

PAUL CAPONIGRO

Seeing with My Heart



Pucker Gallery | Boston

“ WHEN I PHOTOGRAPH, IT IS TO RELATE TO THE SPIRIT OF THE OBJECT OR THE PLACE. EVERYTHING EXUDES LIFE, EVERYTHING IS OF LIFE FROM LIFE, AND I’M VERY INTRIGUED WHEN THE INANIMATE SUGGESTS TO YOU THAT IT IS NOT TOTALLY INERT, THAT THERE IS LIFE IN THERE AS WELL. ”



PEELING PAINT, BACK BAY, Boston, MA, 1956
19 x 11.5"
PC186

ALL WORKS ARE SILVER GELATIN PRINTS.

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By way of introduction for those who might not know, Paul Caponigro grew up in Boston. At one point in the 1960s he was part of the Carl Siembab “photography only” gallery located on Newbury Street. Paul is the son of Italian immigrant parents and lived on the North Shore through high school. He claims some of the most influential aspects of his childhood were the summers spent with his family in the woods of Maine, saying he “felt an immediate connection with nature.” From this childhood exposure he developed a lifelong fascination with and reverence for the beauty and intrigue of the natural world. Although his subsequent professional and personal journey took him to California, Arizona, New York, Japan, and Ireland, it was and is the memory of magical moments in the woods or on the shores of New England that informs his work. He might be the Walt Whitman of modern photography. From an early age he wanted to capture the essence of that personal interaction with nature. It wasn’t taking a beautiful picture of a flower but a mechanism for capturing and expressing his reaction to that flower that he strove to create. Interestingly, growing up he often found the lively, noisy din of his extended Italian family to be a bit overwhelming. So even as a young man he realized his journey would be an internal one, taking time for concentrated inquisitive thought while finding joy and satisfaction in moments of quiet reflection.

By the end of high school this lifestyle had created two muses for him that remain to this day: photography and playing piano. Paul’s current, comfortably efficient home on a wooded lot in Maine has a Bosendorfer baby grand piano in the living room and a complex darkroom studio on the lower floor. He is a master of both. It is likely the synesthetic aspect of his intense commitment and vigorous discipline in both of these pursuits that led Paul to hope viewers of his prints might “shift the stance far enough back from expectation to try to ‘hear through the eyes.’” It should also be noted that Paul does not own a computer. All his music and all his photography are “analogue,” not “digital.” His communication is handwritten, not email. All his connections are real-time and immediate.

It is his complete mastery of the silver-nitrate system that gives Paul the tools for achieving the elegant expressions he seeks. Although friends with and influenced by such luminaries as Ansel Adams and Minor White, he has always answered to his own distinctive creative inner voice. These legendary photography figures no doubt contributed to his technical options, but the substance of his work has always remained distinctively personal and individual to him.

“ TO PENETRATE AND RECORD, EVEN IF ONLY REFLECTIVELY THROUGH AN IDEA-IMAGE, THAT WHICH TAKES PLACE IN, OVER, UNDER, AROUND AND THROUGH NATURE IS TO FEEL THE INTANGIBLE, THE SOMEWHERE IN BETWEEN, THE WHAT IS AND WHAT AM I, THE INTERACTING BETWEEN VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE. THIS IS WHAT I LOOK FOR—WHAT I AM INTERESTED IN. I AM CONCERNED WITH WHAT GROWS OUT OF INTERACTION. ”



SEAWEED & SAND, Lynn Beach, MA, 1959
10.25 x 13"
PC183

Paul Caponigro is among the finest photographers who have ever thoughtfully captured and printed images that awaken the observer. His photographs are exquisite black and white silver gelatin prints of subtle expressive tonality and marvelously sensitive composition. More importantly, however, within each of these prints, there is emotion. Each print presents an opportunity to go beyond the observed, the image, the structure, and experience a feeling, awaken a sentiment, and possibly augment the spiritual part of our lives. This characteristic does not present itself by chance but rather is the result of Paul's conscious approach, perhaps occasionally subconsciously achieved, to infuse his photographs with the spirit he felt while creating them. It requires extraordinary skill to photographically breathe life into inanimate objects. However, he has uniquely pushed his art to allow a viewer in quiet, concentrated contemplation of simple objects or compact natural scenes to experience real attachment, genuine and deep resonance, appreciation, and feeling.

