



CHUCK KELTON

Chuck Kelton makes chemograms and photograms using traditional photosensitive papers and darkroom chemicals to transform light into abstract landscapes inspired by nature. Kelton's work stems from a 35-year career as a master black and white printer for some of the most important photographers in history – Ansel Adams, Danny Lyon, Steven Meisel, Lillian Bassman, Saul Leiter and Mary Ellen Mark, to name a few. After decades of working with negative based imagery, Kelton turned his eye towards a reduced pictorial space. He stripped photographic materials down to the studs, building essential, minimalist compositions of black and white lines. In subsequent series, he pushed color back into the structure by exploring early processes like toning with precious metals (both new and expired) such as gold chloride, selenium and iron.

Though abstract, Kelton's works are representative, often simulating seascapes or other-worldly environments. At the same time, they are evocative of other medias such as watercolors or oil paintings, charcoal drawings or pastels. However, no such actual landscape or outside medias exist in the creation of his work, as his practice foregoes cameras, lenses and negatives. A photogram is the result of exposing photographic paper to light—*writing with light*, whereas the image in a chemogram is the outcome of exposing photographic paper to developer and fixer—*painting with chemistry*. In many of Kelton's most recent works he combines chemogram and photogram techniques. The shift is marked with a cracked, folded horizon line separating swirling tones from smooth, matte black. Each work by Kelton is entirely unique, one-of-a-kind.

In a quote about Kelton in the *LA Times*, Leah Ollman states, "Landscape imagery always registers internal as much as external phenomena, and Kelton makes sure that we know he is not just transcribing nature by titling most of the images "A View, Not From a Window." These expansive vistas originate in the dark rooms of the studio and the self." In his work, a tension between light and dark always exists. So does control over the medium and the act of letting go, visible most in Chuck's larger works "Translated from a Child".

Kelton calls himself a romantic in a traditional sense, with an intellectual need to exist in a visually conceptual conversation. His practice is a conversation between his emotions, ideas and the materials. His most successful works transcend a need to represent non-photographic objectivity while creating the appearance of a natural phenomenon. These works are deeply personal, produced in a deliberate and spontaneous practice while searching for a visual vocabulary. They render both unique and universal, defying their own medium. Shelton Walsmith describes Kelton's work as "Inert and visceral as slabs of slate or plates of scorched metal, dove belly gray to gunpowder black, the works render dawn by threatening unending night. While ambiguity is suspended across the range of Kelton's alchemy, specificity reigns in the emotional impact that is calculated and delivered. The accidental is an anomaly, purpose is the process itself".

When most of photography went digital, Kelton saw it as an opportunity to spend more time on his personal work, and his personal career has flourished. He has been featured in numerous exhibitions and publications. His work is in the collections of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Bibliothèque Nationale de France; Norton Museum of Art, West Palm Beach, Florida; International Center of Photography, New York; and New York Public Library; among others.

CHUCK KELTON

b. 1952, Bronx, NY

Lives and works in Jersey City, NJ

CURRICULUM VITAE

Education

1977 MFA Photography, Ohio University, Athens, OH

1975 BFA Photography, Kansas City Art Institute, Kansas City, MO

Master Printer & Educator

1986 – Present Owner, Kelton Labs, specializing in exhibition and portfolio gelatin silver prints, New York, NY
Master Printer for Danny Lyon, Mary Ellen Mark, Saul Leiter, Lilian Bassman, Larry Clarke and Helen Levitt

1989 – Present International Center of Photography, New York, NY
MFA Photography Program, ICP & Bard College, New York, NY (Previously ICP & New York University, New York, NY)

Solo & Two-Person Exhibitions

2018 *Light + Dark*, Sohn Fine Art, Lenox, MA

2017 *Mana Contemporary*, New York, NY

2016 Von Lintel Gallery, Los Angeles, CA

2013 *Chuck Kelton and Eric William Carroll: New Photographic Drawings*, Bosi Contemporary, New York, NY

2012 *Mana Contemporary*, Jersey City, NJ

2011 *Works On Paper: Chuck Kelton & Go Sugimoto*, Robert Anderson Gallery, New York, NY

