

Wo die Schlange wohnt. „Eden“ von Paul Cava.

Foto: Edition Galerie Vevasi

Sing mir meines Leibes Lied

Bis heute hat kein Dichter den menschlichen Körper so zum Gegenstand seiner Verse gemacht wie er. Walt Whitman (1819-1892), der Begründer der modernen amerikanischen Lyrik, besang ihn bis ins fernste Pochen. „Die Lungen schwämme, der Magensack, die Eingeweide vital und rein, / die Schädelhöhle und in ihr mit seinen Windungen das Hirn, / Sympathikus, Herzklappen, Gaumenklappe, Sexualität, Mutter schaft“ – alles diente ihm in seiner berühmten Hymne „I sing the body electric“ dazu, die Vorstellung von der Seele aus Leibliche zu binden. Der Berliner Schriftsteller Kai Grein hat sie, wie den gesamten Zyklus „Children of Adam“, der wiederum Bestandteil

des mehrmals revidierten Whitmanschen Lebenswerks „Leaves of Grass – Grashalme“ ist, für einen zweisprachigen Bildband des amerikanischen Künstlers Paul Cava neu übertragen. Der in Philadelphia lebende Hightech-Pionier verbindet in seinen Arbeiten Fotografie, Malerei und digitale Nachbearbeitung – und er verleiht dem erotischen Grundklang von Whitmans Dichtung einen offen sexuellen Ton.

GREGOR DOTZAUER

— Walt Whitman, Paul Cava: *Kinder Adams aus Grashalme*. Aus dem Amerikanischen von Kai Grein. Herausgegeben von Alexander Scholz. Edition Galerie Vevasi, Vevasi 2005. 176 Seiten, 79 €.

Bertina H.

»Children of Adam«

Gedichte von Walt Whitman, vom amerikanischen Künstler Paul Cava fotografisch interpretiert

Wir haben uns daran gewöhnt, daß auch Bildbände den Kriterien immer kürzerer Halbwertzeiten unterliegen. Ein Band folgt dem nächsten, unter Ankündigung noch spektakulärerer Fotos, noch besser ausgeleuchteter Einsichten, noch tieferer Schlagschatten, während der vormals so gepriesene das Schicksal einer versta-

berden Existenz auf dem obersten Regalbrett der heimischen Sammlung erduldet. Andere fristen ihr ungelesenes, unberührtes Dasein als großformatige Dekoration auf dem Couchtisch, sodaß man nicht nur das Lesen, sondern auch das kundige Sehen und Schauen für eine überlebte Tätigkeit halten muß. Das Schicksal großformatiger Foto- und Bildbände

ist also zweifellos ein beklagenswertes. Nur wenige Editionen überdauern diesen Strom des Vergessens. Die in der Übertragung von Kai Grehn neu edierte, zweisprachige Ausgabe der »Children of Adam / Kinder Adams« aus der Gedichtsammlung »Leaves of Grass / Grashalme« von Walt Whitman wird zweifellos dazugehören. Und dies vor allem durch die Verbindung der Verse Whitmans mit den fotografisch-künstlerischen Arbeiten Paul Cavas.

