

Foundation

NEWS & COMMENTARY



Photo by Lois Corner

The view from the Lorain-Carnegie Bridge, from a photo series depicting foundation efforts to improve the health of the Cuyahoga River.

“Tremendous Pictures”

“Since its beginnings, photography has attempted to describe cities or at least sections or aspects of them. I am not aware, however, of any such attempt that has been so open-minded, so philosophically generous, as pursued during the past dozen years by The George Gund Foundation.”

—JOHN SZARKOWSKI, FORMER CURATOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY, MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

The George Gund Foundation combined the need to document its grantmaking with support for fine arts photography. The result is worthy of a museum exhibit.

BY DAVID BERGHOLZ

These words by John Szarkowski, a noted photographer in his own right, appear on the cover of *A City Seen: Photographs from the George Gund Foundation Collection*, a publication marking the foundation’s 50th anniversary as well as our foundation’s approach to producing an annual report that celebrates and advances an art form.

Our decision to commission a different fine arts photographer each year to highlight an issue or institution that has been of importance to the foundation came shortly after I began my tenure as executive director in 1989. As an avid (but very amateur) photographer myself, I’ve always had a passion for black and white

photography and relished any opportunity to support and encourage both emerging and established photographers.

Upon arriving in Cleveland, I soon discovered a design firm, Nesnadny + Schwartz, that shared my passion. I began a partnership with one of the firm’s principals, Mark Schwartz, that led to our commissioning portfolios from some of the finest photographers in the country. The foundation’s trustees, recognizing an opportunity to produce a distinctive annual report that would stand out from the dozens of others that regularly land on people’s desks, provided encouragement and funding for this effort.

Foundation News & Commentary

November/December 2002

“Tremendous Pictures”

A City Seen: Photos from The George Gund Foundation

Covering Our Interest Areas

Over the years, we’ve asked outstanding photographers such as Lee Friedlander, Judith Joy Ross, Dawoud Bey, Lois Conner, Nicholas Nixon and Linda Butler to focus on everything from the children of the Cleveland public schools to the topography of the Cuyahoga River. The foundation has offered these artists flexible, unstructured opportunities within the broad context of our interests in education, community development, the environment, civic affairs, human services and the arts.

The response has been quite wonderful. Our foundation and Nesnadny + Schwartz have received more than 100 awards for these reports, including six awards in the prestigious Mead Annual Report Show competition. A number of folks consider them to be collector’s items, and we frequently hear comments about the quality of the photographs and how evocative they are of our grant-making. One local agency executive director wrote that the 2001 report “became my meditation for the day . . . tremendous pictures that led right to the great work the foundation does in our community.” The director of a university press said that his “in-box is filled with handsome catalogs and other stuff, but your report jumped out of the pile and kept me occupied—with pleasure—far longer than I care to admit.”

This November, the George Gund Foundation is celebrating its 50th anniversary and Mr. Gund’s legacy with a series of events. One of the main celebrations will be an exhibition of the annual report photography collection at the Cleveland Museum of Art, from November 17, 2002, through January 26, 2003. It will be accompanied by publication of a hardbound book of the collected images of the 12 Gund photographers. In addition, the foundation is making a gift to the museum of 150 of the photographs.

David Bergholz is president of the George Gund Foundation, which is located in Cleveland, Ohio. He will be retiring from the foundation in January 2003.

Photo by Douglas Lucak



A “pinhole camera” captures an urban backyard at Kinsman and Woodland Hills, one of Cleveland’s diverse neighborhoods.

Photo by Lee Friedlander



This baker at the Orlando Baking Company was part of an essay on “People Working,” illustrating the foundation’s efforts to strengthen the economic vitality of Northeast Ohio.

Photo by Nicholas Nixon



Adequate healthcare for all citizens has long been a concern of the George Gund Foundation. This photo shows a patient at the Free Medical Clinic of Greater Cleveland, a longtime grantee that serves the uninsured and underinsured.

Foundation News & Commentary

November/December 2002

“Tremendous Pictures”

A City Seen: Photos from The George Gund Foundation

Photo by Dawoud Bey



Monique and Deborah Stover represent one of the families featured in the foundation's 1993 annual report, which focused on the foundation's interest in strengthening the family as a source of emotional, social and economic support.

Photo by Larry Fink



A glimpse into the activity and energy in the classrooms and hallways at Cleveland School of the Arts illustrates the foundation's conviction that the arts can play a big role in achieving educational excellence.

Photo by Frank Gohlke



This beach scene in Sims Park, along Lake Erie in suburban Cleveland, represents just one way in which Greater Clevelanders relate to Lake Erie. The foundation has had a long interest in the health of this Great Lake.

Photo by Judith Joy Ross



Students in the Cleveland Municipal District were photographed a decade ago, and the resulting portfolio shows the foundation's ongoing commitment to Cleveland schools.

Foundation News & Commentary

November/December 2002

“Tremendous Pictures”

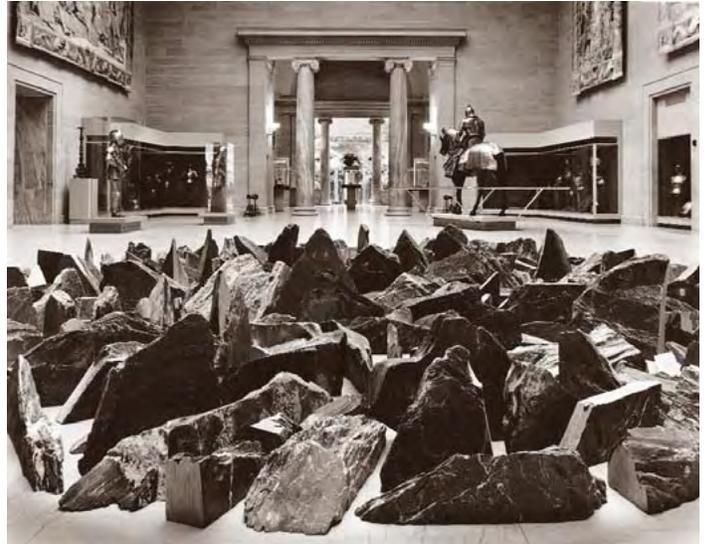
A City Seen: Photos from The George Gund Foundation

Photo by Gregory Conniff



Over the years the foundation has made grants for a range of projects promoting a mix of good urban design with amenities that will make the city a more pleasant place to live and work. Mini-gardens, like this one in a backyard in Cleveland's West Side, offer a soothing oasis to city dwellers.

Photo by Linda Butler



The “armor court” at the Cleveland Museum of Art is one of many arts venues highlighted in the photo collection.

Photo by Barbara Bosworth



Adding more green to the urban scene is Rocky River Reservation. Supporting the reservation —part of the Cleveland Metroparks system—is one of many ways the foundation helps maintain open spaces and greenways around the city.

Photo by Michael Book



A bird's-eye view of Cleveland's Little Italy neighborhood was one of many local scenes included in the foundation's 1990 annual report, the first to feature a commissioned photo essay.