The hope is on viewing and re-viewing an image that the comfort of repetitive recognition will give way to the pleasure of recapturing a feeling, maybe even different feelings on different occasions. As he says, "feelings will apprehend the spirit more quickly than the mind ever will." Paul's photographs are each gems of visual delight. Stand quietly before these images. Appreciate the crisp black/white and endless continuum of grays, the articulate and poignant compositions, the sensory reaction that is called forth. See if they resonate beyond the visual cortex to reach your limbic system with aesthetic joy. Feel them and maybe hear them!

— DR. CARL HERBERT, EXHIBITION CURATOR

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Bernie and Sue Pucker

While some thank yous are obligatory, this recognition comes from the heart. We want to acknowledge the friendship and connoisseurship that our dear friend Dr. Carl Herbert, aka Rusty, has brought to this selection.

We have been friends for nearly four decades and have traveled the world together. We have been blessed by his positive energy, his curiosity, and his openness to all people, places, and challenges. How lucky are we to have shared so many amazing experiences and to have together deepened our delight in art?

He was open to the challenge and caringly curated this remarkable collection of photographs. What a joy to experience Rusty's knowledge and taste as it pertains to the masterful work of Paul Caponigro.

Brother Thomas wrote: "When good people meet, good things happen."

Thank you for sharing in this good happening.

“ THE ZONE SYSTEM AIDED ME IN MY LONGING TO CAPTURE ILLUSIONS OF NATURE’S REALITY ON A TWO-DIMENSIONAL SURFACE. THE FURTHER CHALLENGE, AS I SAW IT, WAS TO ARRIVE AT A ‘THREE-DIMENSIONAL’ ZONE SYSTEM, TO INSERT AN EXTRA DIMENSION INTO THE SURFACE BY AN INFUSION OF FEELING. WITH THIS REALIZATION I BEGAN TO SEE AND FEEL THE TONALITIES OF THE PRINT AS HAVING A LIFE OF THEIR OWN. I NO LONGER VIEWED THEM AS STACKED OR ORGANIZED VALUES, BUT AS SHADES, ALIVE AND CAPABLE OF AFFECTING THE EMOTIONS. ”



ICED STONE WALL, Gloucester, MA, 1965
10 x 12.5"
PC174



BIRCHBARK, WOOD SPIRIT, Cushing, ME, 2004
12.5 x 8.75"
PC185



REFLECTING CLOUD, Adirondacks, NY, 1958
7.5 x 9.25"
PC182



SNOWFIELD & QUARRY, Gloucester, MA, 1965
7.5 x 9.5"
PC172

“ I BEGAN TO SEE THAT THE MEANING IN THESE NEW STILL LIFE STUDIES WAS NOT A MATTER OF LOOKING TO IMITATE OUTER FORMS, BUT OF TRYING TO CAPTURE THE MYSTERY THAT PERMEATED ALL; NOT IN PUTTING FRAGMENTS BACK INTO THE WHOLE FROM WHICH THEY CAME, BUT IN ALLOWING MY OWN RESPONSES AND PERSONAL SEARCHING TO ADD A DIMENSION WHICH MIGHT OPEN DOORS TO NEW VISTAS. ”



