



**Etherton Gallery Presents
Teachers and Mentors: Harry Callahan, Frederick Sommer, Emmet Gowin
at Paris Photo 2018**

November 8-11, Grand Palais, Paris

Etherton Gallery is pleased to announce its participation in the 2018 edition of Paris Photo, from November 8-11 at the Grand Palais in Paris. Please visit us at Stand B39 where we will present over 40 vintage and modern gelatin silver prints, including unique, unpublished images by Harry Callahan (1912-1990), Emmet Gowin (b. 1941) and Frederick Sommer (1905-1999). The exhibition considers the relationship among three masters of American photography whose contributions to the medium remain vital today. Emmet Gowin is heir to two unique voices in the history of photography: Harry Callahan and Frederick Sommer. Their European modernist influenced aesthetic represented a photographic alternative to the transcendental tradition of Stieglitz and Adams and the reticent, documentary style of Walker Evans.

On the advice of Robert Frank, Gowin enrolled at the Rhode Island School of Design to study with Harry Callahan in 1965. Callahan merged the purism of Ansel Adams with the experimentation of Laszlo Moholy-Nagy's Bauhaus experimentalism to forge his own path, and was instrumental in introducing a vocabulary of abstraction or minimalism to photography. As Callahan said, "*The difference between the casual impression and the intensified image is about as great as separating the average business letter from a poem. If you choose your subject selectively - intuitively - the camera can write poetry.*" Callahan's new vocabulary was the result of a process that included using different cameras, photographing the same subject myriad ways, and experimenting with extreme contrast, reduction of form, double or multiple exposures, seriality, repetition and many other innovations. Established within the first decade of his career, this process was repeated and expanded upon over many years with three primary subjects: nature, buildings, and people. Many of his most iconic photographs feature his wife Eleanor and daughter Barbara.

When Harry Callahan invited Frederick Sommer to speak at RISD in 1967, Gowin drove all night from his new job at the Dayton Art Institute to meet him and show Sommer his photographs. As a result of this experience, Sommer became a life-long friend and Gowin's second mentor. Sommer, an artistic and intellectual polymath, created work that joined his profound belief in the infinite nature of photography with Dada's emphasis on chance, and Surrealism's exploration of our physical existence. Gowin said, "*Sommer would say, 'you have to make it to find it or you have to find it to make it,' indicating...[T]hat in our search for discovery and revelation, chance and purpose were intertwined, and both could and should serve the imagination.*" Sommer's experimental practice included multiple exposures (used to mimic the Surrealist technique, frottage); still lifes of found objects; and cameraless negatives made by applying smoke or paint to cellophane or glass. Sommer photographed the Arizona landscape, making flattened compositions, devoid of people or horizons, and decaying animals, thoughtful observations on the cycle of life and death.



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Princeton University Professor Emeritus, Emmet Gowin, is best known for intimate images of his family and aerial landscapes of the American West. Like Callahan, Gowin was struck by the transcendent qualities of an Ansel Adams photograph. However, Gowin's first loves were drawing and painting. Gowin found his photographic voice in a series of small-scale, emotionally resonant images of his wife Edith's extended family in their hometown, Danville, Virginia. Edith Gowin, like Eleanor Callahan, was the subject of many of Gowin's most iconic images. During the 1970s and 80s, Gowin began producing landscapes and later, aerial landscapes from unexpected points of view. These flattened and often horizonless images are mindful of Sommer's Arizona landscapes, but represent modern investigations of the environmental impacts of industrial scale agriculture, excessive water usage, and our reliance on nuclear power, emphasizing subject and form equally. Emmet Gowin has continued the tradition of teaching and mentorship to photographers including Sally Mann, David Maisel, Fazal Sheikh and others.

