



ARTIST

Migdalia Valdes

TITLE

02.24.01 #9 At Gladys Street, San Francisco, CA

DATE

2001

DIMENSIONS

10 in H x 10 in W

MEDIUM

Gelatin Silver Print

IMAGE NOTES

sheet 14 X 11

CATALOGUE NUMBER

2006.018

CURRENT LOCATION

1620-32B

MIGDALIA VALDES

BORN

1963

BIRTHPLACE

New York, NY

GENDER

Female

CITIZENSHIP

United States

CULTURAL HERITAGE

Cuban-American

LIGHT WORK RELATIONSHIP

Artist-in-Residence, 2005

LIGHT WORK PUBLICATIONS

Contact Sheet 137

BIOGRAPHY

Migdalia Valdes recently arrived in Syracuse after a cross-country drive from San Francisco. In time to see New York state glow in red fall colors, she has settled in quickly to attempt the incredible feat of working through five years of materials, including thousands of sheets of negatives and hundreds of rolls of unprocessed film. Dedicated to a practice she developed in 1999, she sets out to photograph at least one meaningful image every day, regardless if this necessitates a single frame or several rolls of film.

Migdalia fills her daily journals with contact sheets, found printed matter, small objects, news clippings, and personal notes. While at Light Work, she hopes to bring some order into her many notes and negatives, as well as to print select images from the open-ended project, which is aptly titled *Everyday*. Migdalia Valdes was recently chosen for the New Artist Award Group Show at the Center for Photographic Arts in Carmel, CA. Her work has been shown nationwide with emphasis on the West Coast. She has worked as one of Ruth Bernhard's assistants since 2001. Migdalia holds degrees from Ithaca College and the San Francisco Art Institute.

ESSAYS

My photographic project, *Everyday*, comes from daily journals that I have maintained since December 1999. My focus vacillates between the journals and the photographs found within them. My original commitment was to photograph one roll of film every day. I wanted to create a habit of photography so there would be no separation between myself and my work. I succeeded. Over time, the number of images I produce each day has become less relevant, but the daily habit is still in place. I focus on the simple subjects we casually encounter throughout life, the beautiful things we see and forget, the faces that come and go and come again. This project is a way of participating and interacting with the world around me. It has also become my study, a practice, a meditation, which ultimately helps me to advance as an artist, photographer, and printer. While the first part of my *Everyday* project is based on photographing, the other half consists of daily journals. These daily journals include newspaper clippings, papers, small objects found that day, as well as photographs. My photographs are taped into the journals as contact sheets, making it possible to include all the images from any given day - even the mistakes! The decision to add newspaper clippings to the journals completely changed the direction of my work, and remains a strong element in the journals today. It feels as if I am inserting the world into my life and my life back into the world. In the past, the focus of my work had appeared partial, isolated. My life is quiet compared to the intensity, cruelty, and beauty of the world. For me, newspapers are like voices, stories about other people and caring about the world as a whole. By including these voices, the project becomes more of a community event, more inclusive and less remote. The found papers and objects in my journals fill in the narratives of the photographs and newspaper clippings even further. They become alive again, instead of the discarded, lost, or tossed feelings, ideas, and moments they were. In the same way the books provide a home for all of this material. Some of these journals are found books that I have appropriated for my use, some are sketchpads, and some are just small notebooks. The direction of the next book always remains open, which is why the project continues to change. It is the combination of all the found papers, newspapers, objects, and photographs within each journal that finally create some truly sculptural pieces. After all of these years, I have a large collection of *Everyday* journals, which continue to grow in this lifelong project. From the journals, I have begun the slow process of printing selected photographs that highlight the series. I have started to print one image from each month along with one image from each year in order to narrow down the vast quantity of images produced - *Every Month* and *Every Year* from my *Everyday* project. It is through the process of printing that I can begin to understand my sight and subsequently, what I am thinking. I wonder if it is possible for other people to look at the work, understand the process, and relate to the tension between internal and external experience, to recognize and hold precious the interaction between the private self and everything that surrounds life. (c) 2006 Migdalia Valdes Migdalia Valdes lives in San Francisco, CA. She participated in Light Work's Artist-in-Residence program in October 2005.