

# ART Views and visions

by Peter Novarese

**T**he galleries and museums are in full swing this season. Some highlights on the schedule:

**David Winton Bell Gallery** (Brown University, 64 College Street, Providence): Duane Hanson's unsettlingly life-like sculptures are at the gallery through November 4. From November 17-January 13, the attraction is *Drawings by Utagawa Kuniyoshi: Sketches for Japanese Prints*, 75 drawings and a selection of woodblock prints representing the work of the master Japanese printmaker (1797-1861). The show is the first comprehensive exhibition of the artist's drawings in the United States.

**The Wheeler Gallery** (228 Angell Street, Providence): From November 1-20, the gallery presents works by Susan Clausen and Javier Navarro-Alemany. Clausen's sculptures are, in the artist's words, "essentially about the unexpected relatedness of random objects. They create a uniquely surreal but approachable environment." Navarro-Alemany's paintings focus on site and the siting of objects in fictional landscapes. His vehicle for this exploration is the "little house," which the artist notes "represents the quintessential idea of shelter in its most basic form. It often becomes the symbol for thoughts, ideas or people. It parallels an almost obsessive investigation of some ungraspable metaphysical understanding of the painting and its 'objects.'"

**Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design** (224 Benefit Street, Providence): RISD welcomes four exhibits in November: *The slow: 20th Century*

*Interior Designs for Town and Country*, a collection of room plans and elevations and drawings (including more than 300 for window curtains and blinds) by the famed interior design firm (through December 30); *The Lesko Collection of Bohemian and Silesian Glass*, featuring 50 rare objects ranging from stemmed goblets to beakers, representing the full range of decorative techniques employed in the former Prussian province of Silesia in Eastern Europe (through December 30); *Women of the Floating World*, an exhibition of Japanese prints which focuses on the role of courtesans within the social fabric of the "floating world," the theatres, festivals, brothels and restaurants that made up the pleasure quarters of Japan's great cities (through January 6); and *Art For Your Collection*, the annual sales exhibition offering a wide variety of art work suitable for gift-giving and capable of sparking the enthusiasm of beginning and experienced collectors (through December 9).

**Virgina Lynch Gallery** (3883 Main Road, Tiverton): Paintings by John R. Frazier and Mary Stafford Frazier and sculpture by Gilbert Franklin are on display through November 31. John



Painting by John R. Frazier

Frazier was a highly regarded Impressionist painter and president of RISD from 1955-'62; Mary Frazier was a noted portrait painter; Franklin studied and taught at RISD and is a highly collected artist.

**Rhode Island College** (600 Mt. Pleasant Avenue, Providence): RIC art professor Lawrence Sykes presents his

*Sabbatical Portfolio* November 1-22. The emphasis is on the observational as Sykes explores three distinct geographic and social environments: the small island of Cape Verde, a Senofu village on the Ivory Coast of Africa and Queens, New York.

**The Rhode Island Black Heritage Society** (1 Hilton Street, Providence): An archival photographic documentary of the black community in Providence entitled *In Black and White*, featuring

works by Tom R. Chambers, is on display through November 12. Chambers selected 44 photographs which "hold a special significance for me. The main subjects in front of the lens are black and the photographer [me] behind the lens is white. This fact, alone, nurtures an 'interracial harmony' that is an important factor for livelihood in today's world and that should be an inseparable quality of brotherhood/sisterhood for all of us."

## ARTS

OCTOBER 25-31, 1990

THE PHOENIX'S  
**NewPaper**  
RHODE ISLAND'S NEWS, ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY

# The Second Front Page

## Exhibit on R.I. settlers is at State House

### Show pairs photos of descendants with accounts of their ancestors' lives

By KEVIN SULLIVAN

Journal-Bulletin State House Bureau

PROVIDENCE — It probably wasn't funny to John Sweet, but 3½ centuries and 11 generations later, Earl Sweet Palmer Jr. gets quite a chuckle out of his ancestor's antics.

It seems John Sweet, one of Rhode Island's original settlers, ran into a little trouble back in the 1600s, when he was "presented by the grand jury for shooting a wolf dog of Colonel Endicott's."

Whether Sweet was convicted of that crime remains unclear, but Palmer said yesterday that the shooting was probably a sign of the times.

"Every one of them was a rebel," Palmer said with a laugh as he read a bit about his family history yesterday at the State House.

Palmer was one of several descendants of the original settlers who attended the opening of a photo exhibit honoring their ancestors.

Descendants/350, by photographer Tom R. Chambers, was completed in 1986 as part of the state's 350th anniversary celebration. It has been exhibited at seven sites and is at the State House for a 10-day showing, through July 1.

The exhibit pairs photos of the descendants with brief accounts of their ancestors' lives. The 40 original settlers' names are familiar: Williams, Brown, Waterman, Angell, Wickenden, Greene, Coggeshall.

Some of the descendants' names are equally familiar, but others have lesser-known surnames. Palmer, for example, said the Sweet family name died with his great-uncle more than 30 years ago. But it lives on as his middle name.

"I take great pride in it," said Palmer, 66, who was born in Massachusetts and moved to East Greenwich three decades ago to a home within 10 miles of John Sweet's original land.

Palmer's brother, Elmer Hall Palmer, is also on yesterday's list. But he laid claim to a different ancestor.

Elmer is in the exhibit as a 10th-generation descendant of William Hall, who lived from 1613 to 1675. His claim to fame, according to the exhibit, was that he was "on a committee to 'treat' with the Indians about drunkenness."

Of course, the two Palmer brothers have identical family histories and are equally related to John Sweet and to William Hall. Each is exhibited with the ancestor who corresponds with his middle name.

The exhibition is to be shown later this summer at the Old Colony House in Newport.



—Journal-Bulletin Photo by WILLIAM K. DABY

**PICTORIAL HISTORY:** Ligna Sanchez, 17, of Providence views one of the 40 portraits of descendants of Rhode Is-

land's founding families. The photos are on display at the Fleet Center through next Wednesday.

# Photographer finds founders' descendants

**Tom Chambers' unique exhibit sponsored by Providence 350**

By **THOMAS J. MORGAN**  
Journal-Bulletin Staff Writer

**PROVIDENCE** — The stern features of Trooper William A. Rathbun Sr. gaze out at the onlooker from the veranda of the Surf Hotel on Block Island, surrounded by the Atlantic Ocean and the whispers of history.

The photograph of the seated Rathbun is one of 40 portraits of Rhode Islanders, all descendants of

founding families, by **Tom R. Chambers**, commissioned by **Providence 350 Inc.**

The exhibit is on display in the Fleet Center, 50 Kennedy Plaza, through next Wednesday.

Chambers, official photographer for Mayor Joseph R. Paolino Jr., said the original idea was his own. "I approached Providence 350, and they liked the idea and gave me a \$1,300 grant," he said.

Rathbun is a 10th generation descendant of John Rathbone, one of 16 purchasers of Block Island, who died in 1702.

Another portrait shows Auxiliary Bishop Kenneth A. Angell, whose ancestor, Thomas Angell (1618-1694) settled Providence with Rog-

er Williams and served as commissioner, juryman, constable, freeman and town clerk. The bishop is shown relaxed in the Superior Court House.

Charles C. Whipple crouches over an ancestral tombstone in Providence's North Burial Ground. He is a 10th-generation descendant of John Whipple, 1617-1685, a purchaser.

Harold Champlin shows another side of the founding families — a member of the Narragansett Indian tribe, he stares out from a pier at India Point Park, the waters of the Providence River dark behind him.

Chambers found his subjects through publicity in newspapers, magazines and television.

"Several people called in," he

said, "then I got a call from Robert Allen Greene. He's a 12th and 13th generation — two different families — descendant of John Coggeshall, 1591-1647, a signer of the Portsmouth Compact. Robert Greene is a genealogist. I would give him certain first family names I had researched out, and he'd plug in the descendants."

Chambers said he relied on the 1969 revised edition of the *Genealogical Dictionary of Rhode Island* for his data.

"I'd reach people and explain the project," he said. "I'd ask if they were willing to let me take a documentary picture. Not one person refused me. They have a lot of pride in their ancestry."