For more information contact Daphne Srinivasan or Hannah Glasston at Etherton Gallery (52) 624-7370 or info@ethertongallery.com

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Emit Gowin, *Edith, Danville, Virginia, 1963* gelatin silver print, © Emmet and Edith Gowin, Courtesy Pace/MacGill Gallery, New York and Etherton Gallery, Tucson

Harry Callahan, *Chicago, 1954* unique gelatin silver print, © The Estate of Harry Callahan, Courtesy Etherton Gallery, Tucson

Frederick Sommer, *Chicken, 1939* gelatin silver print, © The Frederick and Frances Sommer Foundation, Courtesy Etherton Gallery, Tucson

Bios

HARRY M. CALLAHAN (1912-1999)

Harry Callahan was one of the most influential photographers of the twentieth century and is best known for utilizing the objectivity of straight photography to produce works that reinvented reality, "to charge it with personal, even mythic, resonance."

Callahan was the son of a Midwestern farmer who moved to Detroit to get work in the auto factories. He purchased his first camera in 1938, when he was a 26 year-old clerk in the shipping department of Chrysler Motors. While there, he joined the Chrysler Camera Club and then the Detroit Photo Guild. In 1941, he met Ansel Adams who gave a workshop in Detroit. Callahan was struck by "Adams' crisp nature studies and precise prints... [which] stood in stark contrast with the soft-focus, manipulated imagery practiced in the

camera clubs.” Adams’ pictures demonstrated that clear, sharp, highly detailed descriptions of the visible world could be expressive. He also offered him Stieglitz’s model of transcendentalism and equivalency. “I wanted something important, something spiritual in my life then,” Callahan later said. In the summer of 1942, Callahan traveled to New York to meet Stieglitz, but was too intimidated to show his photographs. He admired Stieglitz’s series of portraits of Georgia O’Keeffe, which inspired him to begin the decades-long series of portraits of his wife Eleanor.

Around this time, Callahan befriended Detroit-area photographer, Arthur Siegel, who was a practicing photojournalist. Siegel had studied with László Moholy-Nagy, a European émigré who founded the New Bauhaus School in Chicago. Through informal gatherings at Siegel’s house, he became acquainted with Moholy-Nagy’s Bauhaus teachings. Within two years of meeting Adams, Callahan developed the themes and techniques that would characterize his 50-year career. He experimented with modernist ideas derived from Bauhaus teachings. He experimented with cameras in a range of sizes, from 35 mm to 8 x 10 inch formats; and made multiple exposures, high-contrast prints and used both black and white and color film. Yet, he also he imbued his straight photographs of the every-day world with personal expression. Callahan explored a range of subjects – landscapes and city streets as well as portraits of his wife Eleanor and daughter Barbara.

In 1946 Moholy-Nagy invited Callahan to join the photography faculty at the Institute of Design in Chicago. In 1951 he taught a summer course at Black Mountain College in North Carolina. In 1961 he moved to Providence, Rhode Island to chair the photography department at the Rhode Island School of Design, eventually retiring in 1977. From 1947 to 1960, Callahan’s central subject was his wife Eleanor Callahan, and after her birth in 1950, his daughter Barbara. By the 1970s, he had begun to focus on color photography. He had made color photographs for several years, but they existed only as Kodachrome transparencies. In the late 1970s he began to produce dye transfer prints. Also in the 1970s, Callahan began to concentrate more on exterior themes, such as the beach, city and land. In 1983, the Callahans moved to Atlanta where the photographer developed his Peachtree series. He passed away in Atlanta on March 15, 1999.

Harry Callahan was the recipient of numerous distinctions, including the Graham Foundation Grant for Advanced Studies in Fine Arts (1956); a Guggenheim Fellowship (1972); fellowship in the American Academy of Arts & Sciences, Cambridge (1979); the Distinguished Career in Photography Award from the Friends of Photography, Carmel, Calif. (1981); the Brandeis Creative Arts Medal (1985); the Achievement Award from the Illinois Academy of Fine Arts, Chicago (1992); the Edward MacDowell Medal (1993); and the National Medal of Arts (1996). He was the first photographer invited to represent the United States at the 1978 Venice Biennial.

