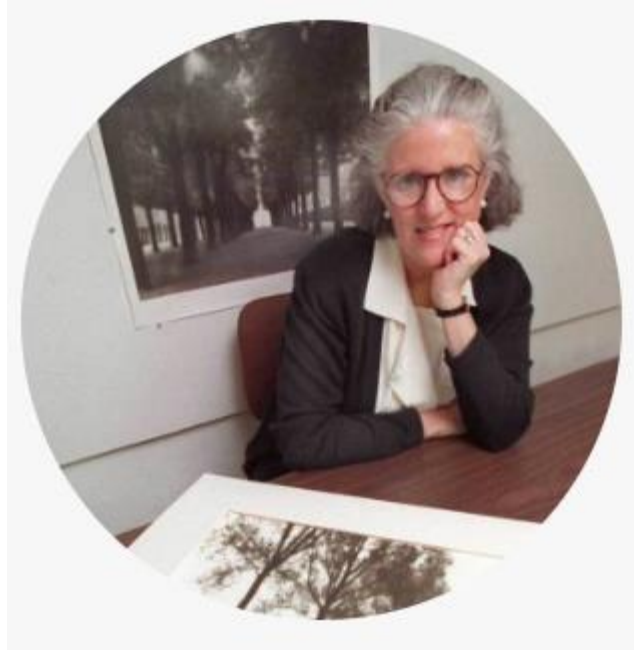


#94 November 2024 Cameraderie
Lynn Geesaman (1938-2020)



I get requests from club members—not often enough—to write articles on photographers that impress them. This is one such, and I am happy to do more if you just write to me with your requests, at sflevitas@gmail.com.

Lynn Geesaman has an interesting place in photography. She specialized in one thing: garden images in the United States and Europe with light and airy blurring created by her printing technique. Her work has been displayed in several gallery shows, and has been collected by the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Art Institute of Chicago, and the Museum of Contemporary Photography.

The Yancey Richardson Gallery in New York City has extensive artist biographies on their website (<https://www.yanceyrichardson.com/artists>). Here is some of what they have to say about Geesamen:

This tension between abstraction and representation is present in much of her work, and is achieved partly through her specific printing technique. This process intensifies the color and gives her photographs a soft, almost out of focus, quality, which also evokes the early Pictorialist photographers. Through these dreamlike presentations, the artist taps into the emotional undercurrent that connects her to each of the places she photographs, offsetting the initial, highly formal look of the work. Through her particular use of color and light, Geesaman creates a tension between the highly structured landscapes and their illusory, or otherworldly, nature.

Here are several samples of Geesaman's work:

Parc de Sceaux, near Paris, France, 1997, Chromogenic Print



Note that the print type is “chromogenic.” Here is some information from the Wikipedia website on chromogenic printing (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chromogenic_print).

A chromogenic print, also known as a C-print or C-type print, a silver halide print, or a dye coupler print, is a photographic print made from a color negative, transparency or digital image, and developed using a chromogenic process. They are composed of three layers of gelatin, each containing an emulsion of silver halide, which is used as a light-sensitive material, and a different dye coupler of subtractive color which together, when developed, form a full-color image. Notwithstanding the success of chromogenic prints in the amateur and professional market, it wasn't considered a medium for fine-art photography up to the 1970s. The pioneers in the use of chromogenic prints and in the use of color photography as a whole in fine-art were photographers such as Ernst Haas, which was profiled by the Museum of Modern Art in its first exhibition of color photography in 1962. Other pioneering fine-art color photographers who printed their photographs on chromogenic prints include William Eggleston [#90, April 2024] and Stephen Shore [#89, Jan. 2024]. Their works, and those of many others, caused chromogenic prints to become the preferred medium for contemporary photography by the 1990s.

Damme, Belgium, 2004



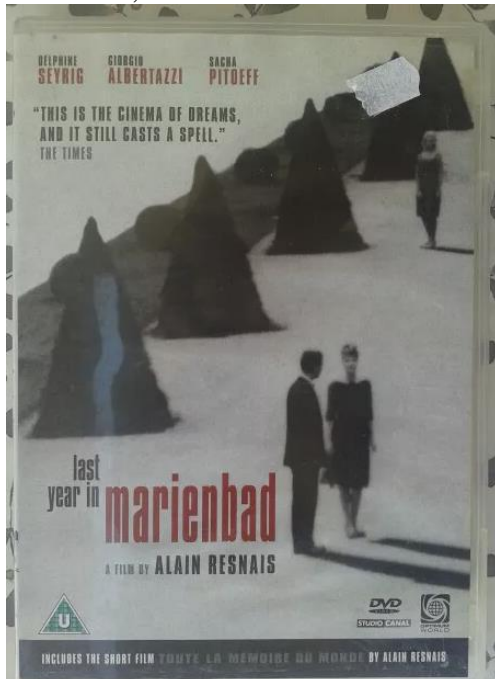
This is from a black and white series.

Parc de Sceaux, 2008



This is the same park as in the first photo, but eleven years later. Evidently, Geesaman loved visiting this park.

This may be a stretch, but I like making connections between art forms: who remembers the 1961 film, *Last Year at Marienbad*? Here is a still, advertising a reprint of it:



Note this famous surrealist film image. The people cast shadows, but the bushes do not. I cannot say if Geesaman is referencing the film. Of course there were many gardens and parks in France with this sort of trimmed bush. But Geesaman was of the right age to have the memory of this film.