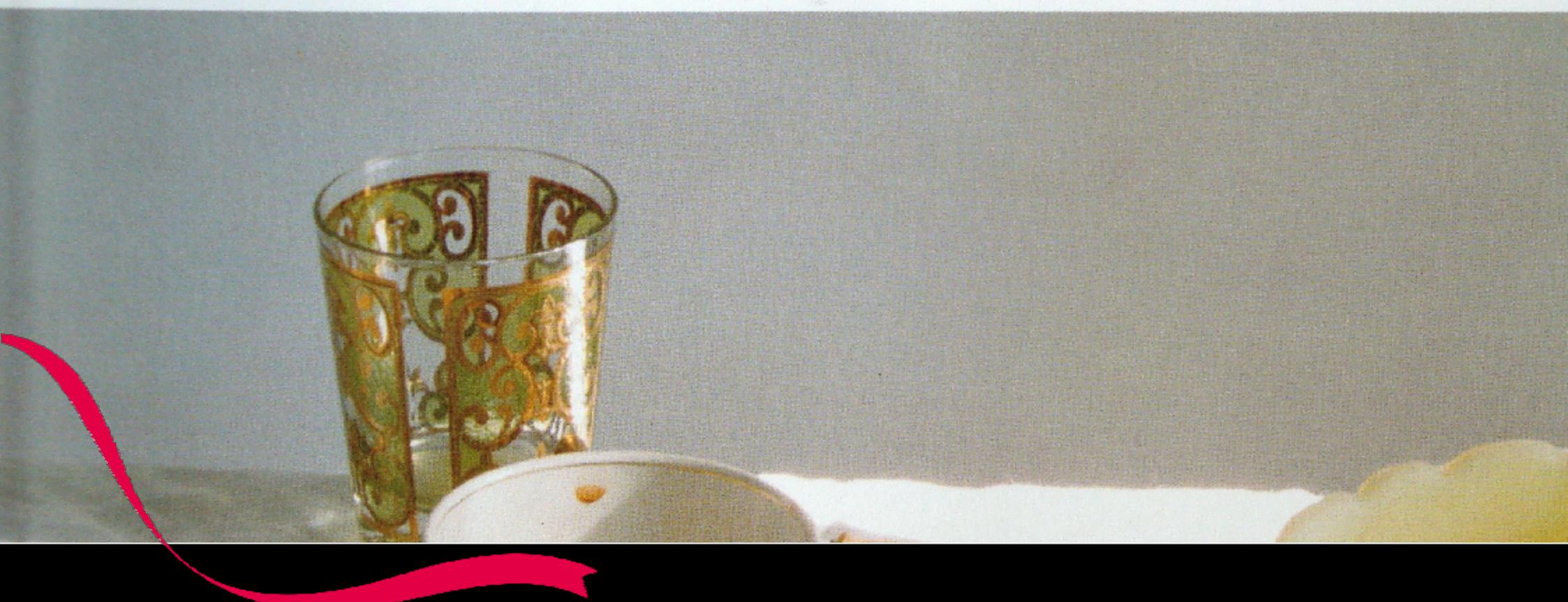
Zwischen begeisterter Zustimmung und befremdeter Ablehnung scheint jede Reaktion auf den Counterpart eines der eigenwilligsten zeitgenössischen Fotografen denkbar. Doch eines ist sicher: Gleichgültig läßt dieser Versuch eines künstlerischen Zwiegesprächs in dieser so reizvollen Verbindung aus Foto- und Textband nicht.

Cava verbindet in seinen »illustrierenden« Arbeiten Fotografien mit nichtfotografischen Medien wie Malerei, Bleistiftzeichnungen und unterschiedlichsten Drucktechniken, dabei die Grenzen des Pornographischen nicht nur streifend, doch nicht um der Provokation willen, sondern als augenlustgestärktes Initiationsangebot an den Text Walt Whitmans. Das mag den großen alten Mann der amerikanischen Lyrik im Grabe so unruhig werden lassen, wie es der puritanische Boden eben zuläßt, es eröffnet doch eine korrespondierende Perspektive, die nicht ohne Reiz für das so oft aufs Eingängig-Verständliche runtergerechnete seiner Verse bleibt. Und das Whitman'sche Prinzip der literarisch versierten