His work has been the subject of many publications, notably *Harry Callahan* (1964); *Harry Callahan* (1967); *Callahan* (1976); *Harry Callahan: Color* (1980); *Water’s Edge* (1980); *Eleanor* (1984); *Harry Callahan: New color Photographs 1978-87* (1988); *Harry Callahan* (1996); *Elemental Landscapes: Photographs by Harry Callahan* (2001); *Harry Callahan: The Photographer at Work* (2006); *Harry Callahan: Eleanor* (2007); *Harry Callahan: Seven Collages* (2012); *Harry Callahan: French Archives: Aix-en-Provence 1957–1958* (2018) and *Harry Callahan: Morocco* (2018).

Callahan’s photographs are in the permanent collections of public collections in the United States and Europe including the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Philadelphia Museum of Art; Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth, TX; Art Institute of Chicago; Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; George Eastman House, Rochester, NY; Nelson Atkins Museum, Kansas City, MO; High Museum of Art, Atlanta; National Museum of Photography, Copenhagen, Denmark;; Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam; and the Maison Européenne de la Photographie, Paris.

Harry Callahan’s archive is housed at the Center for Creative Photography, at the University of Arizona.



FREDERICK SOMMER (1909-1999)

In an influential career that spanned seven decades, Frederick Sommer created paintings, drawings, and collages, composed musical scores and created an influential body of work in photography. Sommer was born in Angri, Italy but raised in Brazil. In 1925, he traveled to Cornell University to study landscape architecture, where he met and married Frances Watson. In 1930, Sommer was diagnosed with tuberculosis. His confinement and recuperation in Switzerland led to a program of reading in art and philosophy, and an interest in photography. Eventually the Sommers returned to the United States, later settling in Prescott, Arizona. In 1939, Sommer became an American citizen.

In 1936, Sommer met Edward Weston and they became close friends. Inspired by Weston's example, Sommer purchased an 8 x 10 Century Universal view camera in 1938. He began making a series of close-ups of still-lives of chicken heads (discarded by his butcher), entrails and other dead animals. Subsequently he purchased a longer focal length lens for this camera allowing him to photograph distant landscapes.

Throughout the 40s, Sommer pursued painting, drawing and photography. He began a series of landscape views of the Arizona desert where he isolated the austere Arizona hillsides and reduced them to abstract patterns. Sommer intentionally created flattened landscapes that lacked a single focal point, calling into question photography's objectivity and suggesting a new way of seeing. Sommer was drawn to the subtle range of gray tones achievable with silver gelatin prints and the practice of contact printing. At an exhibition of his work in Los Angeles, Sommer met Man Ray and Max Ernst, who were living in Los Angeles. Over the years, Sommer collected scraps of billboard posters, children's toys, pieces of torn wallpaper and fragments of rusted metal. By 1946, he was making photographs from these found objects, which he assembled into Surrealist collages. The collages often required considerable handwork in the negatives.

In the 1950s, Sommer developed a process of painting on glass to create cameraless negatives and began experimenting with a Leica 35 mm camera. Later he experimented with processes such as cliché verre, painting on cellophane and smoke on foil. He would paint in oil or deposit smoke from a candle onto a transparent surface and then place it in an enlarger to create negatives of his abstract compositions. Designed only for use as negatives, he often destroyed these transparent paintings after making a satisfactory print. In 1962, he began to make his first cut paper photographs.

In the 1950s, Sommer's reputation grew, aided by friends such as Ernst, Aaron Siskind, Edward Steichen and Minor White who brought his work to the attention of important photography venues such as The Museum of Modern Art, the Institute of Design, Chicago and *Aperture* magazine. Sommer also had an active teaching career. In 1957, he was appointed a lecturer in photography at the Institute of Design, a one-year replacement position for Harry Callahan. He also taught at Prescott College for several years until 1971. Sommer continued to experiment in the years that followed, producing work in a variety of media until the year before his death in 1999.