**"Descendants/350," an exhibition by fine arts photographer Tom Chambers, views like a stately procession of New England nobility. The show consists of black-and-white portraits of 40 Rhode Island scions who singularly and collectively convey an intense bond with local governmental, social and religious beginnings.**

**Chambers photographed each descendant in settings reflective of their ancestors' respective backgrounds. So we meet William A. Rathbun Sr. (pictured top left) looking stern-faced on the deck of the Surf Hotel on Block Island. He's a 10th-generation descendant of John Rathbone (b. ———, d. 1702), who, along with 15 fellow settlers, made his mark on the Ocean State by purchasing Block Island, according to The Genealogical Dictionary of Rhode Island.**

**George Williams (top right) appears in front of the Roger Williams Monument and Burial Site at Prospect Park in Providence. Roger Williams (b. 1599, d. 1683), of course, founded "Providences of the most Holy and only wise I called Providence."**

**Pictured in the Council Chambers at Providence City Hall, Jeanne M. Desrosiers (bottom left), an 11th-generation descendant, rekindles the spirit of Thomas Olney (b. 1600, d. 1682), a deputy and town councilman whose signature was among those that ratified this state's government.**

**Ninth-generation scion Charles C. Tillinghast (bottom right) gazes at the lens from aside the Tillinghast Monument, which stands on Benefit Street in commemoration of Pardon Tillinghast (b. 1622, d. 1718), pastor of the First Baptist Church and overseer of the poor.**

**"They strike a certain pose, posture or expression to convey a sense of self-worth, pride and an awareness of my presence," says Chambers of his ancestral subjects.**

**"Descendants/350, A Photographic Tribute to the First Settlers of Rhode Island," which was funded by Providence 350 Inc., is hanging in the Roger Williams Park Museum through Feb. 15. The exhibition will be displayed at the University of Rhode Island's Extension Center Gallery from March 2 through 27 and at the Narragansett Pier Free Library from April 5 to May 1.**



Tom Chambers

photo by Judi DeGenova



# ROOTS

Four scions of Rhode Island

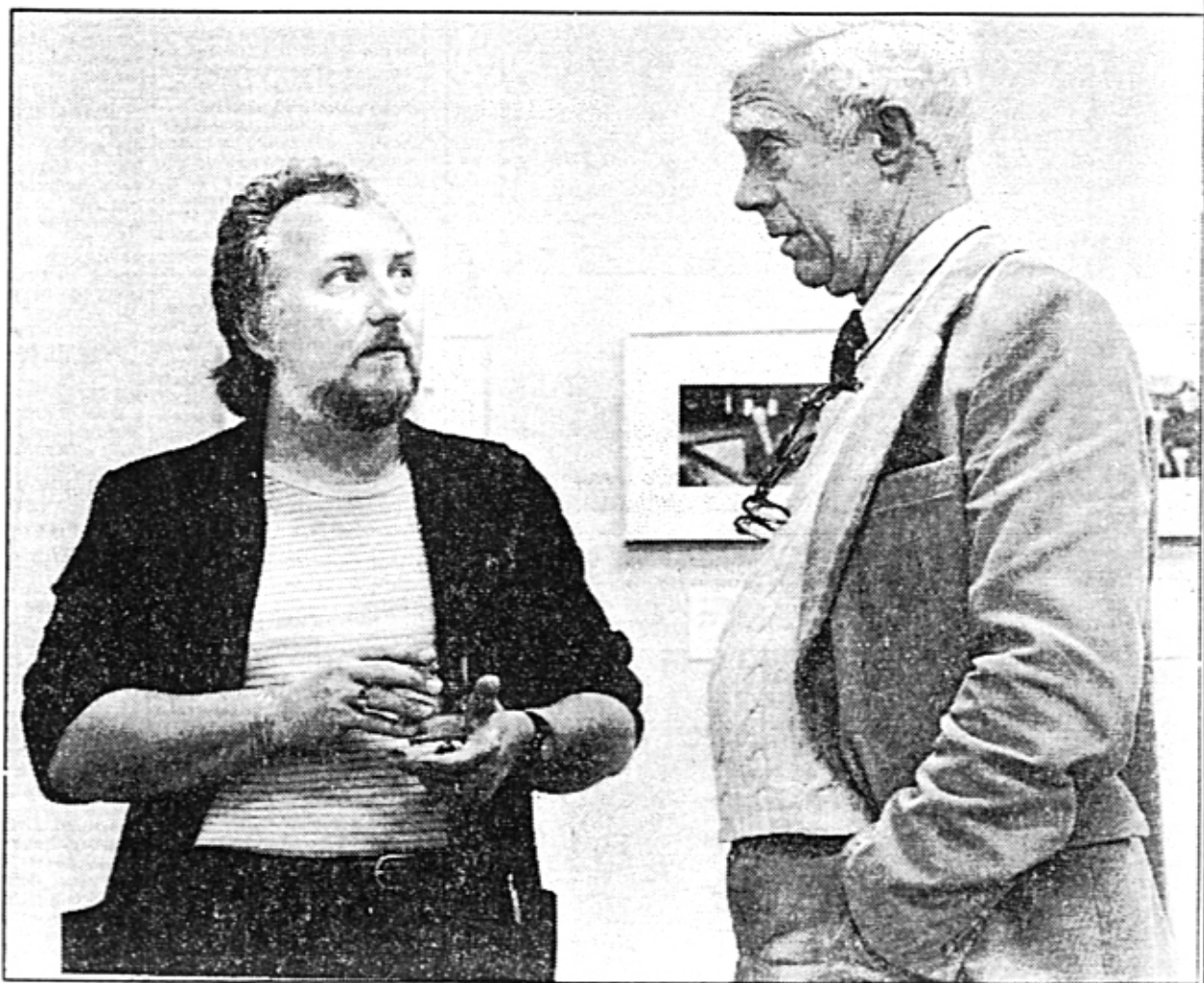




## Pictorial history

Mrs. John Renza of Cranston, above, views "A Photographic Tribute to the First Settlers of Rhode Island" yesterday during the exhibit's opening at the Roger Williams Park Museum in Providence. The display features photographs by Tom R. Chambers, staff photographer for the Mayor's office. At right, Chambers, left, talks with George Wightman Williams, a descendant of Roger Williams and the subject of one of Chambers's photos. The exhibit runs through Feb. 15.

—Journal-Bulletin Photos  
by RICHARD BENJAMIN



# ARTS & CULTURAL TIMES

## ACCESS SUCCESS STORIES

Rhode  
Island  
State  
Council  
on the  
ARTS

### 3. WARWICK MUSEUM: THE CUTTING EDGE OF ACCESS

Warwick Museum is quickly developing a reputation as a facility that takes the issue of access very seriously, to the point where it is becoming a model for the entire state.

Executive Director Mary Jane Sorrentino says that the organization's efforts went into high gear in 1987, with the exhibition of *Descendants 350*, by photographer Tom Chambers, when a taped description of each photograph was provided for visually-impaired consumers. This fledgling effort led to a linkage with Carolyn Del Sesto, an art rehabilitation teacher, who signed on as Coordinator of Special Services. In collaboration with Curator Natalie Colletta, the trio began making their exhibitions a feast for the senses of persons with a wide variety of impairments. Attendance by impaired consumers was around 70 in 1987, but it jumped to over 600 the next year.

Del Sesto says that persons served by the Warwick Museum's access efforts include those with visual impairments, mental challenges, behavior and emotional disorders, physical challenges, and special populations such as the young and the elderly. Besides assisting in opening up Museum exhibits, her role includes developing partnerships with outside entities such as nursing homes and treatment centers. She points out that art tends to elicit a very positive reaction among older Americans because it unlocks a world of experiences through imagery. Carolyn Del Sesto also says that her outreach efforts have benefited the Rhode Island artists who participate through sales of works. As far as she is concerned, the Museum is a beacon in the sky when it comes to access.

Curator Colletta and Executive Director Sorrentino team up on translating each show into non-visual or tactile terms. This is done by recording audio tapes and producing labels in Braille for the blind, generating large type glossaries and descriptions for those with vision problems, developing tactile boards of different art materials that reflect the components used in each show, and holding workshops after each special tour to further underscore how an artist combines disparate elements to produce something. Both of them agree that a key element of the process is getting permission from the artists to allow their works to be touched. Their efforts are attracting attention both from other arts groups and from organizations that deal with impaired consumers.

But, perhaps most importantly, the accessible shows and outreach efforts of the Warwick Museum open up a new world for the consumers. In some cases, their operative senses and spirits are overwhelmed, and their intellects are stimulated, effectively removing some of the perceived barriers in a typical museum environment. The older consumers tend to re-live cultural and personal memories. The access efforts at the Warwick Museum are a good example of a situation in which everybody wins.



Accessing the "Descendants 350" show at the Warwick Museum in June, 1987.

Photos by Tom Chambers



# WARWICK Beacon

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## WARWICK, RHODE ISLAND

### Museum showing 350th photo project

A photographic linkage of past and present is on display through Aug. 29 at the Warwick Museum.

The exhibit presents "Descendants R.I.: A Photographic Tribute to the First Settlers of Rhode Island," a collection of works by Tom R. Chambers of Providence, originally produced as part of the state's 350th anniversary celebration last year.

The 40 photos show living descendants of Rhode Island's founders in settings around the state connected with their ancestors' role in the state's beginning. A number of notable Warwickites from the past are represented by the current generation.

Chambers, who is staff photographer for Providence Mayor Joseph Paolino, took six months to complete the project, which includes a text detailing the history of the ancestor of each photo subject.

