

# ARTS

## Photos challenge idea of what it means to see

**Who:** Seeing with Photography collective  
**What:** "Shooting Blind: Photographs by the Visually Impaired" exhibit  
**When:** Reception and talk 6:30 p.m. Friday. Exhibit currently hanging through May 11.  
**Where:** Teton County Library  
**How much:** Free

By Meg Daly

The latest art exhibit at Teton County Library sounds like a contradiction in terms.

"Shooting Blind: Photographs by the Visually Impaired" features two dozen photographs taken by artists who can't see well, or at all. On display through May 11 in the library's Exhibit Gallery, the show captures the unique visions of members of a New York City art collective called Seeing with Photography. Mark Andres, a sighted artist, started the collective and has been teaching photography to visually impaired people since 1985.

On Friday, two members of the Seeing with Photography collective will join Andres to talk about their work and give a demonstration. Sonia Soberats is completely blind; Steven Erra's sight is limited to an extreme form of tunnel vision. The three artists will discuss their personal approach to photography as well as how the collective works. The presentation is at 7 p.m. on Friday in the library's Ordway Auditorium. The talk will be preceded by a reception at 6:30 p.m. The presentation and reception are free and open to all ages.

"I've learned that everyone sees differently," Andres said. The Brooklyn-based artist guides the collective in a photo-making technique that allows the artists to create their images slowly, piecing fragments together to make a whole.

Using large 4-by-5-view cameras – the kind of lumbering, early 1900s camera used by photographers duck-

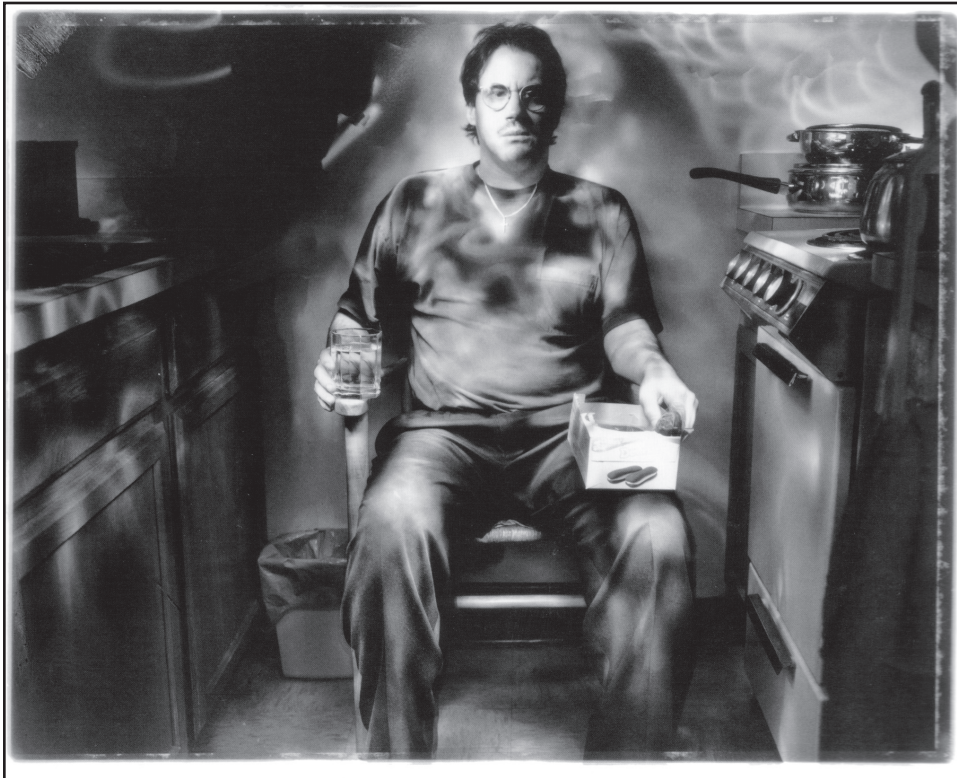
### Seeing the Unseen: Photography Workshop

Mark Andres and Seeing with Photography members Steven Erra and Sonia Soberats will conduct a free, two-day workshop from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday at Teton County Library.

The workshop will lead participants through the same process the Seeing with Photography members use to make their photos. It is open to anyone age 15 and older. Registration is required, but no photography experience is necessary. Each student will take home a finished picture.

"The workshop will be very hands-on and interactive," said Oona Doherty, program coordinator. "These artists have been all over the world teaching workshops. We are very fortunate to have them come to Jackson."

Places are still available; contact Doherty to register by calling 733-2164, ext. 135, or e-mailing [odoherty@will.state.wy.us](mailto:odoherty@will.state.wy.us).



