavor. The results, however, are compelling images, half abstraction, half representation, and the perfect synthesis of intention and chance.

**Gallery 4**

**ABSTRACTION, SURFACE, AND PHOTOGRAPHY**

While much of this exhibition is concerned with photography’s contingent relationship to the real world, this final gallery explores how much the photograph transforms that world. Obstructions, for example, can lead to abstraction in the photograph. Ralston Crawford’s photographs of New Orleans cemeteries aim to convert the three dimensional world into a flat, abstracted two-dimensional one, and the labor-intensive work of Bernard Voita results in a complex set up studio image that is almost indecipherable as a space with any depth.

Those images focus on flatness within the photographic image, while others in this gallery address the flatness of the photographic object. As seductive and convincing as the photographic image might be, the photograph itself remains a flat surface, and any physical act can efface part of the world from that surface. The still mysterious E.J. Bellocq, photographed prostitutes in New Orleans’ Storyville district, and then he or someone else scratched out parts of them on the negative in what appear to be almost violent acts. André Kertesz’s photograph of Paris, which was pieced together from shards of a broken glass negative, is a reminder that the photograph is a representation of the world and if you poke a hole in that representation, you are left with nothing but a black void.

Throughout his career, Kenneth Josephson has explored the artifice of the photograph, often photographing other photographs to create multiple layers of representation between the real world and us and reminding us how the photograph itself is often in the way of our experience of the real world. Today, his work is a timely reminder of how consuming the act of looking at photographs, or even making them, can be. The final images in this exhibition show photographers at work, some patiently waiting for an unobstructed view of their subject, others caught in the act of their craft, often to the exclusion of the world around them. As phone cameras and digital photographs become an increasingly important part of the way we communicate, the works in this gallery are an important reminder of the limitations of photography. As much as it might be able to inform us about the world around us, looking at or making photographs also requires that we ignore that world. In other words, with photography, both the act and the object can very easily become something in the way.

Bernard Voita (Swiss, born 1960) ***Melancolia***, 2014, Archival inkjet print, Museum purchase

Bernard Voita rearranges his studio in elaborate ways, often spending as long as a month to organize it so that when it is photographed as a black and white image, it is reduced to a series of geometric shapes. If you look closely, you will see that the shapes are formed by things separated by varying distances and through the careful manipulation of light and shadow. The image only works from the one vantage point where Voita has placed his camera.

Unidentified photographer, ***Portrait of two children holding daguerreotypes***, 1847, Daguerreotype, Gift of Stanley B. Burns M.D., 84.106.25

Studio of William Snell American, active Salem, MA, 1840s, ***Portrait of two boys holding schoolbooks***, 1850, Daguerreotype, Gift of Stanley B. Burns M.D. 83.60.104

These two daguerreotypes demonstrate a popular portrait tradition in the nineteenth century, in which sitters would pose with things that related to their identity. In one, two schoolboys pose with books large enough to block most of their bodies. In the other, a young boy and girl pose with closed daguerreotype cases that probably contain portraits of their parents or other ancestors. Viewed in context with the conceptual, contemporary photographs of Kenneth Josephson in this gallery, this daguerreotype brings full circle a history of photographs-within-photographs, serving as a reminder of how quickly such images became cherished objects, worthy of recording.

Kenneth Josephson (American, born 1932)

***New York State***, 1970, Gelatin silver print, Loan from the collection of James and Cherye Pierce, Honolulu

***Chicago***, 1976, Gelatin silver print, Private collection, courtesy of Stephen Daiter Gallery, Chicago

***Chicago*** *(History of Photography* series*),* 1973, Gelatin silver print, Private collection, courtesy of Gitterman Gallery, New York

***Matthew***, 1965, Gelatin silver print, Private collection, courtesy of Gitterman Gallery, New York

***Illinois***, 1971, Gelatin silver print, Private collection, courtesy of Stephen Daiter Gallery, Chicago

In much of his work, Kenneth Josephson photographs other photographs to underscore the artifice of the photographic image. A picture of an ocean liner, as real as it may seem, is still only a picture, a flat surface that we cannot penetrate to experience the world beyond. By including a photograph in his photograph, Josephson adds another layer between that world and us, a reminder that the act of looking at any photograph is essentially a choice to ignore or block the world momentarily. As we look at Josephson’s photograph of the photograph, we have chosen to disregard the world of substance around us, in favor of focusing on a surface about surfaces, an obstruction of an obstruction.

Thomas Barrow (American, born 1938) ***Untitled*** from the series *Cancellations*, 1975, Gelatin silver print, Museum purchase, Zemurray Foundation Fund, 76.351.1

André Kertész (American, born Hungary 1894–1985) ***Paris 1929*** (Broken Plate), printed ca. 1970, Gelatin silver print, Museum purchase through the National Endowment for the Arts Grant, 75.36

In 1963 Kertész received this negative, and others, that he had entrusted to a friend for safekeeping when he left Paris for New York in 1936. He discarded the broken negatives, except for this one, which he reassembled from the remaining shards and printed. The missing part of the negative resulted in a black void near the center of the picture. In his series Cancellations, Barrow distorts the photographs with various marks to the negative. Invoking a tradition in printmaking when a metal plate is “cancelled” with an X after all prints have been pulled, Barrow plays with photography’s relationship to printmaking and addresses the disappearing American landscape, as if to suggest that its open expanses are soon to be occupied.