"Even though the album of photographs can be viewed strictly as portraiture," wrote Chambers in an introduction to the exhibit, "it is also a collection of icons or symbols that presents itself through 'flesh' objects (the descendants) as gifts of gratitude, respect and admiration for those ancestors who founded a new society (Rhode Island) based on religious freedom and rights for all."

Each photo is what photographers call an "environmental portrait," with the subject person placed in an environment that relates something about him and his heritage. For

example, Fred Vohr, a 10th generation descendant of Warwick founder Samuel Gorton, is seen outside the Warwick City Hall.

Other Warwick-connected persons are:

Phillips Lillibridge, 11th generation descendant of Stukeley Westcott; Edwin G. Wickes, 10th generation, John Wickes; Thomas E. Greene, 11th generation, John Greene; Rodney Bailey, 11th generation, Randall Holden; Russell W. Greene, 12th generation, William Carpenter; Franklin G. Arnold, 12th generation, William Arnold; and Samuel C.H. Dumas, 11th generation, Samuel Bennett.

Another interesting aspect of the show is a joint project of the Museum and Insight that allows visually-impaired persons to "see" the exhibit. An audio tape recording has been made with a description of each photo and a recitation of its accompanying historical text. Visually-impaired museumgoers can listen with a tape recorder to get a sense of the look of the exhibit.

Museum Director Mary Jane Sorrentino is seeking a donation of a Walkman-type tape recorder so visually-impaired visitors can listen to the tape program more easily. Anyone wishing to help should contact the Museum at 737-0010.

The museum is open from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., Tuesday through Friday, and from 1-4 p.m., Saturday; it is closed on Mondays.



**ON EXHIBIT:** Natalie Coletta, recently appointed curator at the Warwick Museum, displays one of the 40 photos now on exhibit that show living descendants of some of Rhode Island's colonial era founders. The photo she holds is of Fred Vohr, a 10th generation descendant of one of Warwick's founders, Samuel Gorton. The show runs through Aug. 29. Warwick Beacon photo by Jay Anthony.

## DATA BANK LISTINGS GALLERIES

*The following is a random sampling of notable photography exhibits currently on view at various galleries and museums across the country.*

### ARIZONA

#### Center for Creative Photography

University of Arizona, 843 E. University Blvd., Tucson 85719; (602) 621-7968. Through April 3: "Paul Caponigro: Color Photographs." This show offers a rare look at the work of a photographer long known for his exquisite black-and-white prints. About 35 color landscapes and still lifes made during the last decade.

### CALIFORNIA

#### The Friends of Photography

Sunset Cultural Center, San Carlos at

Ninth, Carmel 93921; (408) 624-6330. March 7-April 20: "Edward Weston: Centenary Exhibit." In celebration of Weston's one-hundredth birthday, this show features 50 black-and-white landscapes culled from the photographer's later works. Taken between 1936 and 1945, the images were primarily made out West, mainly in Death Valley and Point Lobos.

#### Fraenkel Gallery

55 Grant Ave., San Francisco 94108; (415) 981-2661. Through March 22: "Helen Levitt: Eighteen Color Photographs." An exhibition of New York City images.

#### San Francisco Museum of Modern Art

401 Van Ness Ave., San Francisco

94102-4582; (415) 863-8800. Through March 16: "Behind the Eyes: Eight German Artists." Through the use of approximately 55 color and black-and-white photographs, artists show how photography plays a role in the creation of their paintings, poetry, sculptures, and performances.

#### Santa Barbara Museum of Art

1130 State St., Santa Barbara 93101-9988; (805) 963-4364. Through April 6: "Masterpieces of Photography from the George Eastman House Collections." Two hundred color and black-and-white prints from one of this country's most renowned collections. The exhibit, which spans the history of photography, includes one daguerreotype taken by the creator of the process, Louis J.M. Daguerre, in 1842 as well as con-

## DATA BANK LISTINGS GALLERIES

18 images by Arthur Fellig, better known as Weegee. The exhibit includes photographs from his book *Naked City*, which documents his work as a New York City news photographer.

### RHODE ISLAND

#### The Silver Bullet Gallery

1 Silver Spring St., Providence 02904; (401) 272-9899. Through March 26: "Dyer Street Portraiture." Tom Chambers shows his series of portraits recording denizens of this downtown El Paso street. The black-and-white images record a diversity of common

people in an urban habitat with an ambience of film noir.

### TEXAS

#### The Heights Gallery

1613 Oxford St., Houston 77008; (713) 868-9606. Through March: "Around Texas: Work by Tracy Hart." Color and black-and-white prints taken during a photographic tour of the Lone Star State; 25 images in all.

### WASHINGTON, D.C.

#### Martin Gallery

2427 18th St. NW 20009; (202) 232-1995.

Through March 25: "Photographs, Drawings, and Paintings." An exhibit of about 20 black-and-white prints by George Dureau, focusing on mutants, dwarfs, midgets, and amputees in New Orleans.

#### Smithsonian Institution

National Museum of American History 20560; (202) 357-2627. March 24-June 10: "Hollywood: Legend and Reality." A traveling exhibition of more than 450 works of art, including photographs, explores the growth of American cinema since its debut in 1910. ■

## Southern Light Gallery



Dyer Street Portrait...by Tom Chambers

## Gallery will feature Chambers

"Dyer Street Portraiture" by Tom Chambers is the March Southern Light Gallery exhibit. Chambers' work provides intimate street shots and reveals the nature of the environment by detailed background content.

Chambers said an essential characteristic of many of his

photographs is a sense of tolerant co-existence of a blend of humanity in which individuals still preserve their own culture and traditions.

Chambers free-lances for arts organizations and regional and national publications.

After viewing Chambers'

"Dyer Street" collection, Arthur Goldsmith, editorial director of *Popular Photography*, labeled it as "strong, direct and honest."

Southern Light Gallery is on the first floor of the Lynn Library/Learning Center. Chambers' photos will be on exhibit through April 12.



# Variety of approaches represented in Silver Bullet photo exhibit



**EXHIBIT:** "Children" by Tom Chambers is one of the photos in an exhibit of 13 local photographers at T. F. Green State Airport through January. It is the Silver Bullet's first showing outside the gallery.

By **JACKLEEN de La HARPE**  
Journal-Bulletin Staff Writer

Changing the perception that photography is not just a recording but an expression of art has been a difficult task.

It wasn't until the mid-20th Century, with help from photographers Edward Steichen, Edward Weston and Alfred Steiglitz, that photography was elevated to the ranks of art.

But even today, photography has never rated, monetarily, the way more traditional art mediums do. Rhode Island, for instance, has just one full time photography gallery — The Silver Bullet Gallery.

The gallery has put together an exhibit of 13 local photographers now on display at T. F. Green State Airport through January. It is the Silver Bullet's first showing outside the gallery.

★ ★ ★

**AFTER LOOKING** at the exhibit, it is difficult to understand why photography is not more saleable. The works, ranging from abstract to elegant architectural photos, are an impressive cross section of photography.

John Sharlin's night shots of empty quarries and ditches are stark and arresting. Sandor Bodo's photos are three dimensional shots

similar to 50s-style postcards that move in different angles of light. Tom R. Chambers has taken slice-of-life photographs on a recent trip home to Texas.

"What is key about the exhibit," said Aaron Usher, acting director for the gallery, "is that the images we chose represent a variety of approaches — night scenes, straight and manipulated shots. We've got a full gambit of photography, all from Rhode Island."

Photography isn't a big seller, he said, because people don't buy photos the way an art collector will purchase art. There just isn't a strong market for photography.

Douglas Dalton, a Rhode Island School of Design graduate whose architectural photos hang in the exhibit, agreed that photographers are rarely able to support themselves with a camera. His salary, he said, comes from freelancing.

★ ★ ★

**ONE REASON** photography is not as saleable is because in theory, he said, anyone can do it.

"It's quite clearly no longer mysterious," he said. "It's very accessible to the man on the street. Twenty, thirty, forty years ago, there were less than 300 people attempting to utilize photography as an expression of fine art. Today there are probably 30,000."

But, he emphasized, that is only a theory.

"It's a thinking business," said Usher. "Most people are making a recording." A artist, he said, "creates with the mind, eye and the camera."

Tom R. Chambers, staff photographer for Mayor Joseph Paolino, used to own a photography gallery in Texas before he moved to Cranston. But his gallery lasted just a year — it was too difficult to make money.

"A lot of people see it as the camera doing most of the work and not the artist — because it's chemical and mechanical," he said. "I certainly feel like the camera is an art form because its a means of expression."

Alan Metnick, the owner of The Silver Bullet Gallery, started the gallery in the lobby of ColorLab, Ltd., 23 Peck St. about five years ago. Although the space was small, "we developed a following," he said. "One of the key thing the gallery shows are many emerging Rhode Island photographers."

