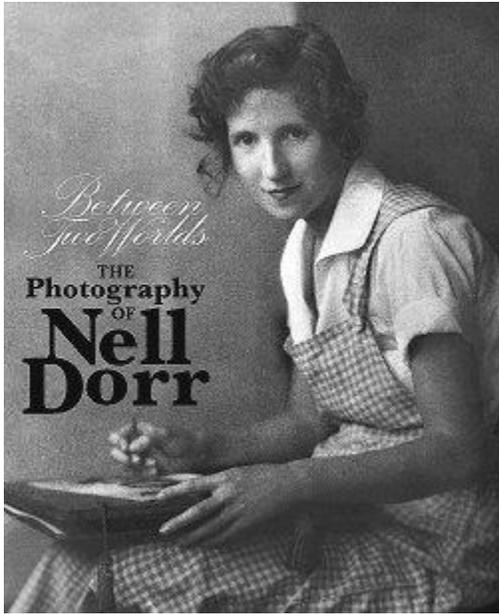


Between Two Worlds: The Photography of Nell Dorr

May 3 to October 31, 2015



This retrospective exhibit, designed by museum volunteer Chris Zaima and constructed by museum volunteers Sandy Booth, Carl Booth, Richard Kleinberg, and Ann Quackenbos, commemorated the 50th anniversary of the Horace Mann School's John Dorr Nature Laboratory in Washington and the 75th anniversary of the Dorr Foundation. Nell Dorr photographs and artifacts from the Massillon Museum in Ohio, the Amon Carter Museum of American Art in Texas, as well as from the community were featured in this show. New touch screen technology was incorporated into the exhibit allowing visitors to watch friends and descendants share their stories about Nell Dorr and the lasting impact she made on their lives and our town. *Between Two Worlds:*

The Photography of Nell Dorr was a traveling exhibition organized by the Massillon Museum. The exhibit and program series were made possible by a grant from the Dorr Foundation.

Nell Dorr, celebrated photographer and Washington resident from 1955 until her death in 1988, is best known for her soft-focus depictions of motherhood, family, and children. She first gained notice for her 1934 exhibition at Delphic Studios in New York City, "Famous Men," which included images of Carl Sandburg and the man who would become her husband, inventor John Van Nostrand Dorr. Her lifelong dear friend, the actress Lillian Gish, provided entree into the world of well-known individuals.

The other side of Dorr's artwork features more imaginary settings, children as fairy-like creatures in beautiful natural settings — sometimes mangrove swamps in Florida, other times New England woodlands. Later she created abstract photograms in her darkroom, creating imaginary scenes often with just the light of a kitchen match to expose the images.

Dorr is best remembered for her images of mothers and their children as recorded in her 1954 book, *Mother and Child*. A year after the publication of *Mother and Child*, Dorr was included in Edward Steichen's landmark photography exhibition, "The Family of Man," at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. She was also one of ten artists included in a 1983 exhibition at the Corcoran Gallery in Washington D.C. that featured great women of photography.

In addition to two editions of *Mother and Child*, Dorr published five other books: *Mangroves: Verse and Photographs* (1933), *In a Blue Moon* (1939), *The Bare Feet* (1962), *Of Night and Day* (1968), and *Life Dance* (1975). In 1955, Dorr and her friend, the well-known children's author Tasha Tudor, created a film, *The Golden Key*.

Take a Virtual Tour of the Exhibit:

<https://s3.us-east-2.amazonaws.com/dorr.panotour.gunnlibrary.org/Index.html>

Past Programs and Special Events Related to Exhibit

[Tour of the Dorr Nature Laboratory](#) | [Lecture on the History of Photography](#) | [Women Photographers Film Series](#) | [Juried Photography Competition](#) | [Lecture on Nell Dorr](#) | [Photograph & Camera Appraisal Day](#) | [Art Themed Washington Cemetery Tour](#)

Walking Tour of John Dorr Nature Laboratory — June 13, 2015

Glenn Sherratt, Director of the John Dorr Nature Laboratory, led a walking tour of the campus as part of the 11th Annual Connecticut Open House Day, a one-day celebration of the state's fascinating world of art, history, film and tourism, with over 200 organizations throughout Connecticut opening their doors and offering special programs.



