



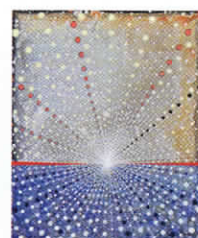
**6** San Francisco's Carnival lights up the Mission District in multi-cultural celebration on May 26 & 27. This year's theme is "Spanning Borders; Bridging Cultures."



**11** Cellist Steven Isserlis (left) performs in concert with fortepianist Robert Levin at Herbst Theatre on May 19 & 20. Presented by SF Performances.



**14** The Asian Art Museum presents *Phantoms of Asia: Contemporary Awakens the Past*, a cross-cultural exploration of Asian cosmology, opening May 18.



**17** A new series of paintings and drawings by New York-based artist Barbara Takenaga are on exhibition at Gregory Lind Gallery May 3-June 23. Left, "Minus Red," 2012.

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From left: Tristan Cunningham, Michael Uy Kelly, Rebecca Frank, David Sinaiko, Leigh Shaw and Siobhan Doherty, who interviewed over 40 people who work and live in the Tenderloin for Cutting Ball Theater's production.

## SF Camerawork Relocates to Central Market

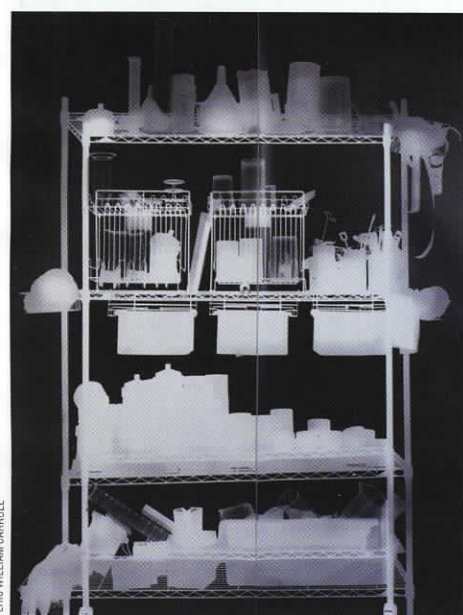
by Sura Wood

Joining a growing cadre of arts groups relocating to San Francisco's Central Market district, SF Camerawork, the nonprofit contemporary photography center founded 38 years ago to support emerging local photographers, reopens in a new space on Market Street this month.

On a recent rainy day, noise poured into the 4,000-square-foot, architecturally designed gallery from the busy streets below. Inviting the outside in, literally and metaphorically, is something that clearly pleases Camerawork director Chuck Mobley as he sits on a couch at the far end of the space and contemplates a series of intriguing plans for the year ahead and beyond.

Camerawork's urban loft—with its copious natural light, freshly painted white walls, refinished wood floors, high ceilings and a bank of large windows overlooking Market—will be the locus for its classes, discussion forums, artist residencies, publications and exhibitions. Located near 6<sup>th</sup> Street, next to the Luggage Store gallery, it's down the street from the old Strand Theater, recently purchased by American Conservatory Theater as a new-works venue. The Black Rock Arts Foundation (Burning Man) and the Gray Area Foundation for the Arts are among other arts organizations setting up shop in this transitional neighborhood, which the city hopes will develop into a revitalized arts district. (A.C.T. will renovate and move into its new digs sometime in 2014.)

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



From Eric William Carroll's installation, "This Dark-room's Gone to Heaven," silver gelatin prints, 2012.

## Cutting Ball Drops Deep into Tenderloin

by Jean Schiffman

"Our biggest show of the season is turning out to be *Tenderloin*," exclaims Rob Melrose, artistic director of the Cutting Ball Theater.

The world-premiere docudrama, begun last spring as part of "Risk Is This: The Cutting Ball's New Experimental Plays Festival," was expected to slip in under the radar. The once-nomadic company is known for experimental work, seminal avant-garde drama and re-imagined classics; a relationship to the community was not part of its original artistic mission.

But since establishing itself as the resident theater of Exit on Taylor, in the heart of the Tenderloin, the company found itself looking toward its own front yard.

Out of that impulse came *Tenderloin*, which, as it turns out, rides on a wave of energy around the Mid-Market Initiative and the Taylor Street Arts Initiative. Recently elected Mayor Ed Lee and District 6 (Tenderloin) supervisor Jane Kim are helping to focus city attention on this ethnically diverse, architecturally rich and undeniably crime-ridden and poverty-plagued neighborhood.

*Tenderloin* comprises a series of interviews conducted by actors. The project's director, Annie Elias, who has previously created four docudramas with her students at Marin Academy, worked with longtime Tenderloin resident and photographer Mark Ellinger—a former homeless person

and addict—to create a list of potential interviewees; the 40 or so hour-long, audio-recorded interviews cut a wide swath through the mean streets. Subjects included a retired beat cop; the children of immigrants from Mexico, Thailand and Cambodia; a social worker; soup kitchen volunteers; an ex-con; a young suburbanite who found comfort in the Tenderloin after an abusive relationship; a hotel owner. Jane Kim was interviewed, and also filmmaker Rob Nilsson. Others included a pastor, an activist lawyer, a nun. All were asked to tell the story of their lives in the Tenderloin.