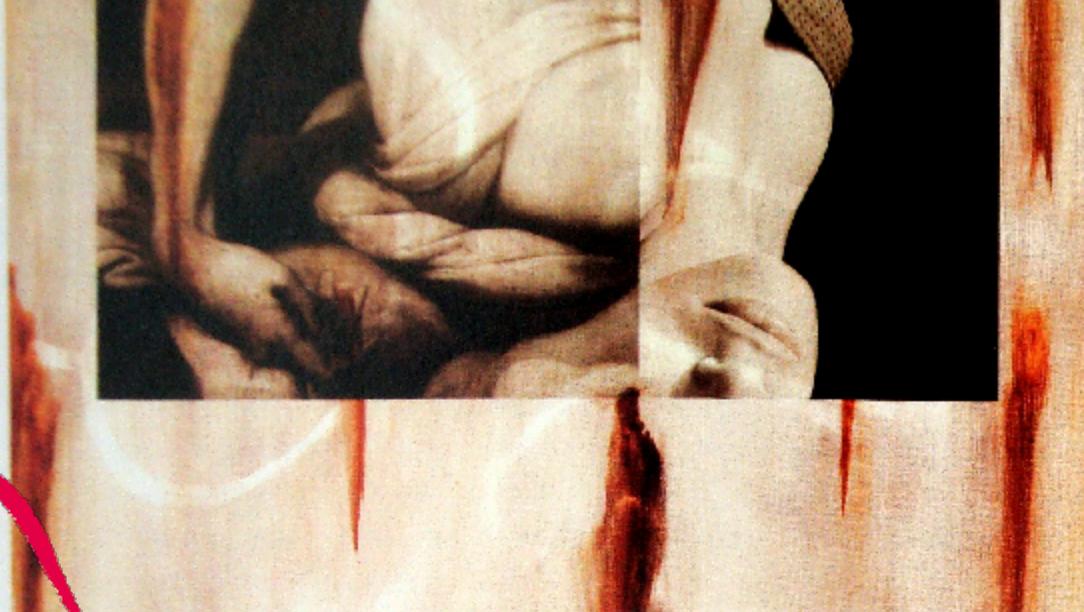


An einem strahlenden Tag in einem französischen Teil der Riviera am 17. August 1902 in der einsamen Strandstadt Le Lavandou. Darauf hat das griechische Schachspiel nur gewartet. Sie hat nun nichts zu machen und das Bademantel-Fegen passiert ein kleines Ereignis: was auf den Boden fallen. Eine kleine Holzfigur auf. Als sie vor einem Schachbrett weiße Figuren aufgestellt, die Partie war unterbrochen worden. Es war eine kleine schwangere Frau. Sie zögerte und wollte ihren Platz zurückstehen, aber nicht, wo sie hingeblieben war. Überall standen die gleichen Figuren herum. Mit ihrer Holzfigur in der Hand starre sie auf das Schachbrett und suchte eine Logik.

Aus dieser winzigen Unschuld entwickelt die Autorin Bertina Henrichs in ihrem Debütroman »Die Schachspielerin« eine zaubernde Geschichte, die überraschend verläuft wie eine antike Inselörtchen. Sie ist eine idyllische Landschaft, bevölkert von einfachen Landsleuten und ge-



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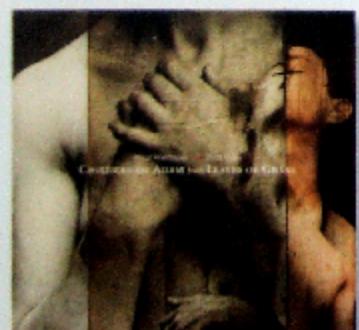


From *Children of Adam*, by Paul Cava

Paul Cava | Children of Adam

**PHOTOGRAPHS AND ARTWORK BY PAUL CAVA.
POEMS BY WALT WHITMAN. PREFACE BY JOHN WOOD.
AFTERWORD BY ARDEN.**

Edition Galerie Vevais, 2005. Designed by Alexander Scholz. Printed by Mairs Graphische Betriebe. Clothbound with photo-illustrated dustjacket or softbound. 176 pp., 24 (25 in the hard-bound version) six-color reproductions with 4 double-page gatefolds, 11 x 12 \$129.00/\$69.00



