



Smithsonian
National Museum of American History
Kenneth E. Behring Center

Guide to the Jan Faul "Potomac :
East and West portfolio of photoprints

NMAH.AC.0441
David Haberstich

1992

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title:	Jan Faul "Potomac : East and West" (portfolio of photoprints)
Identifier:	NMAH.AC.0441
Date:	1991
Extent:	0.3 Cubic feet (1 box)
Creator:	Faul, Jan, 1945-
Language:	English
Summary:	The collection is a set of twenty-four black-and-white silver gelatin prints entitled "Potomac: East and West," by Jan Faul, 1991. They include agricultural landscapes, cemeteries, industrial buildings commercial buildings in rural areas, etc., in the Potomac River region of Washington, D.C., Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia. Each image contains a small area hand-colored by the photographer, providing a subtly mysterious, often whimsical or humorous effect.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Collection donated by Jan Faul, November 13, 1991.

Provenance

The photographs were taken and the prints were made in 1991. This portfolio, number 6 in an edition of 45, was printed especially for donation to the Archives Center.

Location of Originals

Original negatives with Jan Faul.

Processing Information

Collection processed by David Haberstich, 1992.

Preferred Citation

Jan Faul "Potomac East and West" Portfolio, 1991, Archives Center, National Museum of American History. Gift of the artist.

Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

Use and copyright restrictions: all rights retained by the artist. The Museum may exhibit and reproduce photographs in its publications, but cannot make copies or authorize reproduction by others. Contact artist for reproduction arrangements.

Biographical / Historical

Jan Faul was born in Port Chester, New York in 1945. His family moved frequently, living in Washington, D.C., New York, Boston, Denver, Toronto, Strasbourg, and Bern, Switzerland. In Bern he received his first camera as a gift for his fourteenth birthday. He returned to the United States and completed high school in Washington.

In his late teens Faul met Roy Stryker, legendary director of the Farm Security Administration documentary photography project, who suggested that he spend time looking at photographs in the Library of Congress which he did, concentrating on the F.S.A. files. Influenced by his artist parents, Faul studied art history and graphics in college, hoping to become a printmaker, but had begun to support himself with photography by the time he graduated from The George Washington University in 1969.

The "immediacy" of photography and other aesthetic considerations in addition to the financial ones finally led to Faul's abandonment of printmaking and commitment to photography. Since 1970 he has been a self employed photographer, working in landscape, still life, and portraiture. He documented the lives of poor people in the U.S. from July 1970 to March 1971 for the Office of Economic Opportunity. In summer 1971 he photographed scenes of rural poverty for the Appalachian Regional Commission. A grant from the Upjohn Institute for American Labor Studies in 1974 supported his photographic documentation of American workers and changing work habits. In the summer of 1975 he worked for the Smithsonian, portraying the locksmen and pilots of the St. Lawrence Seaway. Further grants and contracts for documentary photography followed, including the 1976 Smithsonian Festival of American Folklife.

Faul moved to Copenhagen, Denmark, in 1979, and there worked on commercial accounts for Esso, Polaroid, and others, while continuing to pursue a variety of personal photographic projects. He returned to the Washington, D.C., area a decade later.

The photographer's career has included commercial work and contractual documentary projects, as well as the sale of photographic prints as art to private collectors and sales and donations to institutions. Fourteen photographs were donated to the Division of Photographic History of this Museum in 1970, and his work is in the collections of the Royal Museum of Art in Denmark, The Library of Congress, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, George Eastman House, the Toledo Museum of Art, the Corcoran Gallery of Art, the Oakland Museum, and others. He has received a number of awards, and has been included in a number of group and solo exhibitions. He has received an artist's residency at Yaddo for 1992 1993. Additional biographical information, including a bibliography, is on file in the Archives Center.

Scope and Contents

The collection is a set of twenty-four black-and-white silver gelatin prints entitled "Potomac: East and West," and is number six in an edition of forty five. The photographs all were taken in 1991 and the prints were made shortly thereafter. The photographs are basically somewhat romantic documentary images of locales in Washington, D.C., Virginia, Maryland, and West Virginia, including landscapes and industrial settings, interiors and exteriors, some of which are apparently abandoned. Human figures are seen only incidentally in several images. Each print has a small area hand colored by the artist, usually adding

subtle humor and/or a hint of mystery. The titles are brief and geographical, and the set is numbered I to XII and XIV to XXV; there is no number XIII, the artist was careful to point out.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged into one series. Sequence arranged by artist: numbered I-XII, XIV-XXV (no number XIII).

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

- Agricultural land -- 1990-2000
- Cemeteries -- 1990-2000
- Commercial buildings -- 1990-2000
- Industrial complexes -- United States
- Industrial towns -- 1990-2000
- Rivers -- 1990-2000 -- United States

Types of Materials:

- Hand coloring
- Landscapes (representations) -- 1990-2000 -- United States
- Manipulated photographs
- Painted photographs
- Photographs -- Black-and-white photoprints -- Silver gelatin -- 1990-2000
- Portfolios (groups of works) -- 1990-2000
- Topographical views

Geographic Names:

- Maryland -- 1980-2000
- Potomac River -- 1990-2000
- Virginia -- 1990-2000
- Washington (D.C.) -- 1990-2000
- West Virginia -- 1990-2000

Container Listing

Box 1, Item 1	"Potomac I." Waterscape with pier.
Box 1, Item 2	"...II. Brunswick." Industrial interior.
Box 1, Item 3	"...III. Indian Head." Church exterior.
Box 1, Item 4	"IV. Marshall Hall." Exterior, Nightingale's Cakes and Catering.
Box 1, Item 5	"V. Hughsville." Industrial interior.
Box 1, Item 6	"VI. La Plata." Interior.
Box 1, Item 7	"VII. Silver Spring." Interior, waiting room?
Box 1, Item 8	"VIII. Indian Head." Reflections in window.
Box 1, Item 9	"IX. Brunswick." Industrial interior.
Box 1, Item 10	"X. Alexandria." Building.
Box 1, Item 11	"XI. Hughsville." Interior of large building.
Box 1, Item 12	"XII. Martinsburg." Roundhouse.
Box 1, Item 13	"XIV. Wash., D.C."
Box 1, Item 14	"XV. Hillsboro." Rural area with stream.
Box 1, Item 15	"XVI. Martinsburg."
Box 1, Item 16	"XVII. Charlotte Hall," Md. Feed and grain store.
Box 1, Item 17	"XVIII. Martinsburg." Roundhouse?
Box 1, Item 18	"XIX. York." Building with chicken coops?
Box 1, Item 19	"XX. Front Royal." Doorway in stadium or bleachers.
Box 1, Item 20	"XXI. Front Royal." Motorcycle with American flags.
Box 1, Item 21	"XXII. Front Royal." Side of building.
Box 1, Item 22	"XXIII. Washington, D.C." "Brice" sculptured funeral monument.
Box 1, Item 23	"XXIV. Wash[ington], D.C." Park bench and cemetery in fog.
Box 1, Item 24	"XXV. High Rock." High angle view of farms and farmland.