

THE MENIL COLLECTION

Contemporary
Arts Museum
Houston

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TEEN COUNCIL

Teen Council is an annually elected group employed by the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston. Teen Council is tasked with creating fresh and challenging public programming: curated by youth, accessible to all.

Teen Council is supported by Ms. Louisa Stude Sarofim, Texas Women for the Arts, and Texas Commission on the Arts.

The Contemporary Arts Museum Houston's education and outreach programming has been made possible by the patrons, benefactors, and donors to its Families of Steel Programming: Vera and Andy Baker, Mary and Marcel Barone, Louise D. Jamail, Kinder Morgan Foundation, Robert and Pearl Wallis Knox Foundation, Leticia Loya, Marian and Speros Martel Foundation Endowment, M.D. Anderson Foundation, Elisabeth McCabe, Andrew R. McFarland, Nordstrom, Nancy O'Connor, Cabrina and Steven Owsley, Ms. Louisa Stude Sarofim, Texas Commission on the Arts, Kim and Gerard Trevino, and Bridget and Patrick Wade.

PUBLIC PROGRAM

Exhibition Walkthrough
The Menil Collection
Saturday, March 12, noon

Please join the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston's Teen Council as they present *Root Shift*. This exhibition walkthrough coincides with the opening of the FotoFest 2016 Biennial.

FRONT Tom Arndt, *Blackfoot reservation, Browning, Montana*, 1978, printed 2012. Gelatin silver print, 11 7/8 × 17 5/8 inches (30 × 44.8 cm). The Menil Collection, Houston, Gift of David and Mary Parker. © Tom Arndt

This exhibition is generously supported by the City of Houston.

ROOT



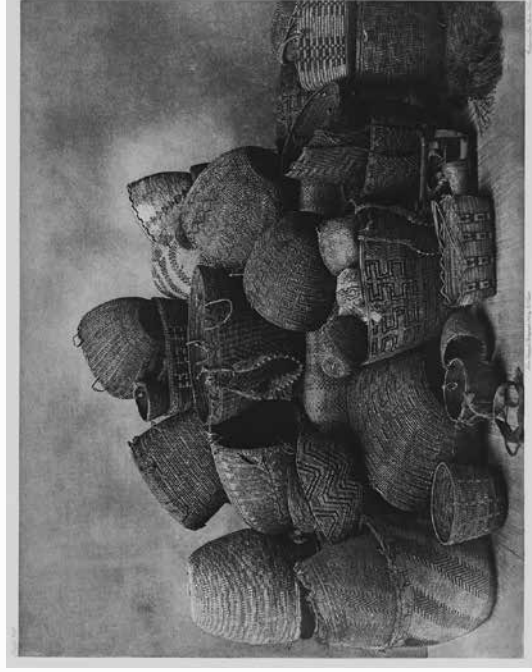
Photographs of Stasis and Change
Selected by CAMH Teen Council

THE MENIL COLLECTION | MARCH 4–MAY 29, 2016

SHIFT:

It's often said that the only true constant is change. As life on Earth has evolved, so has Earth itself. War has uprooted some peoples from their native lands and returned others to theirs, technology has fundamentally changed the way we interact with and perceive our relationship with our surroundings, and globalization has divided cultures and classes. Humans no longer coexist with the Earth, but subjugate it. And we as teens have become so mindful of the worlds we carry inside of us that we often forget to repair the world around us, the world in which we live. With these transformations have come new ways of recording change. We no longer write cursive but type, no longer keep diaries but post blogs, no longer develop photographs but upload them to social media. Yet the impulse to document remains.

Walker Evans's *Stamped Tin Relic*, 1929, demonstrates this desire. The work shows a classical column stamped on a piece of crumpled tin that Evans found at a demolition site. Evans took the photograph at the onset of the Great Depression when he was in New York City, sharing a room with a friend, living in squalor and doubt. But the photograph has a certain sense of hope as well as resignation.



Edward S. Curtis, *Puget Sound Baskets*, 1912. Photogravure, 11 7/8 x 15 1/2 inches (30 x 39.2 cm). The Menil Collection, Houston

The juxtaposition of the stamped column's regality and the unremarkable crushed tin gives it an elegiac quality. Here, Evans does not just show, but salvages, a theme that ripples throughout *Root Shift*—the idea that even as the things we know disappear, we can find a way to hold on to them.

Or consider the perspectives presented by Edward S. Curtis in *Puget Sound Baskets*, 1912, and Tom Arndt in *Blackfoot reservation*, *Browning, Montana*, 1978. Curtis presents a traditional, reverent view of the region's indigenous American culture, celebrating the basket weavings of the Skokomish tribe. But Arndt sees a more contemporary culture, one over taken by capitalism. In his photograph, a teenager rides a bicycle in front of trucks, street lights, and small, single-family houses. The reservation, home to one of the most disenfranchised groups in American history, becomes scarcely distinguishable from a typical suburb. Although Curtis's and Arndt's photographs are separated by differences in technology, geography, and time, both attempt to preserve civilizations, to give fading cultures new life—if not in actuality then in spirit, in the lessons we take away, and the questions we use to learn them.

Our hope is that the photographs in this exhibition cause you to ask such questions and that they help you understand the camera's consistent role in processing change, even as our own understandings of change evolve.



Walker Evans, *Stamped Tin Relic*, 1929. Gelatin silver print, 4 5/8 x 6 5/8 inches (11.9 x 16.8 cm). The Menil Collection, Houston. © Walker Evans Archive, The Metropolitan Museum of Art