Elias culled through about 500 pages of transcripts to settle on main characters and draw forth the dominant themes: the conflicting opinions about how the city can best address the Tenderloin's many problems; the "hidden" population of the neighborhood (children and immigrants); the palpable bond among the neediest residents. She interwove monologues to turn them into dialogues and group discussions, intercut and juxtaposed characters, presented arguments in point and counterpoint. Some stories are narrated and simultaneously acted out. The ambient noises of the interview sites—birds, barking dogs, slamming doors—form a soundscape (created by Matt Stines); visuals include some of Ellinger's photos. Sometimes characters speak in unison, sometimes they overlap—"I feel like I'm working with music," says Elias. CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

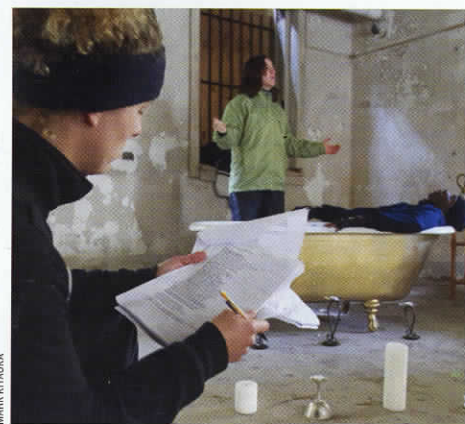
## Searching for Odysseus on Angel Island

by Jean Schiffman

I arrive on Angel Island—the largest island in San Francisco Bay—on a cold, rainy March day. Ava Roy, the founder/artistic director of We Players, greets me in a colorful Peruvian-style hat, walking shoes and no umbrella. The foghorn wails. We are at the ferry landing, Ayala Cove, where the first non-native Spanish explorer—Juan Manuel de Ayala—anchored in 1775. But for the purposes of today's excursion, we are in Ithaka, Greece.

We Players' site-specific theatrical journey, based on *The Odyssey*, the 8th-century-B.C. epic Greek poem by Homer, begins—and ends—here. According to legend, Odysseus spent 10 years struggling to return to Ithaka after the decade-long Trojan War, his journey obstructed by men and gods.

Running throughout the summer, *The Odyssey* is a five-hour moveable feast of sights, songs, dance, poetry, music, dialogue—and actual feasts. Audiences, equipped with time cards and maps, hike half of the island's five-mile Perimeter Road at their own pace, with detours to several historic sites, each of which represents a discrete, mythical, Homeric locale. (Visitors can choose to be driven the final 2 ½ miles back to Ithaka.)



We Players rehearsing a scene from *The Odyssey* with the witch Circe in the East Garrison Hospital Building on Angel Island.

Angel Island comprises 742 acres of beaches, coves and hills. Oak, eucalyptus, Monterey pine, redwoods and Manzanita flourish here. Deer swim across the strait to and from Tiburon. There are owls, egrets, pelicans and more. The island has been the site of military activity from the Civil War to the Cold War; some buildings are restored, some not. CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

# Camerawork

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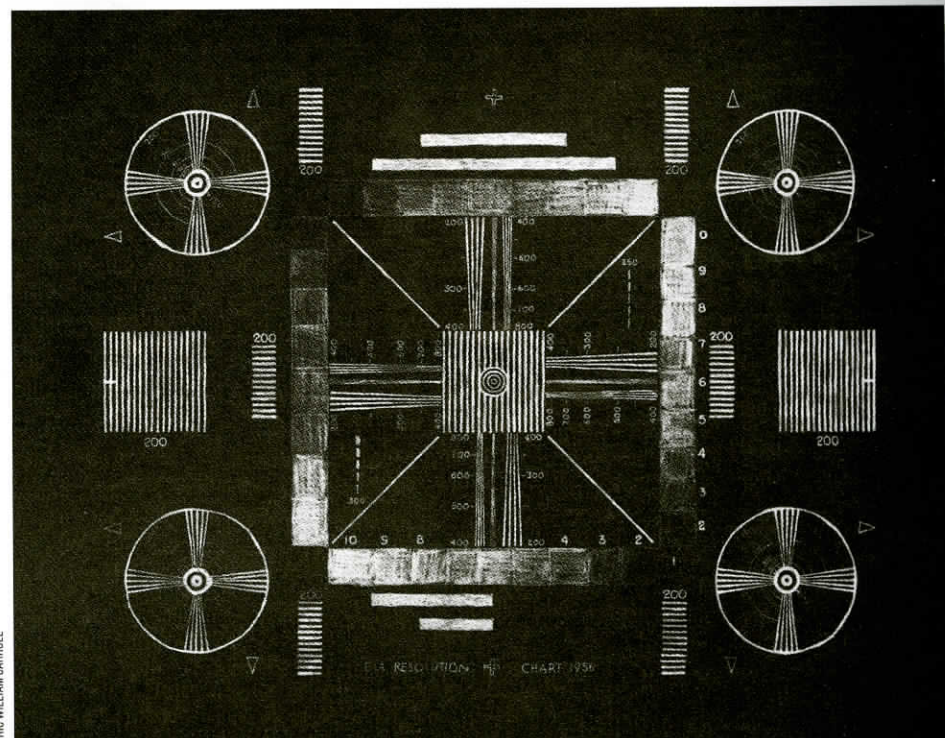
The Central Market district has much to recommend it to arts groups. It's easily accessible by public transportation, and rents are lower here than in other parts of the city, freeing up funds, and allowing more flexibility to experiment with non-traditional programming, factors that contributed to Camerawork's decision to relocate from the Yerba Buena area.