The John Dorr Nature Laboratory, in Washington, Connecticut, is one of the four campuses of the Horace Mann School, an independent day school in New York City. In 1964, Nell Dorr gave the school 83 acres of land in memory of her husband, John Dorr. The Dorr Nature Lab, a LEED Gold, energy-conserving facility, is now comprised of 275 acres and is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year.

The idea of an outdoor campus was the inspiration of Dr. Mitchell Gratwick, long-time head of school at Horace Mann, and John Dorr, a personal friend of Dr. Gratwick. Moved by the ancient Greek adage "character is worth", Dr. Gratwick believed that it was the duty of schools to provide experiences inside and outside the traditional classroom, that nurture a sense of personal worth and responsibility, and an appreciation of the natural world.

The Dorr Laboratory is a place that uses the rhythm of the seasons to help students from second grade through high school explore changes in themselves and the world around

them. This setting becomes a medium for students' self-discovery, and through which they can examine their relationships with others, and study the natural environment in growth enhancing ways.

Participants met at the Gunn Museum for a guided tour of the exhibit "Between Two Worlds: The Photography of Nell Dorr," and were then bused to the Dorr Nature Laboratory for a one hour walking tour of their campus buildings and grounds. They learned about the history of the Dorr Nature Laboratory and the diverse activities that take place there. The bus brought participants back to the Gunn Museum.

The History of Photography — June 30, 2015



Bill Quinnell, retired professor and director of the Photography Program at Western Connecticut State University, gave a free presentation on the history of photography from its inception in 1827 to 1905, in the Wykeham Room of the Gunn Library.

The history of photography has roots in remote antiquity with the discovery of the principle of the camera obscura and the observation that some substances are visibly altered by exposure to light. As far as is known, nobody thought of bringing these two phenomena together to capture camera images in permanent form until around 1800,

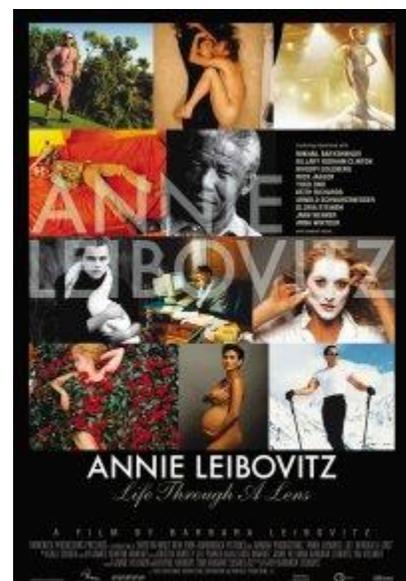
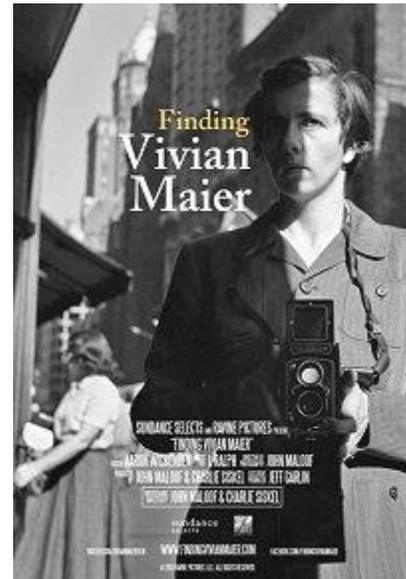
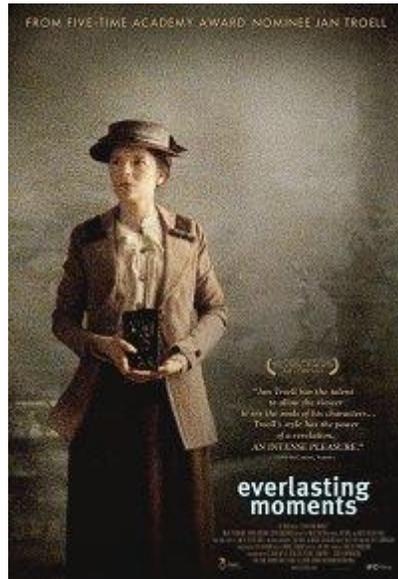
when Thomas Wedgwood made the first reliably documented — although unsuccessful — attempt. In the mid-1820s, Nicéphore Niépce succeeded, but several days of exposure in the camera were required and the earliest results were very crude. Niépce's associate, Louis Daguerre, went on to develop the daguerreotype process, the first publicly announced photographic process, which required only minutes of exposure in the camera and produced clear, finely detailed results. It was commercially introduced in 1839, a date generally accepted as the birth year of practical photography.