DERVISH DANCE, 1999
10 x 12"
PC184

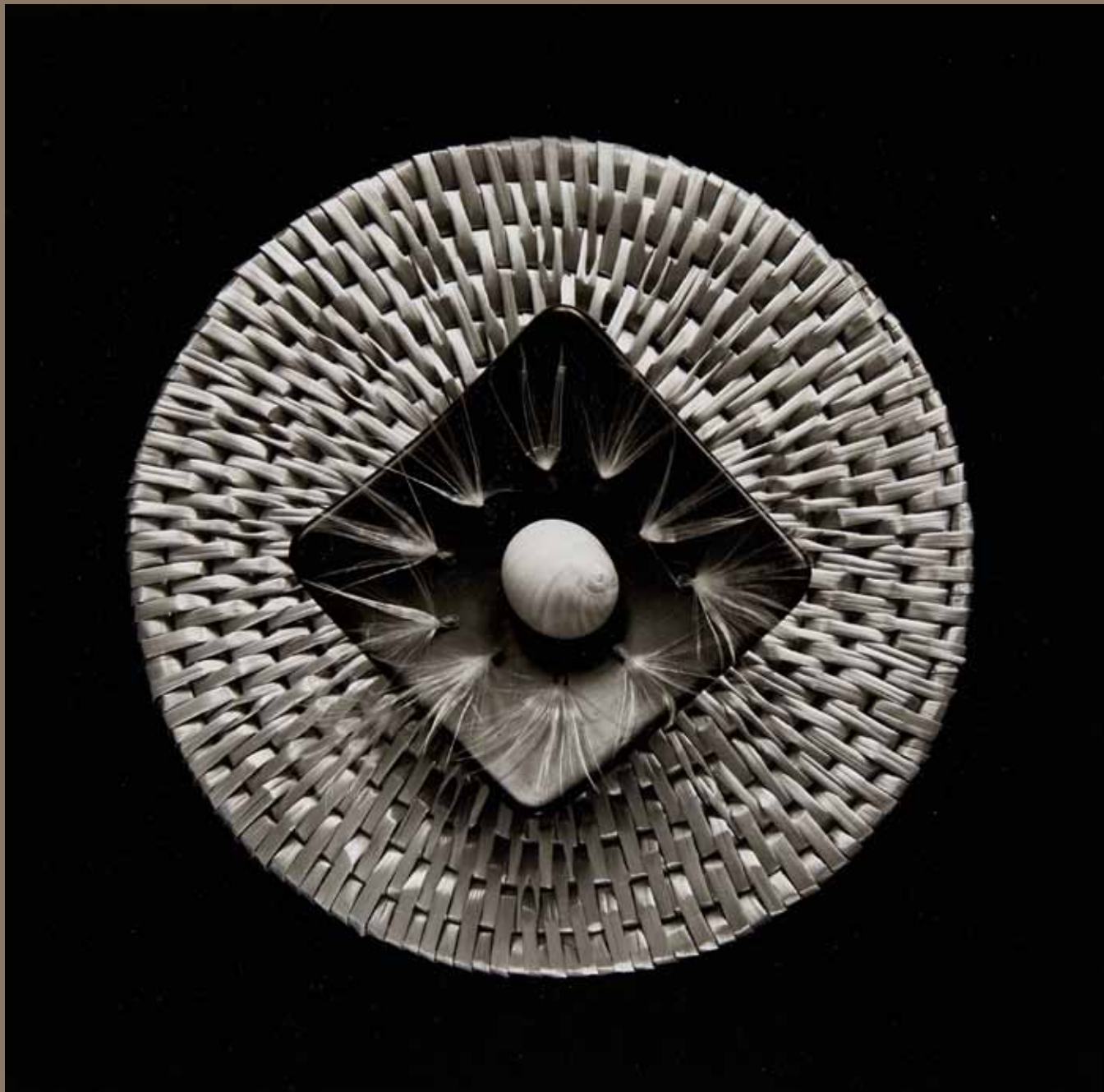


SNOW ON PAPER, Lynn, MA, 1958
11 x 9"
PC169



EUCALYPTUS LEAVES, CRESCENT DANCE, Cushing, ME, 2003
7.5 x 11.25"
PC181

“ I FOUND THAT THESE FRAGMENTS WERE NOT UNLIKE MUSICAL OVERTONES WHICH ONE HEARS WHEN THE STRINGS OF A VIOLIN OR PIANO ARE STRUCK OR PLUCKED. AS IF TO BE VISUAL VIBRATIONS OR REVERBERATIONS, THEY INSPIRED AND INFORMED MY EMOTIONS. ”



