

**LMU NEWS**  
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Contact:

**Victoria Walsh**

Assistant Director, Communications and Media

(310) 338-5133

[vwalsh@lmu.edu](mailto:vwalsh@lmu.edu)

*\*High-res images available upon request*

***Stephen Berkman: Chamber Pieces***

**LABAND ART GALLERY PRESENTS PHOTOGRAPHS AND  
INSTALLATIONS BY ARTIST STEPHEN BERKMAN**

***September 13 – November 23, 2008***



***Opening Reception will be Saturday, Sept. 20, 4 to 6 p.m.***

LOS ANGELES, June 26, 2008 - Loyola Marymount University's Laband Art Gallery will host an exhibition of photographs and installation pieces by the artist Stephen Berkman from September 13 - November 23, 2008.

**Chamber Pieces** will feature a number of Berkman's photographs made using the 19<sup>th</sup>-century wet-collodion photographic process of exposing images onto glass and

tin plates. The experience of viewing one of his photographs is akin to the discovery of a lost world from a bygone era. His intricate compositions convey complex narratives that go far beyond the frame. The exhibition will also present several of Berkman's camera obscura pieces. Using a few, simple tools, such as lenses, spotlights and scrim, Berkman conjures up unexpected, fleeting "objects" created when light and optics converge. Housed in darkened chambers, his camera obscuras invite visitors into realms where transient images play with perceptions of reality. Two of his installations, *A History of Natural History* and *Alternating Eye* were newly created especially for this exhibition. His photographs and camera obscuras will amuse and mystify viewers of the 21<sup>st</sup> century just as optical displays delighted audiences in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Berkman's work revolves around the use of antiquated photographic and optical processes. Berkman exploits the archaic quality of the wet-collodian process, which dates back to the 1850s. His work seeks to refute the notion of history being a closed circuit; instead history is viewed as a work in progress, still receptive to moments of serendipity. In his book *Photography's Antiquarian Avant-Garde* Lyle Rexer states:

Stephen Berkman finds in the ambrotype an opportunity for theatrical fabrication, with history itself as a collaborator. Berkman uses collodion to anchor implausibility and give unreality a historical patina. He stages elaborate tableaux with 19<sup>th</sup>-century characters performing for some obscure purpose.

Berkman's installation work explores the era of pre-chemical photography, both literally and philosophically. While his constructions encompass optical projections and sculptural reinterpretations of the camera obscura, his body of work as a whole examines the intrinsic nature of photography, when it was possible to create fleeting images, but impossible to fix them into permanent photographs. The search to rediscover the temporary nature of pre-photographic history, the scientific interplay of light and optics and the quest for optical amusements, also known as philosophical instruments, are uniquely considered throughout Berkman's work.

For more information and images of his work, please visit Berkman's Web site [www.stephenberkman.com](http://www.stephenberkman.com).

## **PUBLIC PROGRAMS**

In conjunction with the exhibition the Laband will be hosting two public programs:

**Conversation – David Wilson**, founder and director of the Museum of Jurassic Technology, will join **Stephen Berkman** in conversation on Thursday, Oct. 2, 2008 at 7 p.m. in Murphy Hall, Burns Fine Arts Center, Loyola Marymount University.

**Gallery Walkthrough** – Stephen Berkman will take visitors through the exhibition on Thursday Oct. 16, at 12:30 p.m.

## **MORE ABOUT STEPHEN BERKMAN**

Stephen Berkman was born in Syracuse, NY. Now based in Pasadena, Calif., Berkman's work revolves around the use of antiquated photographic and optical processes. His installations and photographs have been exhibited at venues such as MoPA, Museum of Photographic Arts, San Diego; The University Museum, Cal State Long Beach; The Armory Center for the Arts, Pasadena; Stephen Cohen Gallery, Los Angeles; and the Klotz Gallery and Christine Burgin Gallery in New York City. His photographs have been featured in the book *Photography's Antiquarian Avant-Garde, The New Wave in Old Processes* (New York: Abrams, 2002). Other publications include *Blind Spot*, *Art in America*, *i-D*, *Magazine* and the book *The Journal of Contemporary Photography: Strange Genius*. Also included in *Strange Genius* was an essay about Berkman's photographs titled: "The Aura of Relic."

In 2002 Berkman was commissioned to create photographic tintypes in Romania for the feature film "Cold Mountain," directed by Oscar-winning director Anthony Minghella. This work was exhibited at the Museum of Photographic Arts, along with Berkman's series "From Memory." Other notable film commissions include: "The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford," "Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee," "The Fall," and re-creating the Shroud of Turin for the History Channel.

In 2000, Berkman was a visiting artist at the J. Paul Getty Museum. Other projects with the Getty include "Artist Point of View Talks" to accompany the exhibits *Voyages and Visions* and *Julia Margaret Cameron Photographer*. He is also the creator of an

educational video detailing the wet-collodion process for the Getty Web site and art information room.

Currently a member of the film faculty at Art Center College of Design, Berkman received the Great Teacher Award in 1996 and again in 2003. In 2001, 2002, 2003 and 2007 Stephen received an Artist Fellowship Grant from the Pasadena Cultural Affairs Division. He also received an Art Center College of Design Faculty Enrichment Grant in 1999 and 2004. Berkman served for six years on the board of directors of the Pasadena-based arts group AKA New Town. He holds a B.F.A. in film from Art Center College of Design.

### **ABOUT THE LABAND**

The Laband Art Gallery opened in 1984 as part of the Fritz B. Burns Fine Arts Center with a generous gift from Walter and Francine Laband. It is part of Loyola Marymount University's College of Communication and Fine Arts.

### **LABAND ART GALLERY INFORMATION**

For current program and exhibition information, call 310-338-2880 or visit <http://cfa.lmu.edu/laband>.

**Hours:** Wednesday through Sunday, noon to 4 p.m.; closed Mondays and Tuesdays.

**Admission:** Admission is free.

**Location/Parking:** The Gallery is located in the Fritz B. Burns Fine Arts Center on Loyola Marymount University's campus near the intersections of Loyola Boulevard and 80<sup>th</sup> Street in the Westchester section of Los Angeles. Suggested parking is in Hannon Parking Lot A or University Hall. For a map of the school, visit: [www.lmu.edu/maps](http://www.lmu.edu/maps). Please enter the university on LMU Drive off of Lincoln Boulevard. Please check in at the information kiosk for directions to parking and the gallery.

### **\*IMAGE CAPTION**

*The Sharp Shooter and the Song Bird*, ambrotype