



Aperture Releases “The Craft Issue”

New York, December 4, 2025—In a moment when so many images flood our screens, how can a photograph retain meaning and feel tangible? The artists featured in *Aperture* No. 261, “The Craft Issue,” releasing today, make photographs the slow way—building camera obscuras, making photograms, laboring in traditional darkrooms—to insist on the value of handmade, often unique images that frequently merge photography with other media, from ceramics and glass to collage.

In “The Craft Issue,” critic and curator Ekow Eshun interviews the polymath artist Theaster Gates about his founding of the Black Image Corporation and what it will take to craft new platforms and paradigms for a collective Black imaginary. Julia Halperin profiles Jungjin Lee, whose photographs on handmade mulberry paper conjure introspective landscapes charged with nuance and emotional depth, while Zoë Hopkins surveys the work of Troy Montes Michie, who makes collages that evoke fragments of queer history and desire.

Design critic Alice Rawsthorn explores the pioneering photographs of Lucia Moholy, who immortalized the Bauhaus in images that capture the school’s radical fusion of craftsmanship and industrial production. Alistair O’Neill interviews the directors of the Paris-based fashion brand Lemaire about their photographic inspirations and the narrative power of clothes, and the ceramicist and memoirist Edmund de Waal speaks to the editors about his collaboration with Sally Mann and what it’s meant to spend a life amid archives and vessels. And Michael Famighetti, *Aperture*’s editor in chief, sat down with Irina Rozovsky and Mark Steinmetz for a wide-ranging conversation about the physical labor of making pictures and the rewards of close attention, both out in the world and inside the darkroom.

This issue’s portfolios highlight artists who work against photography’s shibboleths of reproducibility and standardization, instead focusing on manual processes and unrepeatable forms. Erin Jane Nelson and Ann Weathersby meld photography, glass, textiles, and ceramics, constructing delicate reliquaries with no easy meanings. John Chiara builds room-sized camera obscuras, towing them around the United States like a modern-day Carleton Watkins, illuminating the facts, as the poet Dan Beachy-Quick writes, “of all it is we can’t make ourselves: sunlight, water, land; eyes, mind, life.”

The cover of “The Craft Issue” features a photogram by Aspen Mays, a Bay Area-based artist who makes her cameraless images in complete darkness, guided by sense memory and experimentation.

Photography has never felt cheaper, faster, and harder to believe in. Yet the artists in these pages represent another image world that’s also coming into view, one that favors slower burns and handed-down techniques—where the mind and the body work together to craft visions steeped in history, tradition, and memory, but exist in that increasingly rare thing, the here and now.

Press Release

For Immediate Release

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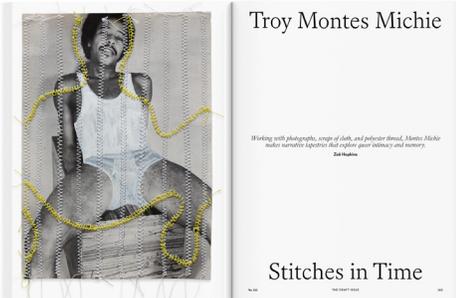
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Inside the issue:

Columns & Features

Texts:

AGENDA

Michella Bredahl, Boris Mikhailov, Alejandro Cartagena, Ralph Eugene Meatyard

BACKSTORY

Quinn Moreland on Mimi Plumb's prophetic images of America on the edge

VIEWFINDER

Kaelen Wilson-Goldie on Karim Kal's mysterious views of nighttime Algeria

STUDIO VISIT

Lucienne Bestall on Jo Ractliffe's Cape Town workspace

CURRICULUM

Philip Montgomery on Sade, Borderland, and the LAPD Archive

ENDNOTE

Edmund de Waal on a life amid archives and vessels

EDITORS' NOTE

The Craft Issue

THE POLEMICS OF CRAFT

Theaster Gates is making the most of the material world
Yechen Zhao

LOOKING GLASS

Ann Weathersby holds a mirror to expanded female consciousness
Rebecca Bengal

THINGS AS THEY ARE

Fungjin Lee's landscapes of introspection
Julia Halperin

HANDS TO HEAVENS

The darkroom alchemy of Aspen Mays
Mimi Zeiger

THE DEPTH OF A POCKET

Christophe Lemaire and Sarah-Linh Tran on fashion, movies, and everyday gestures
A conversation with Alistair O'Neill

AVISION OF HER OWN

How Lucia Moholy immortalized the Bauhaus
Alice Rawsthorn

STITCHES IN TIME

Troy Montes Michie's collages conjure fragments of queer history and desire
Zoë Hopkins

ZEN AND THE ART OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Irina Rozovsky and Mark Steinmetz on attention, focus, and darkroom magic
A conversation with Michael Famighetti

HYBRIDS

Erin Jane Nelson fuses ceramics and photography
Eli Cohen

TREASURE ISLAND

John Chiara's custom camera obscuras illuminate the world's simple mysteries
Dan Beachy-Quick

The PhotoBook Review

IDEAS OF AFRICA

Brendan Embser speaks with curator Oluremi C. Onabanjo

TURN-ON

Natasha Stagg visits Climax Books in New York

GOOD VIBRATIONS

Vince Aletti on Mark Borthwick's early fashion photography

Reviews of photobooks by Nick Haymes, Nikolay Bakharev, Alanna Fields, Donna Gottschalk, and Yung Lean

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About Aperture

Aperture is a nonprofit publisher that leads conversations around photography worldwide. From its base in New York, Aperture connects global audiences and supports artists through its acclaimed quarterly magazine, books, exhibitions, digital platforms, public programs, limited-edition prints, and awards. Established in 1952 to advance “creative thinking, significantly expressed in words and photographs,” Aperture champions photography’s vital role in nurturing curiosity and encouraging a more just, tolerant society.

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