Bill Quinnell is a professional photographer and was the head of the Photography Program in the Art Department at Western Connecticut State University in Danbury, where he was employed for 33 years before his retirement in 2003. Bill has a MFA in Photography from the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, NY and has participated in numerous solo and group exhibitions. Among Bill's many interests are boxing and boxers, which he spent four years documenting through his photography in the early 2000s. He is presently the owner of Quinnell Photographic Studios in New Milford and specializes in shooting weddings.

**Celebrating
Women
Photographers
Film Series —
Mondays in July &
August, 2015**

In support of the exhibit "Between Two Worlds: The Photography of Nell Dorr", a film series focusing on women photographers was shown Mondays at 1:00 p.m. in the Wykeham Room of the Gunn Memorial Library. Nell Dorr was one of the most spiritual and empathetic photographic artists of the twentieth century. Each of the four films explores the spirit and creativity of other female photographers.

- **Monday, July 13 — Everlasting Moments**



Swedish film director Jan Troell (*The Emigrants*, *The New Land*) has made an extraordinary film about a brave and creative working-class housewife who keeps her soul alive through learning the art of photography. The drama charts her resiliency in the face of staggering odds and setbacks as her creativity shines and gives her a keen sense of personal satisfaction and fulfillment. *Color, Unrated, 131 minutes.*

- **Monday, July 27 — Finding Vivian Maier**

Now considered one of the 20th century's greatest street photographers; Vivian Maier was a mysterious nanny who secretly took over 100,000 photographs that went unseen during her lifetime. Vivian's strange and riveting life and art are

- revealed through never-before-seen photos, films, and interviews with dozens who thought they knew her. *Color, Not Rated, 83 minutes.*
- **Monday, August 10 — Fur: An Imaginary Portrait of Diane Arbus**
Turning her back on her wealthy, established family, Diane Arbus falls in with Lionel Sweeney. He is an enigmatic mentor who introduces Arbus to the marginalized people who help her become one of the most revered photographers of the twentieth century. Diane's strange, new world unlocks her deepest secrets, awakens her remarkable artistic genius, and launches her path to becoming the artist she is meant to be. *Color, Rated R, 122 minutes.*
 - **Monday, August 24 — Annie Leibovitz: Life Through a Lens**
Traces the artistic self-realization of Annie Leibovitz, from childhood (born and raised in Waterbury, CT) through the death of her beloved friend, Susan Sontag, and includes snippets of Leibovitz's last visual memories of Sontag. The film traces the arc of her photographic life, her aspirations to artistry, and the trajectory of her career through phases that included the tumultuous sixties in Berkeley, CA, touring with the Rolling Stones, a mentorship by Hunter S. Thompson, and, later, capturing the last candid moments of John Lennon's life with Yoko Ono. It closes with her reflections on life, children, and the wake of her relationship with Sontag. The archival material presented is invaluable for framing an understanding of this immeasurably influential visual artist. *Color, Not rated, 83 minutes.*

One hour before and after each screening the Nell Dorr Photography exhibit was open for viewing in the Museum where refreshments were served.