In this beautifully crafted monograph, Paul Cava illustrates Walt Whitman's "Children of Adam" cycle from *Leaves of Grass*. As a poem, *Leaves of Grass* rejoices in the possibilities of life and the details of the world; this is the book that Bill Clinton gave to Monica Lewinski after all. The "Children

works, containing beautifully arched bodies juxtaposed with love letters and natural elements, emphasize the possibilities of human love and share Whitman's belief that man can be reborn through the ecstatic glorification of the body. In his photographs, vines take root in genitalia, bodies meld into each other, wounds and mouths reveal pathways into the body. A particularly powerful piece features a closely cropped and upside-down Eve figure holding fruit in her hand and placed opposite a right-side-up Christ figure with a wound in his side that resembles both Eve's hips and female genitalia. Mary's hand visibly supports Christ in *pieta*, placed at the same height as Eve's hand holding the fruit, creating the feel of a unified body. The background of wood and blood brings together two symbolic elements important to both figures, but on opposite ends of the spectrum. In this photograph, Cava, like Whitman, turns puritan ideas of chastity and sin literally upside down. In doing so, he collapses binary definitions of sacred and profane, man

Photo collages with a touch of eroticism

By Edward J. Sozanski
INQUIRER ART CRITIC

Even during the years when he ran one of Philadelphia's most stimulating galleries, Paul Cava was immersed in photography and photo-based art. This proclivity expresses itself beautifully in an exhibition of his work at Gallery 339.

The show presents 27 collage-style images that combine photographs with visual and text elements.

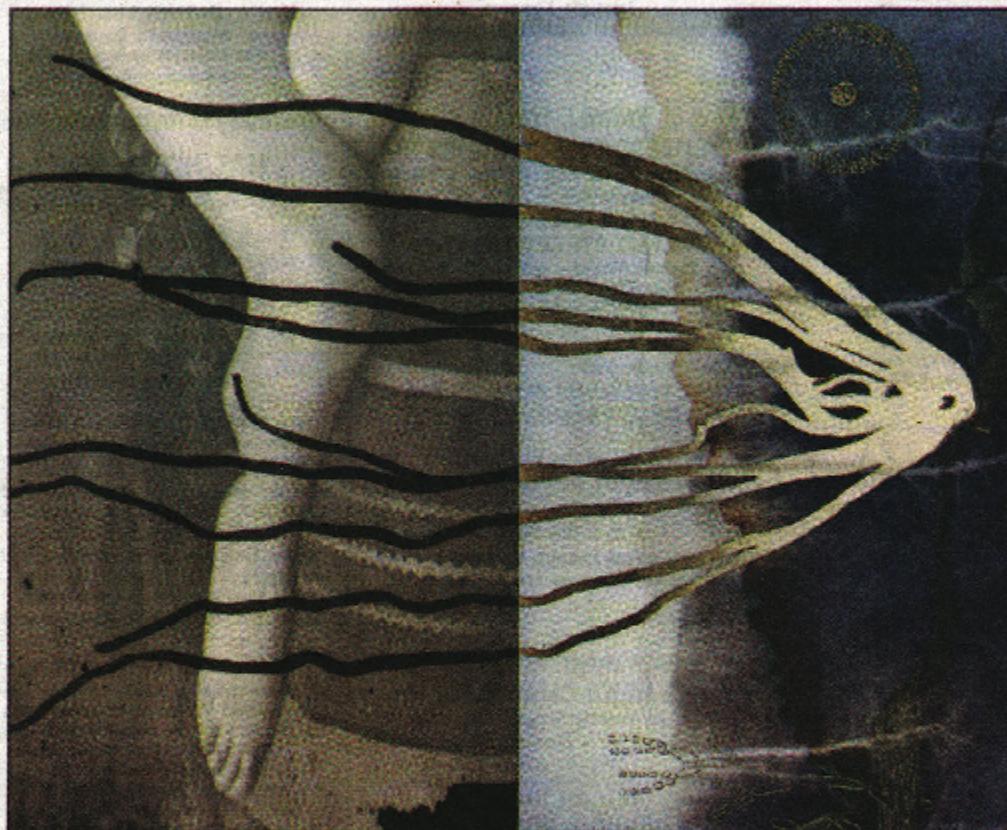
The photos are both anonymously antique and Cava's own. Many are mildly erotic, or at least strongly suggestive of physical love.

Such images fit comfortably into the book *Children of Adam*, which combines Cava's work with poems from Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*. The 176-page, limited-edition volume was published bilingually in Germany by Galerie Vevais.