MAT & PLATE WITH SHELL & SEED THISTLE, Cushing, ME, 1999
10 x 10"
PC175



GRAPEVINE, Tecate, Mexico, 1978
8.75 x 12.25"
PC167

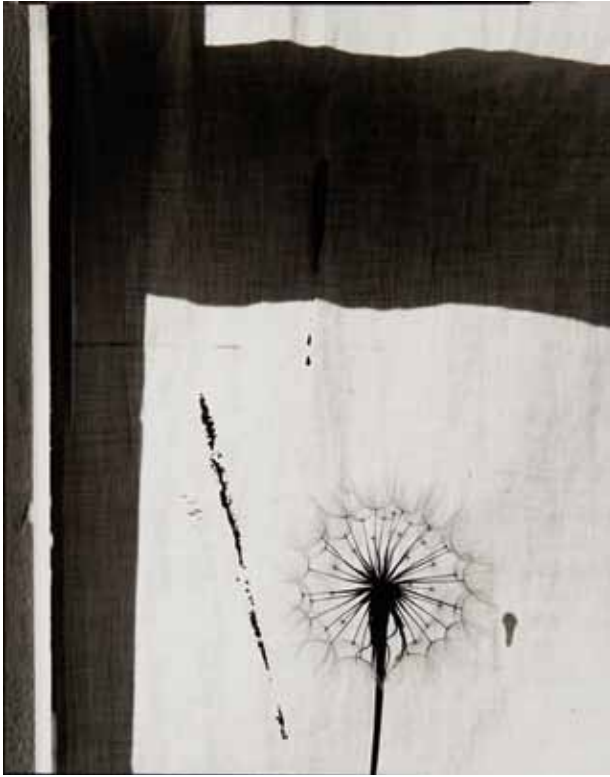


EYE OF HORUS, 2005
7.5 x 11"
PC179

“ A LOT OF PEOPLE FUSS AT ME, SAYING, YOU'RE WASTING TOO MUCH TIME PRINTING YOUR OWN PICTURES. LET SOMEONE ELSE DO THAT. I CAN'T HAVE SOMEONE ELSE PRINT MY PRINTS. THEY CANNOT FEEL WHAT I FEEL, AND IT CANNOT BE RELEASED EMOTIONALLY INTO THE PRINT UNLESS I'M THERE AND YANK IT FROM THE DEVELOPER AT EXACTLY THE RIGHT TIME. ”



GARDEN PLANTS, NEGATIVE PRINT, Brewster, NY, 1963
9.75 x 13"
PC176



SCOTTISH THISTLE & WINDOW CURTAIN, Rochester, NY, 1958
9.5 x 7.5"
PC170



RIVOROUS WATER, LITTLE RIVER, Redding, CT, 1970
7 x 8.5"
PC171



TOFUJUJI SAND GARDEN, Kyoto, Japan, 1976
8.75 x 12.25"
PC168

“ TO ARRIVE AT THE COMPOSITION, I REACH INTO MY FEELINGS. I FEEL THE DISTANCE BETWEEN THE PICTURE EDGE AND THE SUBJECT, THE INTERRUPTIONS OF THE VERTICALS. I AM VERY QUIET UNDER THE DARKCLOTH. VERY QUIET, SO THAT MY EMOTIONS CAN INFORM. ”



FUNGUS ON MARBLE TABLE, Ipswich, MA, 1962
13 x 10.5"
PC49



SEA RHYTHMS, Cushing, ME, 2005
7.5 x 9"
PC6



MOTH AND BOWL, Cushing, ME, 2008
10 x 10.75"
PC8

“ IT IS INTERESTING THAT I CAN FIND IN NATURE,
BY THE WAY I LOOK AT IT, THE MATERIAL
TO MANIFEST IN PHOTOGRAPHS MY INNER
REFLECTIONS. ”



EGRET FEATHER, Cushing, ME, 2012
13 x 7.5"
PC111



GALAXY APPLE, New York City, NY, 1964
7 x 8.75"
PC33

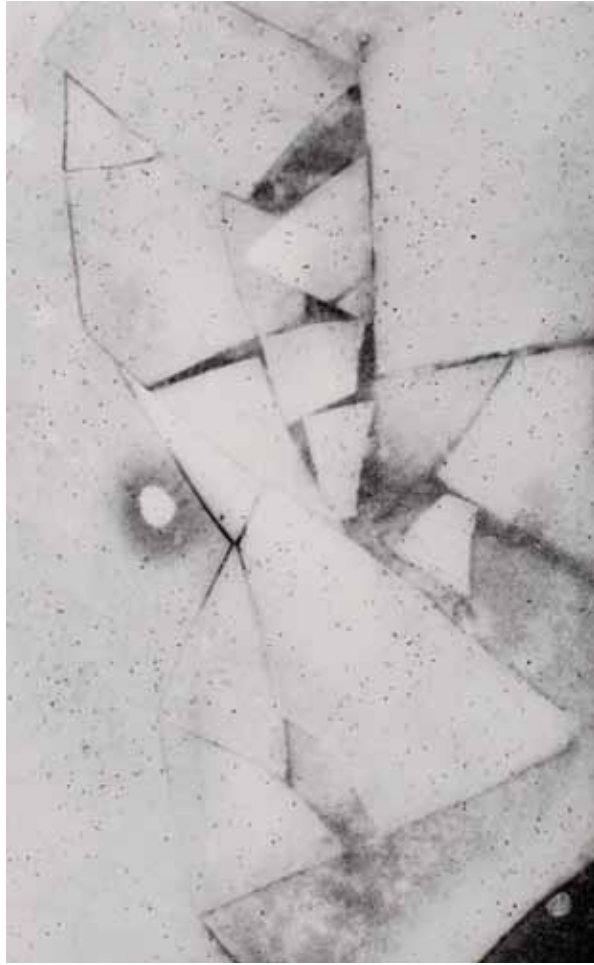


FROSTED WINDOW, Ipswich, MA, 1960
10 x 13"
PC50

“ IMAGES ARE MADE FROM THE HEART. YOU HAVE TO BE PRETTY QUIET IN THE BRAIN TO APPREHEND WHAT THE EMOTIONS ARE FINDING. YOU PARTLY SEE IT WITH YOUR EYES; MOSTLY YOU SEE IT WITH YOUR HEART. YOU HAVE TO SENSE THAT AND KEEP THAT ALIVE...IT'S MEDITATION IN ACTION. ”



