



ARTIST

Patt Blue

TITLE

Mailbox, from series 'The Clevelands: An American Family'

DATE

1973 – 1983

DIMENSIONS

12.625 in H x 8.75 in W

MEDIUM

Gelatin Silver Print

CATALOGUE NUMBER

1984.014

CURRENT LOCATION

1620-10B

PATT BLUE

BORN

1945

BIRTHPLACE

KY

GENDER

Female

CITIZENSHIP

United States

CULTURAL HERITAGE

European-American

LIGHT WORK RELATIONSHIP

Artist-in-Residence, 1984
Light Work Retrospective Exhibition, 1985
Robert B. Menschel Gallery, 1996
Group Exhibition

LIGHT WORK PUBLICATIONS

Contact Sheet 44
Contact Sheet 97
Menschel Gallery Catalogue 45
Light Work Retrospective Catalogue
A Just Image: Selections from the Light Work Collection

ESSAYS

Photography is a wonderfully diverse and deceiving medium. Because of its ability to accurately render details, the truth attached to that information is often understandably believable. We see hundreds of photographs everyday and more often than not we are convinced the information they contain is factual. Recently many artists have been using the 'believability' of photographs and the use of photographs in our society to challenge the intentions of the images' meanings and to investigate the purpose of their impact. Patt Blue's documentary work has shown us a world of human tragedy - one of contrasts and vulnerability. 'Other People,' 1978-81, chronicles the pain and suffering of the residents of a chronic care institution. While a resident artist at Light Work, Blue will work on a series called 'Transmutation', which she describes as 'expressionistic photographs about the forbidden, impenetrable, and mysterious nature of men.' In this work, Blue has moved from the arena of real life to the illusionist stage of the studio. Although it's unusual for a documentary photographer to move from reality to illusion, Blue describes this transition as a necessity: 'My beliefs about art and life have not changed but, for this project, I needed more creative freedom without the responsibility of the Documentary.' Blue presently resides in New York City where she teaches photography at the International Center of Photography and New York University. She is a new member of Archive Pictures and since 1981 has worked as a freelance photographer contributing many award winning essays to 'Life' magazine. She received a CAPS grant in 1981 and a MacDowell Fellowship in both 1983 and 1984. Blue's work is exhibited and published extensively and is represented in collections around the world. Jeffrey Hoone (c)1984A Just Image As it plays out in the headlines, justice means equality, fairness, and the rule of law. Yet beyond the events broadcast on television and the news alerts flashed instantly to laptops and PDAs, there is a large realm of justice that eludes reporters. Throughout daily life - at home, in school, doing errands, tending children, making dinner, playing sports - perceptions of justice often float just below the radar. The Light Work Collection offered plentiful proof that photographers frequently make images of routine daily life and its relationship to a sense of justice. However, as members of the Fine Arts 395 "Art and Identity" class noticed, scholars seldom extend the concept of justice into aspects of living that are legal, but sometimes ethically questionable. Counselors, social workers, and therapists seem to take over where the justice system stops. Nevertheless, the line between the legal system's purview and personal life is not fixed. Class members were careful to insist that the law is often less subtle in its grasp of situations and unaware of complexities than are the images included in this show. Nowhere in the law is it written that by embracing a stereotype one can sometimes achieve influence skin to contesting the mold. Thoughts and feelings such as these coalesced as the subject of this exhibition. Work and family emerged as sites where what is fair is not always what is equal, and what is equal is not always fair. However fair or unfair, the triumphs and annoyances one experiences at work mostly fall below the threshold of the law. It is conventional wisdom, not the IRS, which suggests that wealth carries no guarantee of happiness. Creating this nuanced exhibition about justice in everyday life led the class into hearty and un-nuanced discussions about the slights, snubs, and rebuffs of an ordinary day. The students chose the title A Just Image for this exhibition before they read about the expression in Roland Barthes' Camera Lucida. With the phrase, he and they recognize that art coaxes the world of appearances to create symbols signifying ideas for which there are no words. Just an image becomes A Just Image. Mary Warner MarienA Just Image: Selections from the Light Work Collection is the result of a collaborative effort by thirty-one Syracuse University students enrolled in Professor Mary Warner Marien's "Art and Identity" course. The exhibition examines the Fall 2007 Syracuse Symposium theme of justice. The students chose images from the Light Work Collection, considering the personal and societal meanings of justice. They have created an interactive exhibition, where, as the students write in the exhibition catalogue, "ironically... the viewer is still judging." A Just Image invites viewers to explore the photographs and rethink their definition of justice. As the students of the "Art and Identity" course discovered, though justice is a universal concept, it does not necessarily carry the same meaning for everyone. This can be seen in the different perceptions of stereotypes, families, occupations, and leisure activities, which are some of the topics examined by the class. According to the students, "The Pictures we have chosen require more than just superficial judgment; they require the viewer to acknowledge their own stereotyped projections." Roslyn Esperon