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ARTIST'S STATEMENT

My Conceptual Photography is a concrete manifestation of complex inner stresses from external realities of all kinds: physical, familial, political, religious, time, space and relentless travel. I begin by shooting surreal photographs in a kind of trance-state. I believe that the resultant images, and the Conceptual Distortions I create from them, reveal elements of both my particular personality and psychological states, and reach the same in the viewers' own.

After a BFA and MFA in Painting, I moved to camera arts, and had been represented by the Monique Goldstrom Gallery in SoHo until Monique's untimely death in 2004. We used as my "artist's statement" just a one-line quote from my book *Clues to Myself*: "I gave myself a camera and promised not to interfere." By that I meant I'd let my shutter-release be based on intuition, not on the depiction of what Duane Michals spoke to me of as pictures of "other people's lives." Four books of my photos and texts have been published, and by the title of one, *Soul & Psyche* (Visual Studies Workshop Press, 1998) you can get an idea of how I believe my art engages. I taught Photography at Parsons / The New School for 12 years, and always tried to find the images of my students' that were most unique and personal to themselves as well.

Monique Goldstrom's death so affected me that I decided not to immediately seek another gallery, but to arrange for international exhibitions in North America, Europe and Asia (and NY), and have had 30 since then, about half solo.

During this decade+ of relentless exhibition and travel, I have been shooting several hundred rolls of color and BW 35mm film with analog Olympus OM-1 equipment, often while in motion, then when back in my NY studio, I digitize selected full-frame images as a basis for my final, computer-manipulated Conceptual Photography, which is my art. The Surreal selections are dreamlike evocations no matter where on Earth they were shot, and comprise categories of iconography such as "Trapped Figures," "Tiny Houses" and "Magic Landscapes." It has always been important to me to work with my own imagery, never just distort, for whatever purely visual or graphic reason, any appropriations. This was brought home to me by a critic in Australia, Phillipa Hawker, in her 2013 *Sydney Morning Herald* article, *Barbara Rosenthal: In the Moment, With Originality*. Before she wrote that, these mandates hadn't been so clear to me.

When I began to work with a computer about the time of Monique's death, I started to investigate the stresses within the photos themselves, and as I try to live in a way that keeps my psyche stable, I find that I work to distort the initial full-frame 35mm in order to stabilize that, too. This practice always results in extrusions and compressions of its perimeter. Again, it was a critic who revealed my impetus to myself! This time it was writer Bob Dombrowski in the 2016 *Chattanooga* article *Barbara Rosenthal: The Artist Who Works with Instability*.

In the last few years, I have been giving more importance to the "negative" space surrounding these Conceptual Photographs when framed. These pieces have never been shown publicly yet, and there are now about 70 completed. The 4-edged shapes seem as if accelerating toward the viewer through a vast space. Some even took the shape of comets. So I began around 2013 to place the image in a large, vertical field of black or white, off-centered as if weighted and flying or falling or drifting or wafting. There are now 30 of them lining my studio walls, 26"x40" each, hung with frames abutting. These can be mixed and matched in many different ways, and have the effect of a universe of dynamic imagery, propelled in space, frozen in time. Because of this, I've also begun experimenting with morphing animation, GIF and video programs (accompanied by original audio from composer-friends), which distort and reform the originals in a Surreal-Conceptual interplay along with the wall works.