

VERVE

GALLERY OF PHOTOGRAPHY

***Verve Gallery of Photography Presents
A Group Exhibition by Three Gallery Artists***

Stanko Abadžić
Julio Bittencourt
Michael Crouser

Opening Reception: Friday, January 22, 2010, 5-7pm
Exhibit is on view through Friday, March 13, 2010

Gallery Talk with Michael Crouser
Saturday, January 23, 2009, 2-3pm

CONTACT INFORMATION STANKO ABADŽIĆ

Email: stankoabadzic@arcor.de
Phone: Zagreb, Croatia: 385 98 93530

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR JULIO BITTENCOURT

Email: julio@juliobittencourt.com
Phone: São Paulo, Brazil: 55 11 3459 0021

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR MICHAEL CROUSER

Email: mc@michaelcrouser.com
Phone: 646-369-9021

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR VERVE GALLERY OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Jennifer Schlesinger, Gallery Director, Verve Gallery of Photography
Email: director@vervefinearts.com
Phone: 505.982.5009 Fax: 505.982.9111

219 EAST MARCY STREET, SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO 87501 P [505] 982-5009 F [505] 982-9111

W W W . S A N T A F E P H O T O G A L L E R Y . C O M

Verve Gallery of Photography is pleased to present a three-person exhibition of documentary photography with Verve gallery artists Stanko Abadžic, Julio Bittencourt and Michael Crouser. **The public reception is held on Friday, January 22, 2010 from 5-7pm. The exhibition is on view through Friday, March 13, 2010. There will be a Gallery Talk with Michael Crouser at Verve Gallery on Saturday, January 23, 2010 from 2-3pm.**

STANKO ABADŽIC

Stanko Abadžic will be exhibiting black and white gelatin silver prints from his imagery that has a street photographer's aesthetic, including a wide range of genre and themes in the artist's signature style.

Abadžic's use of shadow, line and form coupled with his juxtapositions create irony, humor and satire. The images are familiar, yet distinct, capturing an Eastern European timeless sensibility, as though they could have been made today or in the early 20th century. They remind the viewer of the old world, where people were friendly, modest, and had humor about their misgivings; playfulness was abundant yet people worked hard and the world was uncertain.

Abadžic's work is characterized by strong contrasts of light and dark and an interest in patterns and geometric forms created by long shadows, brick or cobblestone streets, intricate ironwork designs, fences, and other grid-like elements-shot mostly in Prague and other Eastern European cities. He seeks out children playing, people on bicycles or lingering at street cafes, and has an eye for irony. There is a strong sense of nostalgia and transience running through his work, due no doubt to his experiences as a displaced person.

Stanko Abadžic was born in 1952 in Vukovar, Croatia. At the age of 15 he began to teach himself photography. After marrying, he worked as a reporter and photojournalist to support his family. When the Croatian War of Independence broke out in 1991, Abadžic left everything and fled with his family to Germany for what he hoped would be a brief stay. After four difficult years, during which he took few photographs, they were denied German citizenship and forced to leave. After moving to Prague, Abadžic experienced a rebirth and began exploring the city with a medium-format camera. At this point in 1995, he began to develop his visual eye in earnest.

Abadžic was able to return with his family to Croatia in 2002, settling in the capital of Zagreb. He continues to visit Prague to take photographs and also shoots on the **Adriatic Sea**. Abadžic has had solo exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art Dubrovnik, Museum of Modern Art Rijeka, Mimara Museum in Zagreb, and various galleries in Japan, Argentina Prague, Berlin, and other Eastern European cities. He is represented in the United States by John Cleary (Houston, TX), Verve Gallery (Santa Fe, NM) and Contemporary Works (Pennsylvania).

JULIO BITTENCOURT

Julio Bittencourt will be exhibiting his award winning color photographs from the book and print series, *In A Window of Prestes Maia 911 Building*.

This series centers around what is thought to have been the biggest squat in the world: 911 Prestes Maia, a 22-story tower block in central São Paulo, the largest city in Brazil. In 2006 the abandoned building was home to an estimated 1630 people including 468 families with 315 children - a mini city within a very big one. In 2002 the 'Movement for the Homeless' had moved hundreds of homeless families into the empty building, who in turn made the place habitable, even going so far as providing a library, cinema and workshops. Then suddenly, in March of 2006, the inhabitants learned they were going to be evicted within a month. Julio Bittencourt photographed the diverse occupants at their windows, from which they communicated with one other, recording the happiness and dignity in coexistence with decay and neglect.