**The Gunn Museum's Black & White Photography Competition —
Exhibited in the Library's Stairwell Gallery, August 8 through September 19, 2015**

The Gunn Museum's Black & White Photography Competition was selected by a panel of judges, and hung at the Gunn Library's Stairwell Gallery. Awards were announced at the opening. The judges were Wendy Carlson, Judith Petrovich, and Kathryn McCarver Root.

Wendy Carlson is a Connecticut-based writer and photographer whose award-winning editorial work has been published in a variety of national magazines and newspapers, including *The New York Times*, *Town and Country*, *Bon Appetit*, *Traditional Home*, *Renovation Style*, *Victoria*, *VW Driver*, *Yankee* and others. Her corporate work includes clients in the fields of medicine, health, education and green living. Wendy has traveled to Russia to document the work of American medical teams for Healing the Children, and photographed the Irish countryside from the back of horse. In the United States, she founded 50 Women, an interactive photo exhibit on women cancer survivors that is being published into a book. She is also working on "Lives Well Lived," a project documenting aging in America.



Photograph by Nell Dorr

Judith Petrovich is a Washington, Connecticut photographer who holds a B.A. in Art History from the University of Illinois. She studied at the International Center for Photography in New York City from 1978-81. Judith started working as a photo journalist for The Litchfield County Times newspaper in 1986 and left as Chief Photographer in 2002. Presently, she is a free-lance photographer. Her works have been shown locally at the Washington Art Association, New Arts Gallery 10th Anniversary Show, the Paris-New York-Kent Gallery, and the Minor Memorial Library Gallery.

Kathryn McCarver Root is a gallerist and dealer specializing in fine art photography. McCarver Root opened [KMR Arts](#) in Washington Depot, Connecticut in 2007. The gallery showcases both vintage and contemporary photography from the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries, presented in a non-traditional gallery environment. KMR Arts celebrated its 5th year anniversary in 2012 with a momentous exhibit of vintage prints by Diane Arbus, a hugely influential photographer known for her darkly beautiful images. KMR Arts has exhibited photography by such masters as Ansel Adams, Paul Caponigro, Sally Mann, Elliott Erwitt, Saul Leiter, Lillian Bassman, and Horst P. Horst among others. McCarver Root gained her experience over two decades in New York City while working as a photography editor for books (Lillian Bassman, Bulfinch, Weekend Retreats, Rizzoli) and prestigious magazines (Esquire, US Weekly, and InStyle).

The enthusiastic public response to the Museum's request for black and white photograph entries resulted in over 150 submissions to the competition. This large number necessitated that only one photo from each of the 50-plus photographers could be shown in the exhibition. First Place was awarded to Michael Frohne of Roxbury and his "Sir Dotsalot"; second place to "Paris Cityscape" by Michael Bowman of Washington; third place went to an untitled photo by Lisa Mahar of Washington; and fourth place went to "Shear Avoidance" by Raymond Kwiatkoski of Roxbury.

The Gunn wishes to thank Museum volunteer Chris Zaima for hanging the photo exhibit and judges Wendy Carlson, Judith Petrovich and Kathy McCarver Root for lending their photography expertise to the awards selection.

Nell's Magic World — September 18, 2015

Alexandra Nicholis Coon gave a special presentation on Nell Dorr's career, from Massillon, Ohio to the Mangroves of the Florida Keys and beyond. Although she has a place in the history of photography, Dorr never desired fame nor commercialization of her work. Her nonconformist nature and secluded lifestyle left her name little-known in the larger story of the medium; yet her story is one worth telling. Referencing images from the Gunn Museum's exhibition, the presentation illustrated ways in which Nell Dorr used photography to create a poetic and personal visual language, the beauty of which still resonates in present day.

