



Silver Eye Center for Photography
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Discover Paris in Pittsburgh – Photographs of *La Seine* River by Parisian Bruno Réquillart on View at Silver Eye

(Pittsburgh, PA) Silver Eye Center for Photography proudly presents *Paris on the Seine: Photographs by Bruno Réquillart* on view **February 21 – May 26, 2007**. This exhibition features contemporary panoramic black-and-white prints of the riverbanks of *La Seine* by Parisian photographer **Bruno Réquillart**. See these gorgeous silver gelatin photographs and vicariously travel to the most visited city in the world. The images reveal buildings, barges and more trees than we ever expected to find there. This exhibition conjures up interesting visual parallels between Pittsburgh and Paris and the waterways that have been vital to both cities.

The **Artist's Reception** will take place on Saturday, February 24, 4:00 – 6:00 p.m. 1015 East Carson Street, South Side. Silver Eye Members, \$5.00; Non-members, \$7.00. Hors d'œuvres kindly provided by Le Pommier Bistro Français.

Paris on the Seine: Photographs by Bruno Réquillart is an exhibition of 50 photographs curated by Linda Benedict-Jones, executive director of Silver Eye Center for Photography. Réquillart has photographed the Seine, the major river in north-western France for the past seven years with a HasselBlad XPan, 24 x 65, a rangefinder camera that allows the creation of panoramic photographs. Réquillart prints his own silver gelatin photographs himself on fibre-based paper. While this approach was standard throughout most of the 20th Century, it is now rare to find photographers who work in a non-digital format.

In the field of photography, no city is more important than Paris which is where Louis Jacques Mandé Daguerre first demonstrated the *daguerreotype* along the banks of the Seine river, signaling the birth of photography in 1839. Photographic visionaries of the 20th Century include Eugène Atget, Brassai, Henri Cartier-Bresson, Robert Doisneau, André Kertész, and Jacques Henri Lartigue among many others. Bruno Réquillart continues that photographic legacy today in a formally innovative way.

The Seine is a tourist attraction, especially in Paris, but the river is also a commercial waterway. It is this duality that Réquillart captures in this series of contemporary prints. From barges and bridges to trees and bookstalls, Réquillart is able to capture all aspects of life on the second longest river in France. In the photograph, *Eiffel Tower, Seen from the Avenue du Président-Kennedy, November 11, 2005*, the landmark symbol of Paris is obscured by branches and leaves, yet there is no doubt of the identity of the structure hidden behind the foliage. Réquillart is able to bring new light to well-known sights. Linda Benedict-Jones explains, "We know well the shape of the Eiffel Tower and Notre Dame Cathedral. Through the lens of Bruno Réquillart, however, we see them both, and other familiar scenes, from a new perspective. We discover trees that curiously exude personality; barges of coal that challenge the stately buildings behind them; bookstalls whose contents gently mirror the architecture; and occasional joggers and sunbathers who remind us which era we're witnessing. These new images of this beloved city all take place along banks of the Seine, the great river that flows through Paris."

Réquillart's images are inviting and intimate—both in scale and subject matter. Yet, they are also formalist pieces that rely heavily on line, texture and composition. In his artist statement Réquillart explains, “What always interested me about photography is the possibility—thanks to composition within the viewfinder—of juxtaposing or extracting various elements and planes. So, through the encounter of these pieces of reality, I hope to create a ‘new world’ in which I can recognize myself. The entire art of photography is in this chosen and reconstructed real.”

The mental image we have of Paris is well-known due to the countless images shown in films, posters and books. Bruno Réquillart is able to enhance the familiar by documenting from a new perspective on the riverbanks of the Seine.

About the artist:

The artistic evolution of Bruno Réquillart is unconventional.

Born on December 30, 1947 in Marcq-en-Baroeul in the north of France, he began photographing around 1968 when he was a student of graphic arts and communication. In 1980, while he was represented by the Zabriskie Gallery in Paris and had many exhibition opportunities, he completely stopped photographing in favor of painting. He took up photography again in 2000.

His first photographic period (1968 – 1979) is divided into three parts: Initially there were photographs of theatre and dance as well as documentary images of the social movements of the 70s. Little by little, he refined his photographic vision and, influenced by conceptual art, he made “realizations” (constats) as a series or a sequence on subjects that were considered to be without interest (urban landscape, trashcans, signs, etc.) Later, in contrast, he became interested in formal studies and structural rigor and made his best-known images that play with the relationship between space and surface (The Diver, 1974, and the Versailles series, 1977).

Demanding and rigorous in his working method, he established rules for each series. Photographing for himself alone, he remained on the margins of the established art world market. However, his work was part of the rebirth of French photography in the 70s.

Taking up photography again, after 20 years of not having made a single exposure, he decided to photograph the places where he lives, Paris and Pavia in Portugal. After a year of trial and error with 35mm film, he chose a panoramic format. The series that is presented here, La Seine, is part of this new work.

- From the French Ministry of Culture, 2006.

To request an interview with Bruno Réquillart or to request a CD with images, please call Amanda Bloomfield at 412/431.1810, Ext. 12.

Programming in conjunction with this exhibition includes a free talk on **Living French in Pittsburgh** on March 22, 7:00 p.m., a **French Wine Tasting** with Bruce May, wine critic of

Pittsburgh Magazine on May 2, 7:00 p.m. and a **South Side Photography Riverwalk** on May 12, 9:00 a.m. – Noon. A complete list of programs is enclosed.

Funding for *Paris on the Seine* is provided by The Pittsburgh Foundation, The Heinz Endowments, and Department of Modern Languages, Carnegie Mellon University. Broadcast media sponsorship is kindly provided by WYEP/91.3FM.

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The mission of Silver Eye Center for Photography is to serve the public through exposure to a wide range of work by locally, nationally and internationally recognized photographers. A Pittsburgh institution since 1985, Silver Eye Center for Photography is the oldest non-profit organization in Western Pennsylvania dedicated solely to the understanding, appreciation, education, and promotion of photography as an art form and as an expressive form of visual communication.

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Gallery Hours:
Wednesday, Friday & Saturday,
Noon – 5:00 p.m.
Thursday, Noon – 9:00 p.m.

ADMISSION IS FREE

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