2010 *Run From View*, Causey Gallery of Contemporary Art, Brooklyn, NY

1987 Hedgepeth Gallery, New York, NY

1986 Hedgepeth Gallery, New York, NY

Selected Group Exhibitions

2017 *Dark Room*, Yossi Milo Gallery, New York, NY

2017 *Nine New Jersey Photographers*, Stockton University, NJ

2016 *Recent Acquisitions*, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX

2012 *Volumes*, Causey Gallery of Contemporary Art, Brooklyn, NY

2012 *The Originals: Mana Contemporary Resident Artists*, Mana Contemporary, Jersey City, NJ

2012 *Off the Beaten Path: Photographs and Photograms*, Robert Anderson Gallery, New York, NY

2010 *Art on Paper*, Monmouth Museum, Lincroft, NJ

2009 International Center of Photography Education Gallery, New York, NY

2009 *Ingenious Methodology*, Causey Gallery of Contemporary Art, Brooklyn, NY

2007 Hoxie Gallery, Westerly, RI

2007 Crossroads Gallery, Kansas City, MO

2007 *Out of the Darkroom: Kelton Photographers*, Ch'i Contemporary Art, Brooklyn, NY

2007 *Line Drawing*, Queens Library Gallery, Queens, NY

Selected Bibliography

- 2018 Gates, Emily. "Photographs Without Cameras," *The Lakeville Journal*, July 3.
- 2018 Cassidy, Benjamin. "Sohn exhibit reminds that photography doesn't always require a camera," *The Berkshire Eagle*, June 30.
- 2018 Spring, Elin. "Best Photo Picks for Summer 2018," *What Makes It Great?*, online.
- 2018 "9 New Jersey Photographers" Meet-the-Artists & Reception," *Stockton University Online*, March 6.
- 2016 Casper, Jim. "Creating with Light, Chemistry and Imagination; Photographs without a camera by Chuck Kelton." *LensCulture*, June 3.
- 2016 Ollman, Leah. "Chuck Kelton's lush landscapes, crafted in the darkroom." *Los Angeles Times*, May 31.
- 2016 "Artist's Project: Chuck Kelton," *ESPOUS 23*, Winnepeg, CA: The Prolific Group, March.
- 2016 S. Bonnie, "Interview with Master Printer Chuck Kelton." *Onward*, Spring.
- 2015 Vermare, Pauline. "Chuck Kelton and Alison Bradley," *International Center of Photography*, online, December 21.
- 2015 Silverman, Rena. "Hearing and Feeling What Photographers Are Saying." *The New York Times*, March 25.
- 2013 Knoblauch, Loring. "Chuck Kelton & Eric William Carrol, New Photographic Drawings @ Bosi Contemporary," *Collector Daily*, April 15.
- 2013 "Chuck Kelton/Eric William Carroll." *The New Yorker*, March.
- 2013 "Chuck Kelton and Eric William Carroll: New Photographic Drawings," *Musee Magazine*, April 5.
- 2012 Coppelman, Alyssa. "A Look at Ansel Adams' and Sylvia Plachy's Darkroom Tools," *Slate: Behold*, October 22.
- 2011 Meyers, William. "Shining a Light on Loss," *The Wall Street Journal*, August 27.
- 2011 "Chuck Kelton and Go Sugimoto." *The New Yorker*, April.
- 2010 Massara, Kathleen. "Chuck Kelton and Shelton Walsmith Find Cracks in the System," *The L Magazine*, April 19.
- 2010 "Chuck Kelton 'Run From View' Causey Contemporary," *NY Art Beat*.
- 2007 Meyers, William. "Out of One Darkroom, Many," *The New York Sun*, February 22.
- 1982 *Focale*, Bruxelles: Bibliothèque Nationale, Museum Collection, Paris, France

Selected Public Collections

Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris, France
International Center of Photography, New York, NY
The Morgan Library & Museum, New York, NY
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA
The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX
The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, MO
The New York Public Library, New York, NY
Norton Museum of Art, West Palm Beach, FL
Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Santa Barbara, CA

Additional Teaching Positions & Workshops

Anderson Ranch Arts Center, Snowmass Village, CO
Peters Valley Arts Center, Layton, NJ
Photography Workshop for Native American Teens, with Danny Lyon, New Mexico
Project Basho, Philadelphia, PA
University of Wyoming, Laramie, WY
Woodstock Center for Photography, Woodstock, NY