Alexandra Nicholis Coon is the Executive Director for the Massillon Museum. She received her Master's in Art History from Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, a B.A. in Art History from Kent State University, and has a Collections Care certificate from the Campbell Center for Historic Preservation. She has been with MassMu since 2001, and served as Curator for the Museum from 2003-2010. Nicholis Coon was adjunct faculty for Walsh University from 2006-2011, having taught art history and museum studies courses, and is a member of the University's advisory board. She has curated a number of photography-themed exhibitions, including *Darkrooms in a Digital Age* (2007) and *Faces of Rural America* (2011).



Nell Dorr by Lucia Nebel White



Photograph and Camera Appraisal — October 4, 2015

A free photograph and camera appraisal event was held in the Wykeham Room of the Gunn Library and Museum. Registration was required to participate in this free program.

Kathryn McCarver Root and Randy Carlson verbally appraised participants' vintage photographs and cameras, respectively, for estimated age and value.

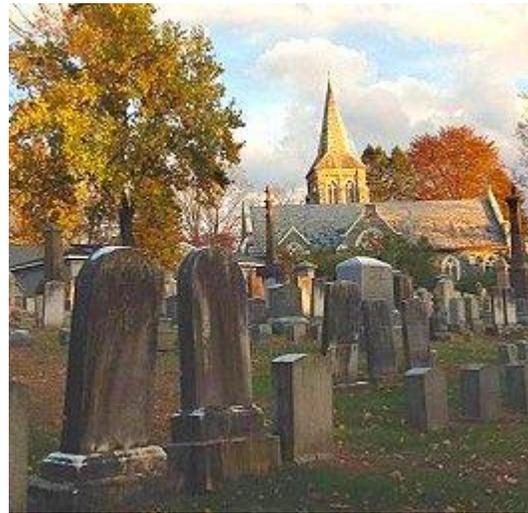
All pre-registered participants were welcome to bring their items in for our experts to identify, and watch this Antiques Road Show-like event.

Randy Carlson is a long time collector and dealer of vintage cameras and equipment, and the owner of [The Photo Shop](#) in Torrington. Kathryn McCarver Root is a gallerist and

dealer specializing in fine art photography, and the owner of [KMR Arts](#) in Washington Depot.

8th Annual Washington Green Cemetery Tour - "Arts" Theme — October 30, 2015

This year we celebrated the artistic people who have called Washington home over the centuries. Costumed tour guides led groups of visitors from the Gunn Museum to the Washington Green Cemetery where the town's departed citizens were stationed at their graves to tell their tales of tragedy and triumph. Tour groups followed a magical path of 1,000 luminarias spanning a quarter-mile through the shadowy cemetery and heard the lively and dramatic stories of Washington's artistic residents. This year the costumed character actors stationed at gravestones represented Washington's most illustrious artists, actors, musicians, and authors, and shared their perilous tales of unrequited love, extravagant lives lived, travels around the world, escape from the Soviets and Nazis, early demise, and much more.



New this year, the last stop on the cemetery tour was St. John's Episcopal Church transformed into a very scary haunted place with spooky organ music and ghostly stories. Afterwards everyone was invited to a BOO Feast at the Church with frightening food, punch from a bubbly cauldron, ghoulish cakes and treats!

Attendees met at the Gunn Historical Museum and formed a line to get numbered tickets for the tours, on a first-come first-serve basis, **starting at 6:15 p.m.** and through the evening until the tickets ran out. Tours of the cemetery departed from the Gunn Museum in groups of fifteen people every eight minutes between 6:30-8:30 p.m. and lasted approximately 45 minutes. A Halloween themed movie was shown in the Wykeham Room of the Gunn Library where attendees waited inside for their tour group to depart. The exhibit, "Between Two Worlds: The Photography of Nell Dorr", was also be open for viewing in the Gunn Museum.

We would like to thank the numerous and talented volunteer tour guides, as well as those who helped set-up and clean-up! Students could also earn community service hours by volunteering for the Cemetery Tour.