"Philosophically and conceptually, the move helps us to scale back a bit on the exhibition footprint and focus more on engagement with people," says Mobley. "We've had no problems with people finding us. The response has been great." The informality of the renovated environs, he adds, is conducive to impromptu gatherings and fosters spontaneity. "We're not interested in that sacrosanct, deathly quiet museum thing," he says. "It's very open, there's lots of light. It's kind of funky. We get a table out if there's a meeting going on, or if there's a class happening, that's fine—you can still view the exhibitions."

Coinciding with the grand opening this month, Camerawork is mounting an exhibition of thought-provoking investigations by Eric William Carroll. Carroll, who has made the photographic process the subject of much of his work, is the 2012 winner of SF Camerawork's Baum Award. Given to an innovative American photographer who hasn't had a major solo museum exhibition or published a monograph, this annual award provides a \$10,000 grant and an exhibit in the Camerawork gallery.

The show features a sampling of Carroll's images, with an emphasis on his explorations of the medium's history and his manipulation of its technological properties. It includes hand-drawn photographs of camera calibration charts; a reproduction of a drawing by Henry Fox Talbot, the British inventor who pioneered the calotype, a forerunner of photogravure and other 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century processes; and a large-format picture created with a fogged negative. An installation, "This Darkroom's Gone to Heaven," re-creates a functional, communal darkroom inside the gallery. Photograms, X-ray-like images in varied grey and white tones, cover its walls, and illumination is provided by "safelights," evoking a once-thriving space that has been abandoned. "The shadows [represent] the equipment and materials one would find in a darkroom," explains Carroll. "[But] it's as if everything had been vaporized, leaving only shadows where the objects stood."

Carroll will use the "repurposed" space to convene discussions with other photographers about influential dead artists and obsolete technologies. "I think of it being a series of historical ghost stories, since the vibe of the abandoned darkroom is a tad creepy," he says. The installation is part of Carroll's ongoing deconstruction of the form and his meditation on the fleeting, fast-changing nature of photography in the digital age. "People are taking pictures of who they're with, where they are, and what they're eating without any discretion," he observes in an interview with previous Baum Award recipient Sean McFarland. "I think the big shift is that instead of generating pictures to save, we're making pictures to share." But, he notes, the photograph as printed picture is in decline. "I'm worried about how that will affect our understanding of history 50



Eric William Carroll; hand-drawn resolution chart; C-print, 2012.

or a 100 years from now. The personal and human element of making physical photographs is in danger of disappearing and with that, all the fantastic mistakes and happy accidents that make the medium so fantastic. We learn from our failures. If there is a computer that will automatically fix all our mistakes, what is left for us to learn?"

In Camerawork's future: a possible exchange/partnership with Three Shadows Gallery in Beijing and a similar project with San Art, an artist-run exhibition space in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. For next year, Mobley is preparing a show with Jason Lazarus, a Chicago artist whose archive, "Too Hard to Keep," is an expanding collection of exquisitely personal photographs (digital images as well as prints) donated by people who,

due to failed romance, painful associations or other heartbreak, can no longer bear to look at them. (The project exists online and as a morphing tactile exhibit.) Camerawork is installing a drop box where visitors can deposit snapshots that document moments or people in their lives that they would rather forget; the images will be forwarded to Lazarus.

"It's an exciting time," reflects Mobley. "Photography infiltrates everything. We're surrounded by so many genres—social documentary work, photojournalism, even some commercial advertising and vernacular scrapbook photography. I'm fascinated by all of it."

1011 Market St. Baum Award reception on May 11; Eric William Carroll exhibition May 4-June 30. [sfcamerawork.org](http://sfcamerawork.org). 487-1011. ★

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