Colorlab, Ltd., a photographic processing lab has recently moved to 1 Silver Spring Avenue. And until the end of February, The Silver Bullet Gallery will be closed. It will reopen with an annual staff show.

The airport photography exhibit, set up in the east concourse, will run through the end of January. It is sponsored by the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts, and Department of Transportation, Division of Airports and The Silver Bullet Gallery.

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THE PROVIDENCE  
JOURNAL-BULLETIN

THURSDAY, JANUARY 9,  
1986

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## West Bay

SUNDAY JOURNAL

# MAGAZINE

June 25, 1989

PORTFOLIO

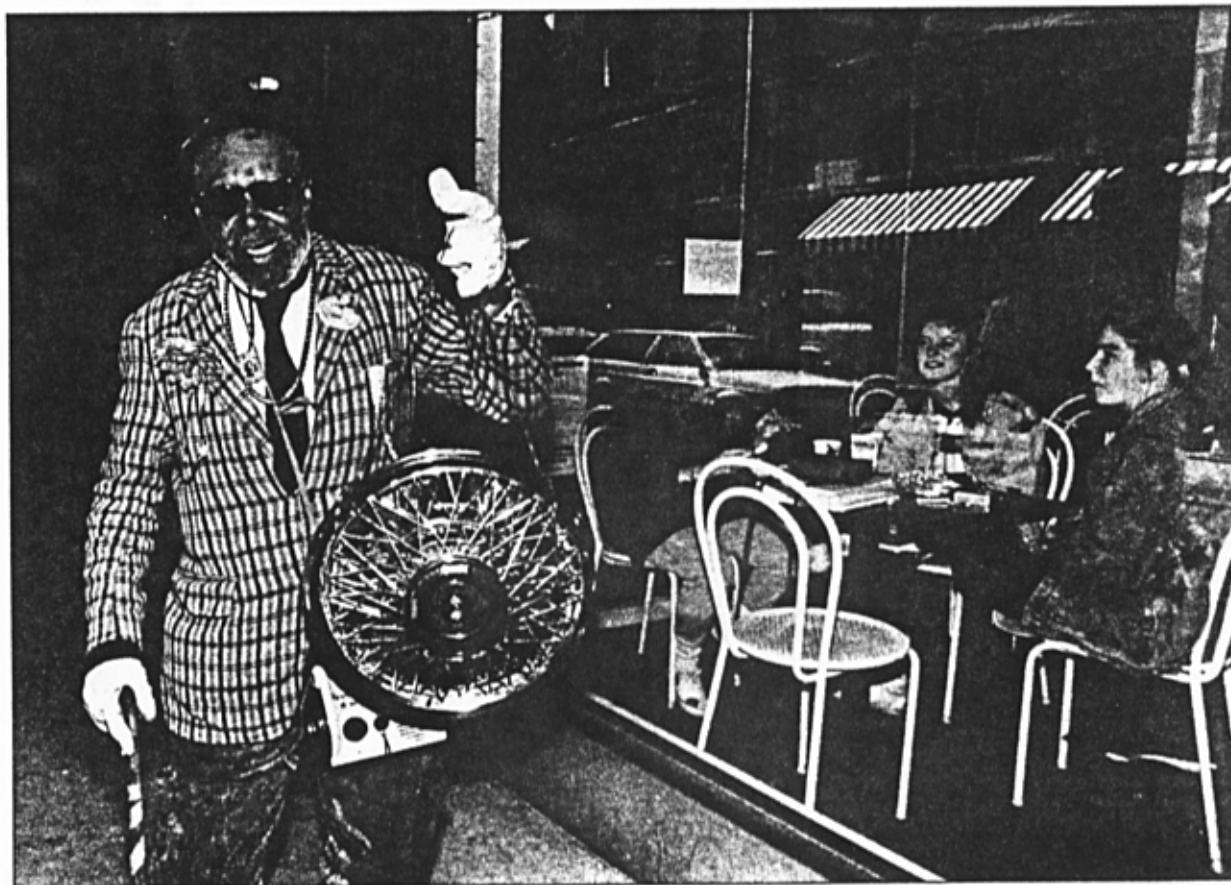
## TOM CHAMBERS



PURIM PARADE, March 21, 1989



**T**OM Chambers is a documentary photographer who works as an official photographer for the City of Providence. Although his job requires that he photograph officials at public events, he often also focuses on the ordinary people who appear at these gatherings and elsewhere in Providence. In the photographs on these pages, we see moments that wouldn't come across in a 60-second TV news story: a man standing for his portrait on Mathewson Street; a boy waiting for a parade to start; a street person participating in an anti-drug event. These images are selected from among the 400 prints now appearing in an exhibit of Chambers's work at Hospital Trust National Bank. Entitled "Hot City," the exhibit continues through August. ■



ON MATHEWSON STREET, March 27, 1989



'JUST SAY NO TO DRUGS' WALKATHON, May 13, 1988



ST. PATRICK'S DAY PARADE, March 11, 1989



THE PROVIDENCE

JOURNAL-BULLETIN



NEWS  
BRIEFS

7-19-89

## Photo exhibit presents look at 'Hot City' in last 4 years

PROVIDENCE — An exhibiton of 400 photographs in the main lobby of the Hospital Trust Tower downtown is designed to show a four-year slice of life in Providence, according to photographer Tom R. Chambers.

Chambers is staff photographer for Mayor Joseph R. Paolino Jr., but he said the show, "Hot City," which will run through Aug. 31, has nothing to do with politics.

"It's based on my coverage with the mayor's office over the past four years," he said, "but it's anything and everything I've covered. As a staff photographer for the mayor, I'm there to shoot ceremoniously, but as a documentary photographer I also go ahead and shoot everything else."

He said he culled the show prints from 500,000 negatives he has produced in the past four years.

"It's a historical look at Providence and its people over the period 1985-89," said Chambers, who has done more than 20 exhibitions here and in his native Texas. His most recent exhibition here was two years ago in the Fleet Center Building, a show called "Descendants 350."

The style and approach of the current exhibit are similar to Descendants 350, he said, "but this is much larger in scale and scope. It looks at not only the people of all ethnicities, but also at the elderly and children. And, it's a historical look at a particular activity — like a groundbreaking. It's very much of a social show. There's a social message running throughout the show involving the elderly, the children, the activities."

"You could say it's a historical, archival look at a city during a certain period of time."

Chambers said he was able to set up the exhibition through a grant from the Hospital Trust National Bank.

## Photos

*Continued from Page B-1*

"When I go through the exhibit it brings back a lot of memories," said Linda A'vant-Coleman, executive director of the Black Heritage Society. "The images that he caught, they're so positive. It shows a lot of the good things going on."

From graduations at Roger Williams Day Care to the rededication of the Chad Brown housing project. From a jazz festival at Kennedy Plaza to an Easter parade.

"He seems to highlight a lot of the events that have gone on in the black community," A'vant-Coleman said, adding that one of the society's goals is preservation. "We're into documenting our history here in Rhode Island."

Chambers will donate the work to the society for its archives. The photos, he said, are a historical look at events over five years.

For George Howard of East Greenwich, the exhibit was a pleasant change from the usual snapshots of politicians and community leaders.

Chambers, who said he has been a documentary photographer for 15 years, considers the exhibit to be his most important in Rhode Island.

He selected the photos from about 500,000 negatives he has collected over five years of documenting life and events in the city.

The exhibit, which he describes as "very upbeat, very positive, very proud," symbolizes "interracial harmony."

host of other ceremonies. It is there, he said, that he captured some of the images of the city's black community.

The 44 black and white photographs are on display at the Rhode Island Black Heritage Society, 1 Hilton St., until Nov. 30.

*Turn to PHOTOS, Page B-2*

—Journal-Bulletin Photo by WILLIAM K. DABY

IMAGES: Bernie Watson and Dana McCants examine photographs at the "In Black & White" exhibition last week.

# Photos highlight the black community

By DEBORAH BARFIELD  
Journal-Bulletin Staff Writer

PROVIDENCE — It's called "In Black & White": a collection of photographs of blacks in the city doing everything from dancing in the streets to marching in substance-abuse walkathons to simply posing at festivals.

Its creator is a white documentary photographer.

"I'm a social photographer," said Tom Chambers at the opening of his exhibit last week. "I evaluate society through the lens. This coverage is part of my ongoing city documentary with the mayor's office."

"This show is significant because I'm a white photographer behind the lens taking a look at the black community."

