JAN FAUL "POTOMAC: EAST AND WEST" PHOTOPRINTS, 1991
1 Flat Oversize Box
0.3 cu. ft.

CONTAINER LIST

24 silver gelatin photoprints, unmounted, unmatted, on 16" x 20" paper, with small amounts of hand coloring. All signed, titled and numbered in ink in margin, "Potomac" on all. Note: number "XIII" was omitted from the series by the photographer.

2. "...II. Brunswick." Industrial interior.
3. "...III. Indian Head." Church exterior.
5. "V. Hughsville." Industrial interior.
7. "VII. Silver Spring." Interior, waiting room?
8. "VIII. Indian Head." Reflections in window.
13. "XIV. Wash., D.C."
15. "XVI. Martinsburg."
17. "XVIII. Martinsburg." Roundhouse?
18. "XIX. York." Building with chicken coops?
19. "XX. Front Royal." Doorway in stadium or bleachers.
20. "XXI. Front Royal." Motorcycle with American flags.
23. "XXIV. Wash[ington], D.C." Park bench and cemetery in fog.
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Biography

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, Strasbour, 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

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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 Content

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.

Provenance

This suite of prints essentially was created for donation to the Archives Center by the artist in 1991, and the material has not been in anyone else's possession.
D. Haberstich: 1/8/92: WWPPC1033