Cava's blendings of graphic media typically combine a nude, or several in conjunction, with images from nature such as plants, birds or creatures that resemble marine organisms. The series also includes several crucifixions and, improbably, a picture of a Ferris wheel.

The tone of the series is sensual, but gently and poetically rather than aggressively so. Cava's goal isn't blatant arousal or titillation, but an acknowledgment that much of human behavior is governed by romantic impulses and sexual attraction.

His images aren't illustrations in the



"**Nemaleon #2**" is among the photo-based works of Paul Cava on display at Gallery 339, in conjunction with "*Children of Adam*," a book of Cava photos and Walt Whitman poetry.

conventional sense but, as the exhibition demonstrates, lyrical complements to Whitman's vigorous poetry. They would make a beautiful, thought-provoking show even without the book.

Gallery 339, 339 S. 21st St. 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Wednesdays through Saturdays, noon to 5 p.m. Sundays. Through Nov. 27. 215-731-1530 or www.gallery339.com.

Eclectic watercolors

Not all exhibitions of watercolors are cozy collections of traditional still lifes, landscapes, beach scenes and portraits. "Water color: current views" at Gallery Joe involves a dozen artists, but it affirms a new, more conceptual approach to this venerable medium.

Of the 36 works, only a relative few connect directly with tradition. These include Harrison Haynes' *Carport* and his picture of a boy sitting in a pickup truck. Charlene Liu also paints realistically, but in a flat, allover style that resembles stained glass.

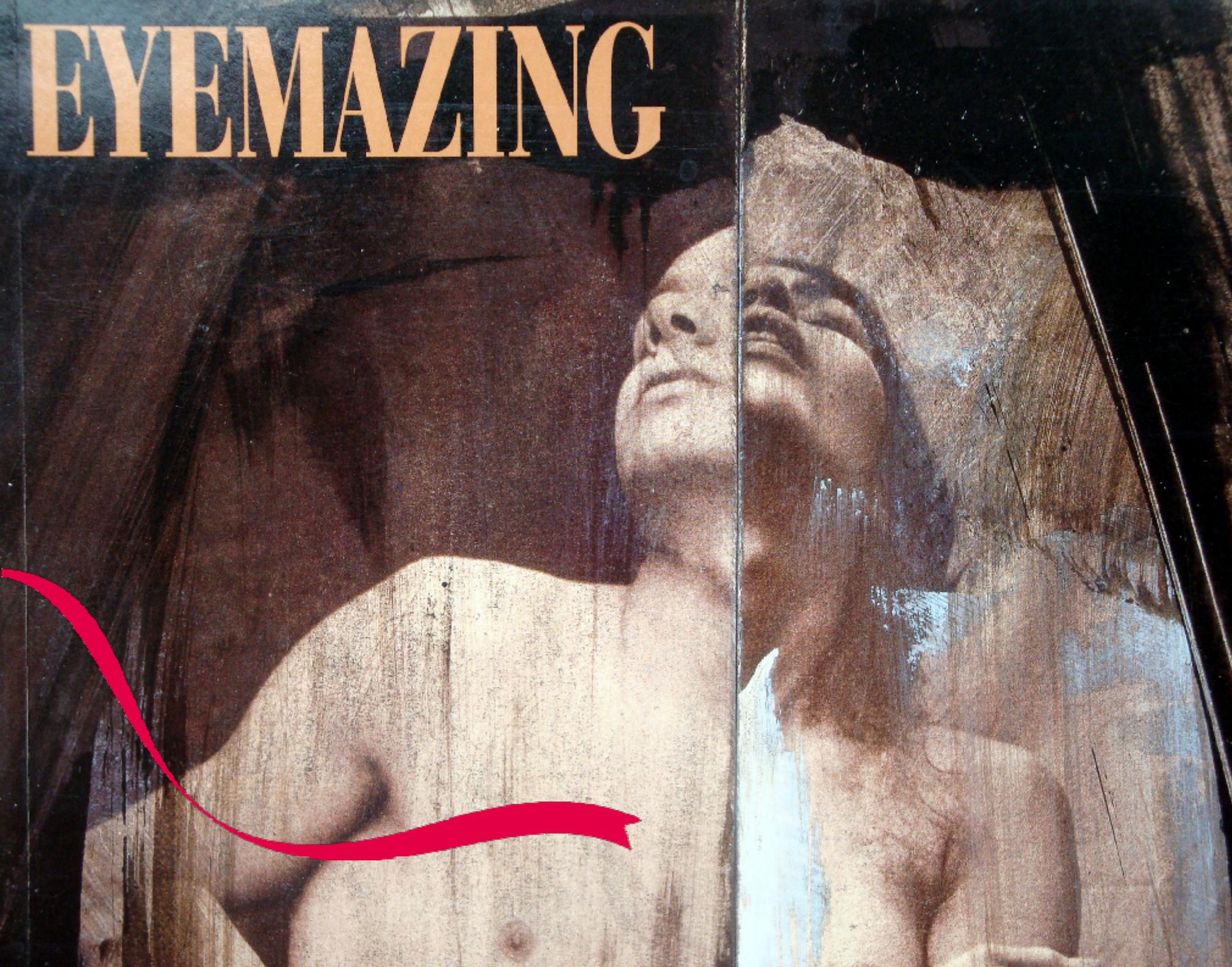
More common are works such as Nicole Fein's small plaid patterns, Amy Rathbone's pointillist designs (one of which resembles a collapsing paper bag), and Matthew Bliss's ethereal veils of deep blue-black, which suggest thunderclouds.