Chambers, 43, has been a staff photographer for Mayor Joseph R. Paolino Jr. since 1985. In that time, he has snapped pictures of dedications, ribbon cuttings and a

FREE

# THE PHOENIX'S NewPaper

APRIL 19-25, 1990

RHODE ISLAND'S WEEKLY

THREE SEC

THE NEWSPAPER, SECTION TWO, APRIL 19, 1990

2

# 8 DAYS

# A WEEK

by Jim Macnie

**ART.** "Make room for my 45s right beside your 78's," Jackson Browne once sang to his father. **Tom R. Chambers** mixes his media to come up with a spin on that particular sentiment. *Mother's 45s* pulls the rug out from under ordinary nostalgia by pinpointing specific sections of his mom's snapshots and strategically-placed seven-inch records (selections include "I Get Ideas," "Playing For Keeps" and "Little Small Town Girl"). An era is documented; the woman's pleasure concerns become evident; a dying art form is given another purpose. In one fell swoop, Chambers chronicles how we interact with our memories and how those memories are forever irretrievable. The exhibit hangs at Gallery One (75 John Street, Providence) through May 6. Free; call 273-1155.

**FRIDAY**  
**20**





# Lifebeat

D Section

THE PROVIDENCE  
JOURNAL-BULLETIN DJMN

FRIDAY  
APRIL 20, 1990

1  
RPM  
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## ON EXHIBITION



**PHOTOGRAPHER**  
Tom Chambers  
remembers Mama  
with records  
bearing pictures of  
her in the middle  
at Gallery One.

## Putting Mama on the record

By BILL VAN SICLEN  
Journal-Bulletin Arts Writer

PROVIDENCE — As the official photographer for Providence Mayor Joseph R. Paolino, Tom Chambers is no stranger to the public spotlight. But in a show that opens today at Gallery One, the Texas-born artist bares a more personal, less public side of himself.

Called "Mother's 45s," the new show features a series of 45 rpm records, each with a snapshot in its cen-

ter hole. The pictures are of Chambers's mother, who died seven years ago at age 58.

"I guess I'm a mamma's boy at heart," Chambers said last week during an interview in his photograph-lined studio in Providence's North End. "I lived with the woman for 17 years and got kind of attached to her. This is my way of keeping her memory alive."

Chambers said he got the idea for

the show after an emotional visit to his grandparents' house two years ago. While looking through some of his mother's personal belongings he discovered a box of vintage 45 rpm records featuring songs by Patti Page, Peggy Lee, The Platters, The McGuire Sisters and other recording artists from the '40s and '50s.

"I brought them back and played  
Turn to PHOTOGRAPHER, Page D-16

# Photographer creates a record of his Mama

Continued from Page D-1

one after another," Chambers recalled. "At first, I just wanted to listen to the music and reminisce. But then I began thinking about how I could use them in some sort of artistic way, as a creative outlet for my grief."

Chambers's solution was to place snapshots of his mother in the center holes of the 45s, in such a way that the records form a shiny black frame around the photographs. He also arranged the pictures in chronological order, so that the series begins with shots of his mother as a little girl and ends with pictures taken as recently as 1980.

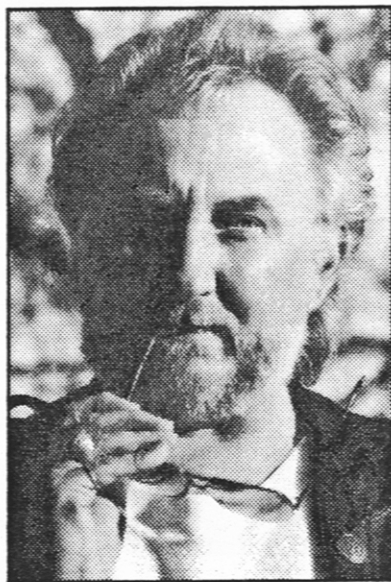
## Music in the background

To complete the project, which Chambers considers a single work of audio-visual art, a part of each recording was copied onto a cassette, which plays continuously during the exhibition. Since the audio and visual portions of the show follow the same sequence, viewers can easily match the 45s on display with their original music.

The result is a moving tribute to his own mother that Chambers hopes will stir memories and emotions in everyone.

"We all have mothers and we all have memories," Chambers said. "The loss of a parent and the feelings that evokes should be something everyone can relate to. I started the piece to work through my own grief, but I think it deals with universal emotions."

Although "Mother's 45s" is the most personal of Chambers's works to date, it's not the first time he has shown an interest in family life. Five years ago, he began tracking down the descendants of Roger Williams, John Nicholas Brown and



**TOM CHAMBERS** was looking through old photo albums . . .

other movers and shakers from Rhode Island's past.

The result was "Descendants 350," a traveling exhibition of portraits of the heirs and scions of famous Rhode Islanders. Finished in time for the state's 350th birthday celebration in 1986, the show featured shots of George Williams (a descendant of Rhode Island's founder) and Charles C. Tillinghast (a descendant of Pardon Tillinghast, a former pastor of the First Baptist Church), among others.

Since 1986, "Descendants 350" has visited more than 20 locations around the state, including Roger Williams Park, the Colony House in Newport and the Rhode Island State House.

Last year, Chambers put together another traveling show, this one

drawn from the more than 500,000 pictures he has taken since becoming Providence's first official photographer in 1985. Called "Hot City," the show took its title from the now-famous Newsweek magazine article that proclaimed Providence one of America's "10 hottest cities."

"That article got people feeling good about living in Providence," Chambers said. "So I figured it might be a good time to show some of the things that I'd been doing. I think it really caught the spirit of the city and the spirit of the times."

Speaking in a soft country drawl that's as Texan as Lone Star Beer, Chambers also said he's trying to arrange a national tour for "Hot City."

An only child, Chambers was born and raised in Nocona, Texas, about 90 miles north of Dallas on the Texas-Oklahoma border. Although he didn't settle on photography as a career until his mid-20s, Chambers admits to owning a Brownie camera as a teenager. At least one of the photographs in "Mother's 45" was taken with that camera. Others were taken by friends and family, as well as by Chambers himself.

"Mother's 45s" continues through May 6 at Gallery One, a part of School One, 75 John St. in Providence. Gallery hours are Friday-Sunday, noon-4. An opening reception for the show is scheduled for Sunday from 3-6.

*RPMP*  
*[Signature]*

# RHODE ISLAND MONTHLY

APRIL 1990 \$1.95

## APRIL 1990

A spring basketful of events in and around Rhode Island

WEEKEND

FRI. 20-SUN. 22

Honor thy mother—and all mothers. View *Mother's 45s*, an exhibit at Gallery One in Providence that pays unique homage to moms everywhere. See Art.

RPM  
De

### CALENDAR

**GALLERY ONE.** APR. 20-MAY 6: *Mother's 45s*. Artist Tom Chambers pays tribute to mothers everywhere, especially his own, in an exhibit using old 45 r.p.m. records, photographs, and music. Opening Apr. 22, 3-6. Fri-Sun. noon-4 p.m. School One, 75 John St., Providence, 273-1155.

**GALLERY 401.** APR. 1-25: Paintings From the Pawtucket Arts Council. Members juried show. Opening Apr. 1, 2-4 p.m. APR. 29-MAY 23: Neal Drobnis. Glass sculpture. Opening Apr. 29, 2-4 p.m. Mon.-Thurs. 9 a.m.-10 p.m., Fri. 9-4, Sun. 9-5. Jewish Community Center of Rhode Island, 401 Elmgrove Ave., Providence, 861-8800.

**HERA GALLERY.** MAR. 31-APR. 22: A juried show of work by artists from New England and New York. Opening Apr. 1, 1-4. APR. 28-MAY 28: *Native American Art: Tradition and Innovation*. Art by local Narragansett Indian artists and artists from other eastern tribes. Tues.-Fri. 12-3, Sat. 10-4, Sun. 12-3. 327 Main St., Wakefield, 789-1488.

**HUNT-CAVANAGH GALLERY.** APR. 1-20: Student Ceramics Show. APR. 22-29: Senior thesis show. Drawings by Amy Wolf and paintings by Paula Sibson. APR. 29-MAY 20: Senior thesis show. Photographs by Michael Flanagan, ceramics by David Heckmann, and prints by Danielle Locastro. Mon.-Fri. 9-4:30. Providence College, River Ave., Providence, 865-2401.

**JRS FINE ARTS.** Original—and unique—works by leading contemporary artists, including a selection of Southwest-inspired fine-art items. Mon.-Sat. 10-5:30, Fri. to 8, Sun. 1-4. 218 Wicken-den St., Providence, 331-4380.

**LENORE GRAY GALLERY.** Through APR. 10: Tom Herbert. New sculpture. APR. 15-MAY 8: Boxed Landscapes/Environments. Sculpture by Jon

Howe. Mon.-Fri. 9-5. 15 Meeting St., Providence, 274-3900.

**MAZZONE'S ART GALLERY.** Paintings, drawings, and other works by Betty and Michael Mazzone. Wed.-Sun. 10-5. On the grounds of the Fantastic Umbrella Factory, Route 1A, Charlestown, 364-0591.