Time-lag photography created the swirling light and shadows in Stephen Dominguez's *Devil Dogs and Vodka*, typical aspects of the work in "Shooting Blind: Photographs by the Visually Impaired."

ing beneath a cloth that you've probably seen in films – the artist and several technicians work together to set up a shot in a darkened room. The camera's shutter is disabled, and small flashlights are used to illuminate parts of the image, one after another.

"When the light hits the subject, it starts making an image," Andres said. Everywhere else is dark, so only the lit part of the subject is captured on film. This traditional technique is called chronophotography or "painting with light."

The artists work with several assistants who talk them through the image being created to make sure it is the image the artist intends.

"There's a lot of talk while pictures are being made," Andres said. "You

have to be open, less judgmental. You have to carefully describe the photo and what you are feeling from it."

The results often have a dreamlike or underwater quality, as if light were dancing off the surface of a pool, beneath which sits the subject. One particularly striking self-portrait by Morty King features King wrapped in a white cloth moving his hands as if he were feeling music in the air. His eyes are closed, and the look on his face is calm and deep.

Exhibit coordinator Kirsten Corbett said some people she has talked to have found the photos unsettling. Corbett said the exhibit prompted her to re-examine the meaning of sight.

"What does vision mean to different people?" she asked. "What kind of

artwork would people with different sighted abilities produce?"

Indeed, some of the photos are an attempt to show what an individual's vision is like. *How I See* by Roseann Kahn shows the artist with her face nearly blurred out by a cloudy white light. The picture is consistent with how Kahn described her sight in a book that accompanies the exhibit. "I can't see your face or my face but I can see everything else," she writes.

Andres, whose parents are both artists and who describes himself as "very visual," says he no longer finds the thought of going blind to be scary.

"I have a different sense of it now," he said. "You just use your other senses. You don't lose essential experience."

## Environmental photographer sees bigger picture

**Who:** Jonathan Long, photographer  
**What:** "Pre-Law Wastelands: Abandoned Mine Lands of Southern Illinois" solo show  
**When:** Hanging through April 13  
**Where:** ArtSpace Loft Gallery, Center for the Arts  
**How much:** Free

By Simpson Burlison

Having grown up in eastern Idaho, Jonathan Long is no stranger to natural beauty. So when he sees land that has been stripped of it, it certainly grabs his attention.

Long's interest in documenting environmental degradation fuels "Pre-Law Wastelands: Abandoned Mine Lands of Southern Illinois," his solo photography show hanging at the ArtSpace Loft Gallery in the Center for the Arts.

After pursuing a degree in fine arts with an emphasis in photography, Long attended graduate school at Southern Illinois University, where he went on to earn a Masters of Fine Arts in cinema and photography.

While at Southern Illinois, Long was aware that the area had been heavily coal mined, but had not witnessed the effects it had on the land until one day while out photographing. After Long discovered the stripped land, his curiosity drove him to photograph the sites. When his pictures turned out well, he continued to pursue photography of the area further.

He visited various organizations in the area, ques-



Two photographs, *Fall Color* and *Black Canyon*, form one winding installation in Jonathan Long's solo show at the Center for the Arts.

tioning them about what he had run across. They were able to tell Long where more of these abandoned mine lands that had not yet been reclaimed by the government were located. From that, his final project for graduate school and this exhibit was born.

Visitors to Long's show will be immediately overwhelmed by the sheer size of his photographs. Although there are only two photographs displayed, they take up the entire loft space and provide more than enough insight into what Long initially found mesmerizing about the abandoned land, which was destroyed in the 1940s before there were any envi-

ronmental laws in place to protect such areas.

In working on environmental pieces like these, Long hopes that people will stand up and take notice of what is going on around them.

"I think they already had somewhat of an impact, simply by making people realize that this landscape exists," Long said. "There were people that had lived their entire lives within a short distance of where these photographs were taken and were unaware that it even existed."

The scars on the southern Illinois earth that Long focuses on are evidence of activities that changed an entire landscape without regard to the water, air or life, and now the government is making an attempt to reclaim it. The bulldozing and laying of topsoil often does nothing more than cover up what once was.

While shooting the photographs, Long also shot photos from adjacent locations that showed land that had been reclaimed. Although those are not shown in this exhibit, Long still considers venturing back to southern Illinois once the government has attempted to reclaim the land that he spent most of his time photographing.

"I think that eventually I will go back and do it, but part of me doesn't want to because I don't want to see it bulldozed and covered up," Long said. "I'd like to remember it how it was because it is a very beautiful place that I've enjoyed."

While Long hopes to draw attention to environmental destruction, he thinks his next project will shine light on a more positive theme: restoring rivers to their pristine state by removing dams.