INNER NIGHT SKY, WOOD BOWL & FLOWER, Cushing, ME, 1999
9.75 x 12"
PC173



RIVER ICE, Newton, MA, 1960
12 x 7.5"
PC19



CARVED WOOD, Izumo-Tai, Japan, 1976
8.75 x 13"
PC90



NEGATIVE PRINT, Brewster, NY
13.25 x 10"
PC13



NEGATIVE PRINT, Brewster, NY, 1963
10 x 13"
PC31



REFLECTING STREAM, Redding, CT, 1968
8.25 x 11.25"
PC14



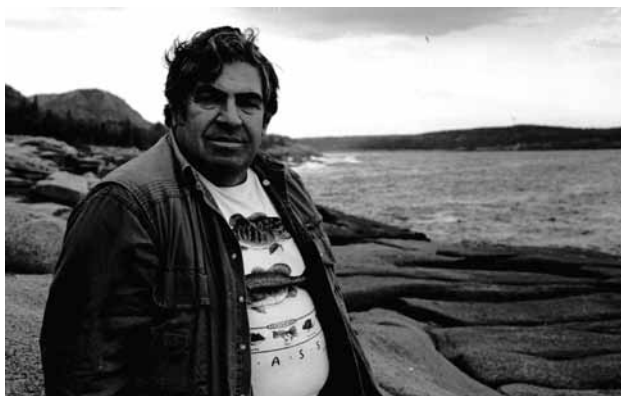
ROCKWALL, CT, 1958
10.25 x 13"
PC15



ABALONE ON PAPER, Cushing, ME, 2009
9 x 12"
PC178

PAUL CAPONIGRO

Born in Boston in 1932, Paul Caponigro is renowned as one of America's most significant photographers. When he was thirteen, he began to explore the world around him with his camera and has subsequently sustained a career spanning six decades.



His first solo exhibition opened at the George Eastman House in 1958 and his reputation for uncompromising skill with the large format camera was established. Caponigro was a student of Minor White (1908–1976) and a young contemporary of West Coast photographers Ansel Adams (1902–1984) and Brett Weston (1911–1993). He is currently regarded as one of America's foremost landscape photographers.

Caponigro approaches nature receptively, preferring to utilize an intuitive focus rather than merely arranging or recording forms and surface details. His lasting contribution to photography is not limited to the beauty of his compositions or masterful printing but extends to his unparalleled ability to engage the viewer in the mystical presence concealed in nature.

Paul Caponigro has exhibited and taught throughout the United States and abroad. He is a recipient of two Guggenheim fellowships and three National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) grants, and in 2001 he received the Centenary Medal from the Royal Photographic Society in recognition of his significant contribution to the art of photography. Caponigro's images are included in most history of photography texts and numerous museum collections, including The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC; the Art Institute of Chicago; and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

PUCKER
ESTABLISHED 1967 BOSTON
GALLERY

PUCKER GALLERY

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GALLERY HOURS:

Monday through Saturday
10:00 AM to 5:30 PM
Sunday 10:30 AM to 5:00 PM

Pucker Gallery is open to all and is taking necessary precautions for visitor and staff safety as recommended by current public health guidelines. Though not required, appointments are available.

Pucker Gallery is a member of the Boston Art Dealers Association and the New England Appraisers Association.

CREDITS:

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view current and past
exhibition catalogues and
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the Week* email list.

COVER:

GLASS EGG REFLECTING TREES
Cushing, ME, 1999
9.25 x 7.5"
PC180

RIGHT:

SHORELINE, MONTAUK POINT
Long Island, NY, 1972
11.75 x 9"
PC177

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DATES:

11 September through 24 October 2021

PUBLIC OPENING RECEPTION:

Saturday 12 September 2021 | 3:00 PM to 6:00 PM

ONLINE EVENTS:

Please visit www.puckergallery.com for a list of virtual gatherings and events accompanying *Seeing with My Heart*.