**MUSEUM OF ART, RISD.** APR. 6-AUG. 25: *Italian Painting, 1450-1900*. Through APR. 22: *Contemporary Landscape Painting: Terra Incognita*, traditional landscapes with innovative twists, and in the adjoining gallery, *The Landscape Tradition in Printmaking*, old master prints from the permanent collection, including prints by Rembrandt and Dürer. Through MAY 20: *American Architects in Paris*, elegant, large-scale drawings—many of imaginary buildings—by four American architects studying at the Ecole des Beaux Arts at the turn of the century, accompanied by 50 drawings from the museum's permanent collection. Tues.-Wed., Fri.-Sat. 10:30-5, Thurs. noon-8, Sun. 2-5. Adults \$1, senior citizens 50 cents, children 5-18 25 cents, Sat. free. Rhode Island School of Design, 224 Benefit St., Providence, 331-3511, ext. 360.

**NEWPORT ART MUSEUM.** APR. 11-JUNE 3: *Exploring the Figure Through Sculptured Form*. Contemporary sculpture by New England artists. Tues.-Sat. 10-5, Sun., hols. 1-5. Adults \$2, senior citizens \$1, under 18 free. 76 Bellevue Ave., Newport, 847-0179.

**NEWPORT FINE ARTS.** Through MAY: Oils, watercolors, and drawings by the early 20th-century Boston School impressionist Kenneth S. MacIntire. The gallery features fine American and European paintings. Mon.-Sat. 10-5, Sun.

noon-5. 23 Bowen's Wharf, Newport, 846-4096.

**PROVIDENCE ART CLUB.** Main gallery: APR. 1-13: Norma Anderson, sculpture and prints, and John K. Fulweiler, paintings and prints. APR. 16-MAY 4: Special Invitational Show. Works by 19th-century Rhode Island artists, including club founders and earlier artists. Dodge House: Through APR. 13: Cape Cod artist Ruth Hogan, white line wood blocks. APR. 22-MAY 11: Gil Franklin, sculpture. Main gallery, Mon.-Fri. 10-4, Sat. noon-3, Sun. 3-5. Dodge House, Mon.-Fri. 11-3, Sat. noon-3, Sun. 3-5. 11 Thomas St., Providence, 331-1114.

**ROGER KING GALLERY OF FINE ART.** American paintings of the 19th and 20th centuries. Mon.-Sat. 10-5, Sun. noon-5. 21 Bowen's Wharf, Newport, 847-4359.

**SARAH DOYLE GALLERY.** APR. 5-26: Photographs and sculpture by John Fazzino. Mon.-Thurs. 9 a.m.-10 p.m. Fri. 9-3, Sat. 11-3, Sun. 4-10. 185 Meeting St., Providence, 863-2189.

**VIRGINIA LYNCH GALLERY.** APR. 1-MAY 1: *Nocturnes and Botanicals*. Paintings by Penelope Manzella and Lyn Hayden mark the beginning of the gallery's eighth season. Tues.-Sat. 10-4, Sun. 1-4, or by appointment. 3883 Main Rd., Tiverton, 624-3392.

**WARWICK MUSEUM.** APR. 8-MAY 6: *Spending Our Children's Inheritance*. Multi-media works from around the country highlight the environment. Tues.-Fri. 11-4, Sat.-Sun. 1-4. Free. Kentish Artillery Armory Building, 3259 Post Rd., Warwick, 737-0010.

**WICKFORD ART ASSOCIATION.** APR. 1-25: Juried multi-media members show and sale. APR. 29-MAY 17: Juried open photography show. ▶



# Spotlight

"MOTHER'S  
455"  
/

## Artists pay memorable tribute to their "Parents"



**Kimberly A. Bird**  
Associate Writer

Parents, an exhibition of works of art in which artists portray their own parents opened at the Dayton Art Institute Museum of Contemporary Art at Wright State University recently. The art exhibited employs the use of photographic images which depict the unique dynamics involved in child/parent relationships.

As part of the Dayton Art Institute's mission statement "we intend to draw on the connections that exist between art and life." Parents provides a view of life through a window into child-parent relationships. These realistic works show the touching experiences familiar to all. Parents is a wonderful opportunity to enlighten a large and diverse audience on the connections between parents and children.

Ron Geibert, Professor of the WSU Department of Art/Art History is curator and editor for the



structured memories needed to fill the physical and emotional voids created when a parent is no longer present. Artists reveal feelings of a tenderness between parent and child, while others are filled with cynicism and a yearning for "what should have been."

Parents is important because it takes the position of commenting about life from the eyes of a younger, more vital generation, attached emotionally as well as biologically to a generation past its prime. It displays how time has taken its toll on a generation and cared-about subjects have been wounded. Parents portrays the scars that are evident and manifested in a variety of ways.

Unquestionably, the art represented in Parents attempts to draw an emotional response. Often a "love story" approach to art-making may be thought of as trite, but because the artists are dealing with intimate situations involving their own parents. Due to the familiar subject matter, it is easy to perceive the artist's honesty and true emotion in a dynamic display of realistic work. One of the goals of the show was to portray the universal nature of the feelings and problems being expressed in the

employs the use of photographic images which depict the unique dynamics involved in child/parent relationships.

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Ron Geibert, Professor of the WSU Department of Art/Art History is curator and editor for the exhibit. Geibert says he came up with the idea of the show since his father died when he was a sophomore in college and he started to wonder about him. Geibert says, "I never really knew my father, he was a work-a-holic."

Geibert says after he brought up the idea with other artist he began to realize that many people had a parent they didn't know very well or they had a difficult relationship with. Geibert says that, "Many people don't know their parents due to death or divorce. Or (artist) they may be facing their parents demanding needs due to health reasons and long-term care needs."

"All artist made work about their own parents," says Geibert. "I think this is the first show were artist centered on their parents. It makes for a powerful show... looking at your parents and the relationship is a powerful thing."

Geibert selected twenty-one artists to display work in what will be one of the largest shows ever mounted in the museum. Parents

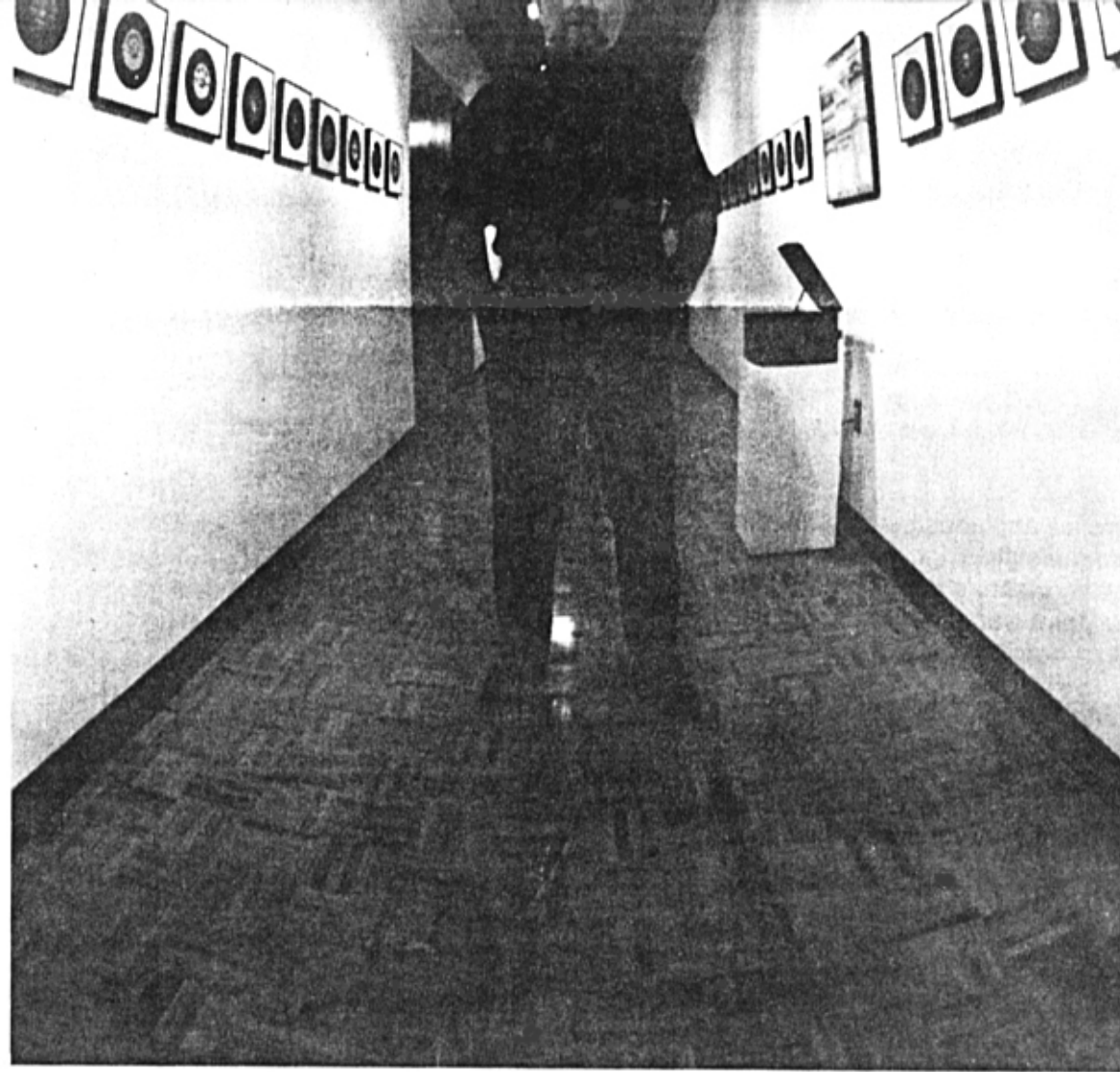


Photo by David S. Hwang

**Many talented artists were involved in putting together the Parents exhibit, including Tom Chambers of Austin, Texas. His pieces were dedicated to his deceased mother, consisting of a nostalgic collection of old family photos and his mother's 45 rpm record collection.**

will provide an alternative look at the emotional bonds inherent in the child/parents connection as artists photograph their own parents. These twenty-one artists focused their cameras on the subjects, their own parents, to present personal inquiries into child-parent relationships as seen from an adults per-

spective.