Bittencourt's photographs are a powerful record of this diverse community. He grew up in São Paulo where he became accustomed to people communicating across windows as family and friends lived on top of and next to each other. As such, windows were always a significant part of Bittencourt's life and this is what drew him to create this project.

"To be able to photograph a window I also had to be positioned in one [across from the subjects in other's homes]. I think that by choosing windows, and only them, I created a 'rigorous game' that I proposed to myself – to look at windows, from windows... My intention was to show a symbolic and a physical 'barrier', the decay of the materials, the dignity of the people who survive behind them and the decay of a system that doesn't integrate its inhabitants into society but moves away from them making these 'barriers' each time bigger."

The building was finally evicted in 2007 and many residents were relocated to public housing developments in the east side of the city, Some returned home - usually northeast of Brazil and other South American countries, while others have joined other, much smaller squats, mainly downtown. The artist has been following this theme for more than a year, in his new series called *Citizen X*.

Julio Bittencourt was born in Brazil, grew up in São Paulo and spent his adolescence in New York. In 2000 he began his career at the photo department of *Valor Economico*, the major financial publication in Brazil where he worked as a staff photographer and as assistant-editor for four years. Since 2006 Julio has been working as a freelance photographer for magazines, newspapers, advertising and corporate clients in Brazil, Europe, Canada, Japan and the United States, in addition to his personal projects. Julio's work has been exhibited in galleries and museums worldwide and published in magazines such as *Geo*, *National Geographic*, *Stern*, *Le Monde*, *The Guardian*, *Esquire*, *Leica World Magazine*, among others. In 2008 he published his first book, *In a window of Prestes Maia 911 Building*, which was awarded the Leica Oskar Barnack Award. Julio currently lives in São Paulo.

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MICHAEL CROUSER

Michael Crouser will be exhibiting black and white gelatin silver prints from his soon-to-be published book, *The West*.

This Kodak sponsored project features imagery of the disappearing world of cattle ranchers in Colorado, all shot on Kodak Tri-X film. The imagery is made in Crouser's style of warm-toned prints with soft blacks that allow for a sense of serenity even in the sometimes stark subject matter.

Like the artist's previous work on the world of the bullfights in Spain, Mexico and South America, these Western pictures examine and document a rough, dangerous, age-old and disappearing world. The artist is drawn to the timeless elements in this work—horseback riding; branding with hot branding irons; cowboys wearing chaps and cowboy hats and chewing tobacco. The artist was intrigued with the soft-spoken, kind cowboys and cowgirls that he's met along this exploration. The Colorado landscape was a new subject for the Crouser, usually photographing in the warmer climates for his bullfighting series.

"*The West* is a series that had its beginnings as long ago as 1997, with some test shots I did on a ranch in Telluride, Colorado. Almost ten years later, as I found myself in a period of general and photographic malaise following the death of my mother, I was invited to come back to Colorado, to a friend's ranch near Gypsum to photograph that year's calving. I wasn't hopeful of gathering much, as my heart really wasn't in it. To my surprise, I found myself captivated by the work of the ranchers I met, and made some pictures during the week that got me excited about holding a camera again. My friendship has grown with these wonderful people, and as they have introduced me to neighboring ranchers, so has the series."

-Michael Crouser

Michael Crouser was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota in 1962, and graduated from Saint John's University (Collegeville, MN) in 1985. His first monograph, *Los Toros*, was published by Twin Palms Publishers in the fall of 2007, and was given 1st Prize in the category of Fine Art Book in the International Photography Awards. Both *Los Toros* and his second book, *Dog Run*, were recognized in *Communication Arts*, *PhotoDistrict News* and the *Lucies/IPAs* as being among the top ten photography books of their respective publishing years. Three prints from the *Los Toros* series can be found in the permanent collection of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. Crouser is represented by galleries in Santa Fe, Houston, New York, and Spain. His third book, with a working title of *The West*, featuring black and white imagery of the disappearing world of cattle ranchers in Colorado, will be published in the Spring of 2011. Michael Crouser splits his time between Brooklyn and Minneapolis.