Rebecca Bird's vivid abstractions, one of which looks like an expanding fireball, remind us that watercolor needn't be prissy; it can convey force. As for delicacy, Charles Ritchie's photolike images, particularly *Self-Portrait With Night III*, handle that superbly.

Gallery Joe, 302 Arch St. noon to 5:30 p.m. Wednesdays through Saturdays. Through tomorrow. 215-592-7752 or www.galleryjoe.com.

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Paul Cava

Children of Adam

ew body of work, by Walt Whitman's American poet, Whitman like Edward Weston it about Whitman's were something about with photography?

of Adam book and in Philadelphia was from the past 25 with Whitman's poetry many reasons, primarily honesty regarding the

sex, and so I am saddened when some people claim they see pornography in my work. I am not a religious person but I believe the story of Christ is the story of love and it's accompanying suffering and sacrifice. I attended Catholic school when young and the power of this symmetry was not lost on me so Christ makes repeat appearances in my work. Another less religious way to view this relationship of love and loss, creation and destruction, is as Eros and Thanatos, the two timeless halves of being. It's not a new story in art and literature. These are passionate instincts that artists have grappled with since the cave paintings at Lascaux.

early/mid '70s I became immersed in the medium and would spend time at the Eastman House studying the early photographs by the Photo-Secessionists. Once I had immersed myself in the photo history of French primitives from private collections and the Bibliothèque Nationale. All this gave me a strong foundation to deconstruct. There were years where I put photography aside and only now my influences are varied and plenty and include

SP: How did you meet Alexander? What projects has he done? Your



ion whereas in Warhol's and impersonal, a promotional issue as to how photo-based I were to work large like connection would be more easily made. Defining artists with the media seems these category distinctions to be working in just keeps artists who work in various or by this problem of grants and grants.

Australian poet, Alison Croggon, it would be a departure in that I have never made work in response to specific writing before. As I said earlier, my work for *Children of Adam* all existed prior to its relationship to Whitman's poems. This would be quite different, I generally let the work direct me. We'll see how things evolve. I've wanted to work more intensely, perhaps pushing the physical and the scale relationships more. I feel the stylistic nature of my work is beyond my control; it's what feels natural, I can't imagine consciously changing anything at this point.