**KENNETH JOSEPHSON Photography Is**

This exhibition presents a brief survey of the work of Kenneth Josephson (American, born 1932), one of the most inventive photographers of the second half of the twentieth century. Throughout his career, Josephson has explored photography’s central relationships: between light and shadow, flatness and depth, the real world and its representation, and the image and the object. In his work, these explorations take many different forms—multiple exposures, richly printed street photographs, landscapes, and pictures of pictures—but these disparate works all share one thing in common: Josephson’s photographs refer back to themselves or to the processes that created them. While these ideas might lead to dry, analytical images, in Josephson’s hands they result in playful, beautifully composed photographs that surprise, challenge, and delight. The world, as it exists in his photographs, seems to be made for photography, but often Josephson is the one who made it. The degree to which he has tampered with the scene in front of the camera is sometimes obvious and sometimes not. Josephson therefore frequently keeps us guessing at what is real and what is fabricated. Collectively, his work suggests a host of playful definitions for photography—photography is fiction, photography is document, photography is performance—but individually, each photograph seems to celebrate the existence of photography, to revel in the process that brought it into being, and to delight in the simple fact that Photography Is.

*Kenneth Josephson: Photography Is* is organized by the New Orleans Museum of Art in conjunction with *Something in the Way: A Brief History of Photography and Obstruction*, currently on view on this floor in the Templeman Galleries.

The A. Charlotte Mann and Joshua Mann Pailet Gallery is dedicated to the presentation and interpretation of photography.

Kenneth Josephson (American, born 1932) ***Hollywood (Archaeological Series, Two Meter Stick)***, 1975, Gelatin silver print, Museum purchase, 2016

In this work, Josephson exploits the flat plane of the photograph to play with perspective. Using a two meter stick that is carefully painted to look as if it recedes into the picture further than it does, Josephson collapses the distance between him (and therefore us) and the iconic Hollywood sign.

Kenneth Josephson (American, born 1932) ***Chicago***, 1959, Gelatin silver print, Museum purchase, 2016

Josephson created this work for a project that his teacher, renowned photographer Harry Callahan, assigned him as a student. The challenge was to create a multiple exposure image in the camera. In other words, he had to expose the same frame of film at least twice, without seeing the results of each exposure in the process.

Kenneth Josephson (American, born 1932) ***Chicago***, 1961, Gelatin silver print, Loan, private collection, courtesy of Gitterman Gallery, New York

Josephson is a careful student of light, always aware of how it might be exaggerated in the final print, and how that exaggeration might transform a simple scene, like people waiting for a bus, into an abstract pattern of light and shadow

Kenneth Josephson (American, born 1932) ***Stockholm***, 1967, Gelatin silver print, Loan, private collection, courtesy of Stephen Daiter Gallery, Chicago

In this image, one of Josephson’s best known, what appears to be the result of darkroom manipulation is, in fact, simply un-melted snow that was shielded from the sun’s rays by the shadow of the car.

Kenneth Josephson (American, born 1932) ***Chicago***, conceived 1969, printed 2012, Gelatin silver print, Loan, private collection, courtesy of Stephen Daiter Gallery, Chicago

This witty piece plays on photography’s need for light. Josephson thought of this idea in 1969, but never realized it until quite recently, in 2012. We might assume that the piece presents two photographs of the same light switch: one in the “on” position, and the second in the “off” position. But, of course, the second image could be of almost anything, or nothing at all. Josephson therefore sets up our expectations, and then playfully leaves them unfulfilled.

Kenneth Josephson (American, born 1932) ***Illinois,*** 1958, Gelatin silver print, Loan, private collection, courtesy of Stephen Daiter Gallery, Chicago

Through Josephson’s eyes, the world often appears more like a frame from a graphic novel than a slice of real life. In this image, the outlines of the broken, opaque glass in the factory window are strangely similar to the shapes of the birds above it, as if they have just busted through, comic book style, to emerge into the sky.

Kenneth Josephson (American, born 1932) ***Gotland, Sweden***, 1967, Gelatin silver print, printed 2014 Loan, private collection, courtesy of Stephen Daiter Gallery, Chicago

This self-portrait was taken while Josephson was peering over the edge of a deep ravine. His shadow is bisected by the depth of the chasm, rendering his legs in the foreground as comically outsized appendages for the tiny body and head towards the top of the picture.

Kenneth Josephson (American, born 1932) ***Stockholm***, 1966, Gelatin silver print, Museum purchase, 2016

Kenneth Josephson (American, born 1932) ***Wisconsin***, 1980, Gelatin silver print, Loan, private collection, courtesy Gitterman Gallery

These two works, although similar in appearance, were produced differently. In the top image Josephson documents the light filtering through the trees as it highlights fragments of the ferns below. In the bottom image, Josephson has painted portions of leaves white, and then photographed them. Separated by fourteen years, one records the world as it was and the other records a world that Josephson created.