

photograph

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2018 \$5



photograph

- 6** THE CURATORS
Makeda Best by Jean Dykstra
- 8** IN PROFILE
Robert Koch by Sarah Schmerler
- 22** FEATURE
Deana Lawson's Intimate Fictions
by Catherine Wagley
- 32** INTERVIEW
Penelope Umbrico by Lyle Rexer
- 42** PHOTO BOOKS
by Vince Aletti
- 52** PORTFOLIO
Dave Jordano by Jean Dykstra
- 66** PORTFOLIO
Matt Leifheit by Elisabeth Biondi
- 74** IN THE STUDIO
Maya Rochat by Giada De Agostinis
- 80** REVIEWS
- 89** EXHIBITIONS
- 110** RESOURCES
- 114** CALENDAR
- 116** THE BACK PAGE
Gillian Laub

About the Cover: ©David LaChapelle, *Elton John: Egg on his Face*, 1999. Courtesy Staley-Wise Gallery. On view in *David LaChapelle: Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow?*, December 13-March 2 at Staley-Wise Gallery

Publisher
Anthony Beale
Editor
Jean Dykstra
Art Director
Fabio Cutró
Communications Manager
Giada De Agostinis
Founding Editor
Ava C. Swartz
Founder
Bill Mindlin

Published bi-monthly by
photograph
1919 Madison Avenue, #522
New York, NY 10035
212/787-0401
info@photographmag.com


ISSN 1544-9084
Volume 16 Number 2
November/December 2018

Printed by Meridian Printing

SUBSCRIBE:
One year / six issues
\$35 US, \$40 Canada,
\$70 all other countries
Payment by check (US bank),
AmEx, MasterCard, Visa
or via PayPal at
photographmag.com/subscribe

E-NEWSLETTER:
photographmag.com/newsletter

photographmag.com

  @photographmag
 photographmagazine

©2018 PHOTOGRAPH. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED



THE CURATORS

Makeda Best

By Jean Dykstra



Photo: Unique Nicole

"It's a special job," says Makeda Best, referring to her position as the Richard L. Menschel Curator of Photography at the Harvard Art Museums. Best approaches photography as a fine art, of course, but also as a teaching tool. "I collect and install strategically," she says. "How is it going to fit into the broader story we are telling at the museum, but also how can I complicate what the students think they know about photography and its histories."

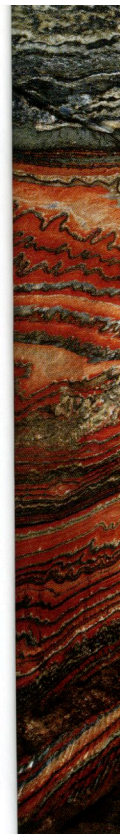
Best's current exhibition, *Time Is Now: Photography and Social Change in James Baldwin's America*, on view through December 30 at Harvard's Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts, explores the life of the acclaimed African-American author as well as the issues of the day, many of which remain painfully relevant. One of the works in the show is a 1949 portrait by Marion Palfi of Mrs. Caleb Hill, titled *Wife of a lynching victim*. "The photograph has never been exhibited here, but now I think of all the widows we've seen in the last few years," says Best.

When Best took the job at Harvard nearly two years ago, it was a homecoming of sorts:

she had earned an MA and PhD in art history from Harvard after earning a BFA and MFA in photography from the California Institute of the Arts, where she studied with Allan Sekula (she also has a BA in history and art history from Barnard). Before joining Harvard, she was an assistant professor of visual studies at the California College of the Arts. "One of the things we're known for around Cambridge and Boston is that we encourage slow looking," says Best. "Photography is a medium people need to stop and look at. People don't do that now."

Best's interest in photography came well before her formal education, growing up in San Francisco and watching the 14-part television documentary *Eyes on the Prize* with her parents. "I was really taken by the Civil Rights imagery," she recalls. She read *Time* and *Vanity Fair*, cutting out pages and making scrap books out of images she liked, and poring over photography books like *I Dream a World: Portraits of Black Women Who Changed America*. Later, she volunteered at the now-defunct magazine *Photo Metro*: "I would open the mail and educate myself about what I was seeing."

Best's family wasn't involved in the arts — her mother was a farmer, and that worldview taught her to "notice the details and understand the context of events," says Best — but they were supportive of anything she wanted to do. When she was 16, her mother bought her a camera, and when she wanted a membership to SFMOMA, they got her one. Her mother and step-father worked for the City of San Francisco, and she spent a lot of time at City Hall, which was across the street from SFMOMA at the time. Best attended a prestigious private school, and while her friends from school may have had the resources to travel, she says, "I had this space in the city that was my own, my own space to dream and wander, and I knew I would never forget it. Something really clicked with me." It's an experience that she's brought with her as a curator and teacher: "I was a kid who found a space, and from that space I could think about everything."



A

41 East 57

505

This

Photo © Et

photograph