Utilizing on the power of looking back, Parents is full of particularly pungent visual statements. The artists confront not only the joy of healthy, nurturing relationships. In Parents, artists reveal the personal anguish of having to cope with role reversals occurring dur-

ing aging or debilitating disease. New dependencies, some brought on by stroke, memory loss, Alzheimer's disease and cancer, are portrayed in some of the artist's works. Joys, as well as tragic ironies are displayed throughout the exhibition, and some pieces are based on fantasies, and the recon-

been wounded. Parents portrays the scars that are evident and manifested in a variety of ways.

Unquestionably, the art represented in Parents attempts to draw an emotional response. Often a "love story" approach to art-making may be thought of as trite, but because the artists are dealing with intimate situations involving their own parents. Due to the familiar subject matter, it is easy to perceive the artist's honesty and true emotion in a dynamic display of realistic work. One of the goals of the show was to portray the universal nature of the feelings and problems being expressed in the art work as an effort to provoke empathy for an often forgotten population. Although the content of Parents gives the show its emotionally sharp edge, another of the museum's objectives was to select only pieces of art of the highest photographic quality.

A publication of the works displayed in the Parents has been published in conjunction with the exhibition. This catalogue will expand beyond the prints in the exhibit with several essays dealing with the psychological and social issues inherent in parenting. The 80 page catalogue combines the artworks with the words of the artists and invited writers.

Parents will be on display from April 13 through May 14 in the Museum of Contemporary Art in the Creative Arts Center. The museum hours are Monday through Thursday, 10 am to 4 p.m. and Sunday, noon to 4 p.m.. The exhibit is free and open to the public. For more information contact the museum at 873-2973.

# Austin American-Statesman

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 1992

## BEST BETS

### On the town

Long-running Canadian rockers **Rush**, with **Primus** opening, are at the Erwin Center; tickets are \$19.50 and \$24. ... Metroplex country harmonizers the **Dixie Chicks** perform at the Cactus Cafe's grand reopening show, **Victims Family, Rockbusters** and **Burning Bush** are at the Jelly Club, Kerrville favorite **Rory McLeod**, with **Jill Fuller** opening, is at Chicago House, and the first family of New Orleans music, the **Neville Brothers**, is at the Terrace but the show has been sold out for weeks. ... Legendary saxist **Clifford "Honky-Tonk" Scott** and the **Rhythm Rats** perform a record release show at the Elephant, **Tony "Ham" Guerrero** introduces his new **Tiempo Latino** band at La Zona Rosa, **The Grandmothers** are at the Filling Station, **Alejandro Escovedo** is at the Lamar Waterloo Ice House, **House In Orbit** plays Mercado Caribe, the **Beaver Nelson Band** is at Hole in the Wall, **Alan Haynes** performs at

Antone's, and **Logan & the Lix** are at Babe's. ... **Lillian Standfield** is at Maggie Mae's Pub, **Son Geezinslaw & Boomer Norman** are at Henry's, **High Noon** is at Headliners East, **Eric & the Offbeats** are at Hondo's, **Jim McCord** plays the Broken Spoke, **Billy Paul** is at Donn's Depot, **Lisa Colvin** plays acoustic at Chances, **Rusty Wier** is at the Saxon Pub, the **Lonesome Dove Band** is at the Lumberyard, **The Brew** and **Karan Chavis** are at Top of the Marc, **Soul Hat** is at the Black Cat, and **Rhythm Kitchen** performs at the Austin Outhouse. ... The **Hoo Doo Cats** have a tape release show at the Continental Club with **Chris Duarte**. **Wasted Faith** and **Last Rite** are at the Back Room, the **John Driver Band** and **Jr. Medlow & Tornado Alley** play the 311 Club, the **Jazz Bandits** are at Jazz on Sixth, **Billy Young & Tom Robinson** perform at the Driskill Hotel, **Don McCallister's** Songwriters Showcase, featuring the **Flaky Biscuit Boys** and **Muleskinners**, is at the 38th Street Waterloo Ice House, and **Meredith Miller** entertains at the High Time

Tea Bar.

### Best of the rest

The opening reception for Rhode Island photographer **Tom R. Chambers' Providence in Austin** exhibit, which includes many works of interest to music fans generally and fans of the Fabulous Thunderbirds specifically, is from 6 until 9 at G.F. Gallery (713 E. Sixth). ... The **Hillel International Film Festival**, a cinematic retrospective of the history of the Jews of Eastern Europe, continues with the 1981 German film **Raindrops** at 7:30 at Goldsmith Hall on the UT campus; admission is free. ... Viennese Pianist **Paul Badura-Skoda** performs pieces by Mozart, Chopin and Schubert at 8 at UT's Bates Recital Hall; admission is \$8. ... A cross-section of reporters from the Capitol press corps discusses the upcoming Super Tuesday primary on **The State of Texas**, at 8 on PBS. ... Central Presbyterian Church's free Noonday Concert series presents the **Nova Saxophone Quartet**.

— Michael Point



# Time Out

## For The Weekend

Saturday, February 22, 1992  
Austin American-Statesman



Photo by Tom R. Chambers

One of Tom R. Chambers' photographs in his 'Providence in Austin' exhibit at G.F. Gallery depicts a St. Patrick's

Day parade down Smith Street in Providence, R.I. in March 1988. The exhibit continues through March 12.

## Fine Arts

### G.F. Gallery

"Providence in Austin," an exhibit of photographs by Tom R. Chambers, is at G.F. Gallery, 713 E. Sixth St. through March 12. Call 480-0402.

### Gallery at the Driskill

Paintings by Chris Morel and Rod McGehee, watercolors by Marvin and Greg Moon, photo collages by Linda Kelsey Jones, sculpture by Mary Paige Huey and Cindy Debold, furniture by Zita and works by more than 25 other artists are at the Gallery at the Driskill, 604 Brazos. The gallery is closed on Sundays. Call 320-0660.

### Gallery at Shoal Creek

Sculpture and paintings by 36 contemporary American artists are part of the Gallery at Shoal Creek's 14th Annual Gallery Show, at 1500 W. 34th St. Call 454-6671.

### Gallery of the Republic/Native American Images

Maps, documents and replica flags of the Republic of Texas and the United States, antique Navajo rugs, Indian jewelry, and artworks by Austin artists are at Gallery of the Republic/Native American Images in the Four Seasons Hotel, First Street and San Jacinto Boulevard. Call 472-7701.

### Harlem Street Gallery

Works by Ernie Barnes, Annie Lee, Henry Porter, Varnett Honeywood and other African-American artists are at Harlem Street Gallery, 1154-B Angelina St. Call 832-1888.

### Lynn Herrmann Gallery

"American Images," an exhibition of photographs by Alfred Black, is at Lynn Herrmann Gallery, 723 E. Sixth St., through April 1. Call 476-9502.

THE 6th ANNUAL  
**PROVIDENCE WATERFRONT FESTIVAL**

## Inner city youths who said yes to the arts will march and demonstrate their crafts

By **BILL VAN SICLEN**  
Journal-Bulletin Arts Writer

PROVIDENCE  
Visitors to the 1990 Providence Waterfront Festival will want to keep their eyes peeled and their watches synchronized for a unique parade scheduled for 2 p.m. tomorrow. That's when a troupe of about 60 children from the city's Metro-Arts program will wind their way through the festival crowd, carrying brightly colored banners and performing juggling and acrobatic tricks.

"We've got clowns and jugglers and all kinds of things," says Metro-Arts coordinator Thomas Russack. "The kids have worked especially hard because they know they're going to have a big audience."