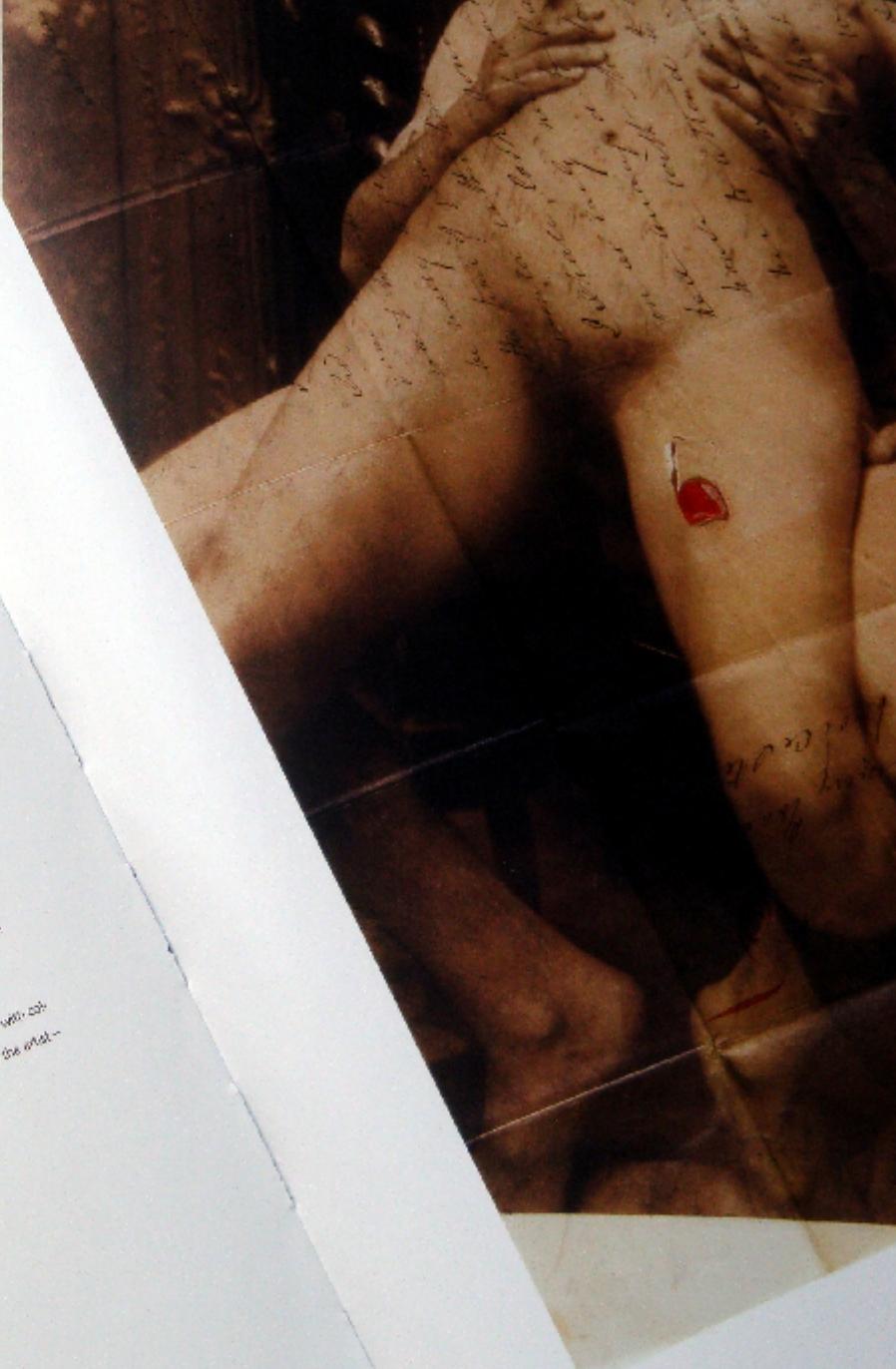
*Editor of The Photo Review, App: The Australian Collection
Tour of Stewart House
Edition of The Photo Review App: The Australian Collection
Photographs Paul Capon
Illustrations Paul Capon*

with 2 additional decorative colours, printed on PhotoKodak photo paper, 11x17 inches, full colour with mounted reproductions on front and back, symphathem with statistics and a foreword - \$179. Limited edition, 100 copies, 176 pages, A cover with 2 additional decorative colours, double gatefold cover with flap, printed on PhotoKodak paper, 11x17 inches, \$99.