Frederick Sommer's photographs are in the permanent collections of American and European museums among them, the Art Institute of Chicago; J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, CA; the National Gallery, Washington, D.C.; Maison Européenne de la Photographie, Paris; Victoria and Albert Museum, London; the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; and The Museum of Modern Art, New York. His archive is housed at the Center for Creative Photography, at the University of Arizona, Tucson.

EMMET GOWIN (b. 1941)

Emmet Gowin was born in Danville, Virginia in 1941. He obtained his BFA in graphic design from the Richmond Professional Institute (now Virginia Commonwealth University) in 1965 and an MFA in photography from the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) in 1967. While at RISD, Gowin studied with



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Harry Callahan (1912-1999), who became a mentor and important influence on his work. Gowin also developed a friendship with Frederic Sommer, (1905-1999) whose ideas and work affected him deeply.

Following his marriage to Edith Morris in 1964, Gowin began making photographs of Edith, his sons Elijah and Isaac, and Edith's extended family in Danville, intimate portrayals of the small rituals of everyday life. During the 1970s, he began to make landscape photographs and since the mid-1980s, he has explored the use of aerial photography to document the impact of human intervention in the environment. Some of the issues addressed in this work include the impact of center pivot irrigation used in industrial-scale agriculture of the Great Plains; the effect of weapons testing on the environment near the Yucca Flats nuclear test site; and the impact of military occupation on Kuwait after the first Gulf War. For the past several years, he has been engaged in photographing over a thousand species of nocturnal moths in Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador, French Guiana, and Panama for the project, as well as experimenting with a variety of photographic processes, such as salt paper prints.

Over the course of his career, Emmet Gowin has received numerous awards and grants, including a Guggenheim Fellowship (1974), two National Endowment for the Arts Fellowships (1977, 1979), the Governor's Award for Excellence in the Arts from the State of Pennsylvania (1983), the Friends of Photography Peer Award (1992), and a Pew Fellowship in the Arts (1993). In 1997, Gowin was honored with the President's Award for Distinguished Teaching at Princeton University, where he taught from 1973 until his retirement in 2010.

His work has been the subject of several monographs and scholarly publications, including *Emmet Gowin/Photographs* (1976); *Emmet Gowin: Photographs, 1966-1983*, (1983); *Emmet Gowin/Photographs: This Vegetable Earth Is But A Shadow* (1990); *Emmet Gowin: Aerial Photographs* (1998); *Emmet Gowin: Changing the Earth* (2002); *Mariposas Nocturnas – Edith in Panama* (2006); *Emmet Gowin* (2013); and *Mariposas Nocturnas: Moths of Central and South America, A Study in Beauty and Diversity* (2017).

Emmet Gowin's work has been widely exhibited in the U.S. and abroad and was the subject of a mid-career retrospective organized by the Philadelphia Art Museum (1990-1993); a comprehensive exhibition organized by the Yale University Art Gallery (2002-2004); and a major retrospective which opened at Fundación Mapfre, Madrid, Spain in 2013, and traveled to the United States and The Netherlands.

Emmet Gowin's work is collected by public institutions worldwide including the Art Institute of Chicago; Cleveland Museum of Art; J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, CA; Maison Européenne de la Photographie, Paris; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Philadelphia Museum of Art; Tokyo Museum of Art; Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, CT; and the Center for Creative Photography at the University of Arizona, Tucson.

Etherton Gallery

Established in 1981, Etherton Gallery is best known for its expertise in post-World War II American photography. In over 300 exhibitions featuring well over 100 artists, the gallery has showcased the icons of the history of photography as well as the contemporary artists changing its course. Etherton Gallery is dedicated to making great works of photography accessible to novices and experienced collectors alike. The gallery is a long-standing member of AIPAD (the Association of International Photography Art Dealers), and Terry Etherton serves on the Board of Directors. Etherton Gallery participates in fine art photography fairs including the AIPAD Photography Show NY, Classic Photographs LA, Photo LA, and Paris Photo. The gallery has placed work in numerous private and public collections among them: The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles; Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri; and Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Terry Etherton is an accredited member of the American Society of Appraisers and is available for appraisals, absentee bidding and collections consultation.