The parade will eventually work its way back to the eastern edge of India Point Park, where the Metro-Arts program also is sponsor-

ing a demonstration of African drumming and a mural-painting workshop. Both the demonstration and the workshop are free and open to the public.

The parade also will call attention to one of the state's most innovative programs for dealing with the problem of teenage substance abuse. Founded in 1985 at the Smith Hill Center in Providence, Metro-Arts organizes regular arts and crafts workshops for children ages 8 to 14, who are considered to be "at risk" from the temptations of drugs and alcohol.

"We try to show them that there are alternatives to things like crack and booze," Russack says. "If we can teach them to have confidence in their own abilities — if we can get them to believe in themselves — then there's less chance that they'll reach for some kind of

Turn to **TAKING**, Page D-3

## Taking charge of their lives

Continued from Page D-1

crutch. We use the arts as a way of getting them to take charge of their lives."

The program currently serves seven Providence neighborhoods, including Elmwood, Federal Hill, Fox Point, South Providence and the West End. Workshops are held in local community centers, such as the Fox Point Boys and Girls Club on the East Side and the Hartford Park Community Center in Olneyville, and are run by professional artists whose interests range from theater and photography to juggling and balloon-making.

Tomorrow's parade at the Waterfront Festival will be led by children from the Wanskuck Boys and Girls

Club, who participated in a clowning and juggling workshop run by Providence artist Marvin Novogrodski. They will be joined by children from another workshop at the same location who created a special "movable mural." The mural can be divided into sections and carried around like a dragon from a Chinese New Year's parade.

The Metro-Arts display (behind the main concert stage in Section E of the festival grounds) will also feature costumes and fabric sculptures made by children from the Smith Hill Center and a fleet of colorful tissue paper balloons made by teenagers at the Fox Point Boys and Girls Club. Percussionist Wall Matthews will lead a group of Metro-Arts youths from Elmwood in a

demonstration of African drumming techniques.

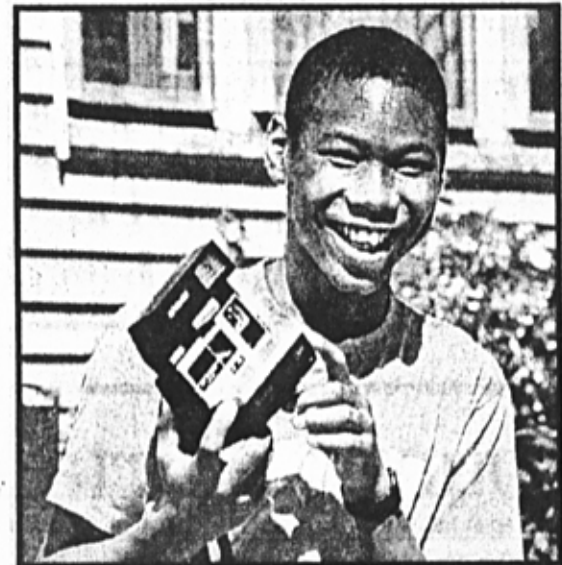
The parade and other Metro-Arts activities will be captured on film by a team of fledgling photojournalists under the supervision of Tom Chambers, a photographer for the City of Providence. Using cameras donated by the Polaroid Corp., Chambers recently held a four-week workshop at the Smith Hill Center that explored the styles and techniques of photojournalism.

"I think I got as much out of it as they did," Chambers says. "They have so much energy and enthusiasm. Partly, it's discovering something new, like how to work a camera or how to think the way a news photographer thinks. But it's also a thrill for them to be challenged in a creative way. I think that's something they don't really get enough of."

D Section

THE PROVIDENCE  
JOURNAL-BULLETIN DJCF

FRIDAY  
SEPTEMBER 7, 1990



— Journal-Bulletin Photo by WILLIAM K. DABY

**APPRENTICE:** Antone Hazard holds the camera he used for a photo workshop.



# Serious snapshots

Local photographers display their art at Greene Airport

## Art reviews

By BILL VAN SICLEN  
Special to the Journal-Bulletin

*Photographs from the Silver Bullet Gallery, Greene State Airport, Warwick. Through Dec. 19.*

The 1970s saw an unparalleled burst of creative energy from American photographers. Spurred by a series of major museum shows and an art market that was suddenly willing to pay serious money for fine art photographs, they simultaneously plundered and expanded the tradition they inherited from Alfred Steiglitz, Walker Evans, Aaron Siskind, Edward Weston and others.

In the process, they helped set a standard that a new generation of photographers has had to come to terms with in much the same way. Through Dec. 19, an exhibition at Greene State Airport organized by Providence's Silver Bullet Gallery shows how a cross-section of local photographers has met the challenge.

The work ranges from Daryl Matsamoto's mixed media collages and Sandor Bodo's 3-D snapshots to Ken Arsenault's nature studies and Sal Mancini's travel photos. The result is a fascinating show that is less interested in advancing particular causes or movements than in exposing viewers to a wide variety of contemporary photographic styles and techniques.

Judy Gelles, for example, has lifted some of Diane Arbus's portrait techniques — high-contrast lighting, odd poses — for her studies of a young boy wearing, successively, a Halloween mask, a football uniform, a fake nose and a Harpo Marx wig.

The photographs, which have the posed-but-unposed look of snapshots, are about identity: how we get it, where we get it from and how we disguise it. The fact that the subject is a young boy and not an adult only adds to their slightly sinister power. Unlike Cindy Sherman, who uses the medium as a stage on which to act out adult fantasies, Gelles is interested in the period before we master the art of role-playing, when we're still a little uneasy with the grown-up world of masks and costumes.

Tom Chambers, by contrast, is interested in people who don't play roles and who don't hide behind masks. His black-and-white portraits of middle-aged men and women — a grocer posing in front of his fruit stand, a woman standing in front of a trio of family portraits — convince us that we're seeing people just as they are, without the mediating influence of art or culture.

Both Sal Mancini and John Sharlin share an interest in landscape

photography but approach the genre in very different ways. Sharlin's night shots of abandoned quarries and drainage ditches derive from the so-called New Topology movement, which emerged in the '70s as a reaction to the "heroic" landscape work of Ansel Adams and Brett Weston.

Mancini's twin views of the Giza pyramids, on the other hand, revive the 19-Century tradition of travel photography, which viewed the monuments of earlier cultures not as tourist attractions to be reduced, via the camera, to mere keepsakes, but as architectural achievements on a par with any in the modern world.

There is also excellent work here from Phil Lieberman and Aaron Usher, who carry on the stylistic traditions of Henri Cartier-Bresson and Eugene Atget, respectively, and from Gail Porter, whose views of abandoned factory-buildings carry a haunting, even poignant sense of absence and loss.

**TOM R. CHAMBERS**

**photography**

p.o. box 8619 • CRANSTON, RI 02920 • (401) 946-0135



## ART/THEATRE



# Interesting photograms by Chambers on display

By Pikirayi Deketeke

AFTER missing a couple of Tom R. Chambers' photographic exhibitions, I finally caught up with his work at the National Gallery of Zimbabwe where he is showing some interesting photograms based on a traditional African mask from the Dan tribe in Eastern Liberia.

Titled "Variations On The Dan Mask", Chambers offers his interpretations of the mask form depicting different shapes and symbols from which the viewer can also give his/her own interpretations.

Though based on a traditional mask, the different images have a much more contemporary appeal with graphical designs that have both humour and symbolic meaning.

The artist's approach is said to border on abstract art as it reduces natural appearances to simplified forms. He says the first is the depiction of the essential or generic forms of things by elimination of particular and accidental variations. The other is the working away from the individual and particular with a view to creating an independent construct of shapes which will have aesthetic appeal in its own right.

In some instances the images reflect the moon and darkness while others depict a face hiding behind bars of different shapes.

Tom Chambers is posted at the National Gallery as an art conservator/curator working on a permanent collection project to produce a catalogue of the ac-

quisitions. He has exhibited his photodocumentary work at the United States Information Service and at over 30 venues in the United States.

Meanwhile Pierre Gallery will be exhibiting the work of the late sculptor, Brighton Sango, who died tragically in August this year.

Pierre Gallery has decided to honour him with a retrospective exhibition, says the gallery's curator, Olivier Sultan.

Born in 1958 in Gurube, Sango worked in Tengenenge with Bernard Matema before leaving to work on his own. "Refusing to be held back by any conventions, Sango was claiming complete originality for his work. Indeed, the only

sculptor to work with abstract figures, he was an important example for young Zimbabwean artists," says Sultan.

His inspiration derived mainly from the shape and colour of the stone itself rather than Shona myths. Although fascinated by modern technology, Sango had remained in the rural surroundings of Gurube, removed from Western influences.

"Brighton Sango never left Southern Africa despite the international appeal of his work. This strange meteor has now left, and we will miss him," says Sultan. Although the man is no more, his work will continue to be cherished by art lovers throughout the world.

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