Custom bound hard cover edition limited to 30 signed copies with collector's choice of an original signed and numbered print by the artist - \$1200.

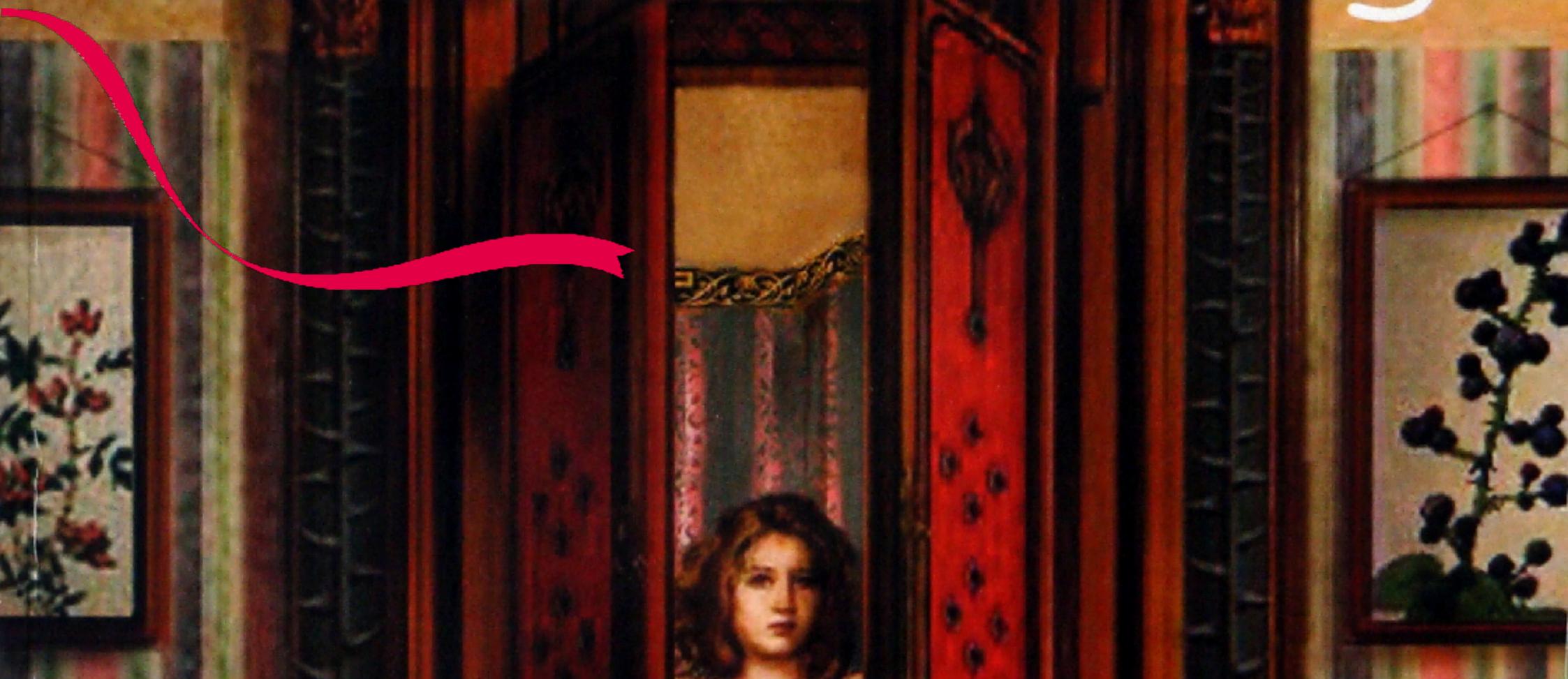
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Das Jahrbuch der Erotik XXI

Mein heimliches Auge



old
years
and it
is nearly
the same old story
nowhere in the land.
I shall look down
on the bridge and wonder
how unceasingly I have
been with the people
here & attend & listen
to their stories & their
trials & losses through
life & open & speak
it out.