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**FOTO  
FEST  
2010  
BIENNIAL** **CONTEMPORARY  
U.S. PHOTOGRAPHY**  
MARCH 12 – APRIL 25, 2010  
HOUSTON, TEXAS

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# AFTER SIX WEEKS OF A FORMIDABLE RUN OF EXHIBITS AND EVENTS, THE FOTOFEST 2010 BIENNIAL IN NUMBERS

**HOUSTON, TEXAS - APRIL 26, 2010** - The FotoFest 2010 Biennial closed its main events on Sunday, April 25, after a six-week run, which was marked by a formidable number of exhibitions, events, workshops, forums on contemporary curating, the world's largest portfolio review for artists, an International Fine Print Auction, book signings, and a lot of networking between photographers who came from around the world.

FotoFest, the United States' **largest citywide celebration of photography**, put its 2010 focus on **Contemporary U.S. Photography** and invited five curators from different regions of the country to present their visions of the field and what they felt best reflected photography in the U.S. today. The four main U.S. exhibitions were accompanied by a fifth, non-thematic exhibition, Discoveries of the Meeting Place, spotlighting ten artists who had presented work in the previous Biennial's portfolio review. In addition to FotoFest's own exhibitions, the city boomed with **111 independently organized photographic exhibitions citywide**. The International Fine Print Auction featured 81 hand-picked international works; workshops focused on online multimedia and social networking technologies. There were films, gallery treks, artist-curator talks, and public Evenings with the Artists. An estimated 245,000-250,000 people attended the Biennial events over the six-week period.

Over 1,000 artists from 35 countries participated in the FotoFest 2010 Biennial. FotoFest featured the work of 57 photographers in its principal exhibitions, and 493 artists exhibited in independent shows. FotoFest itself sponsored 25 different events, offering opportunities for the public to tour the art works and encounter many of the artists. One of the most anticipated and praised events of the Biennial, the **Meeting Place Portfolio Reviews** welcomed 520 artists from 31 countries who shared their work with 172 reviewers from 24 countries. Several days of professional exchange, which provide career-building opportunities for participating artists, the Meeting Place is one of the distinctive features of the FotoFest Biennial and its stories are countless. Veterans of the Meeting Place return, year after year, because they find the dialogue and the exposure an irreplaceable tool for furthering their connections to the professional and museum world. Among the many stories are those of Sara Terry from New York who saw a collector buy several of her prints for the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and of Takeshi Shikama, a photographer from Japan who had his work taken to New York for AIPAD 2010 by John Cleary Gallery in Houston. The 16-day Meeting Place is the world's largest

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portfolio review, and over its 26-year history, it has been a launching pad for the careers of hundreds of photographers. The 2010 Biennial got one of its best accolades this year from Bill Meyers in The Wall Street Journal, who called it “remarkable”.

The FotoFest 2010 Biennial Grand Opening took place on **Friday, March 12, 2010** at the FotoFest headquarters and gallery – the site of ***Whatever was Splendid: New American Photographs***, one of the four principal exhibitions of Contemporary U.S. Photography. It was attended by Houston Mayor Annise Parker and by an array of museum professionals; international consuls; patrons; collectors - including Mary and Roy Cullen, Marshall and Victoria Lightman, Bernadino and Mary Arocha and Carolyn Farb; and New York gallerists and collectors William Hunt and Brian Clamp. Guests also included the FotoFest 2010 Biennial curators: **Natasha Egan, Aaron Schuman, Edward Robinson** and **Gilbert Vicario** and many of the 45 exhibiting artists. In the ensuing weeks, the Media Workshops and the Fine Print Auction were attended by William Luers, former President of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, and his wife Wendy; Tim Wirth, President of the United Nations Foundation, and his wife Wren; Jamie Niven, Vice President of Sotheby’s in New York; collectors Lynn Wyatt and Joaquim Paiva from Rio de Janeiro, Nion McEvoy of Chronicle Books in San Francisco.

The FotoFest Fine Print Auction provided a rare opportunity to encounter and acquire high quality contemporary fine art photography from five continents. Conducted by **Denise Bethel, Sotheby’s Senior Vice President and Director of Photographs Department**, it played to a full house of 400 people on **Tuesday March 23, 2010** at the **Doubletree Hotel Houston Downtown**. The auction brought in \$363,575 and all 81 lots sold to bidders from the U.S. (especially New York, California, Tennessee and Texas), Latin America and Europe. Revenues from print sales at the auction benefit FotoFest artist programs and the Portfolio Reviews. Proceeds from Auction ticket and table sponsorships benefit FotoFest’s artist programs and FotoFest’s Literacy Through Photography year-round classroom-based education program in Houston-area public schools.

FotoFest co-published the 2010 Biennial Catalogue, with European publisher **Schilt Publishing** (Amsterdam, The Netherlands). The 500-page, two-volume 2010 Biennial catalogue features more than 300 full-color images and five essays by Biennial curators on Contemporary U.S. Photography.

## **UPCOMING EVENTS AND PROGRAMS**

After the Biennial, FotoFest will continue to present new U.S. and international exhibitions at its Vine Street Studios gallery headquarters and its year-round school-based Literacy Through Photography education program. In November 2010, FotoFest will organize its first Meeting Place in Paris in collaboration with the online photography organization Lens Culture preceding the opening of Paris Photo. **Lens Culture FotoFest Paris 2010** will feature three days of portfolio reviews and meetings with 120 photographers from around the world and 40 international photography experts.

## **LEADING INSTITUTIONAL SPONSORS**

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## ABOUT FOTOFEST

The FotoFest Biennial is the first international Biennial of Photography and Photo-related Art in the United States. Through the FotoFest Biennial and its year-round art programs, FotoFest is known as a Platform for Art and Ideas, combining museum-quality art with important social and aesthetic issues. FotoFest curated exhibitions give priority to the works of important but little-known photographic artists from the U.S. and around the world.

Founded in 1983 and based in Houston, Texas, FotoFest is a non-profit organization promoting photographic arts and education. FotoFest is recognized for its discovery and presentation of important talent, contemporary and historical, from around the world, its commitment to presenting important social ideas through the photographic arts, its groundbreaking exhibitions and its portfolio review program, The International Meeting Place. FotoFest has curated and commissioned exhibitions of photo-based art from Latin America, Asia, Europe, the Middle East and North Africa. In addition to year-round art exhibitions and programming, FotoFest's school-based education program, Literacy Through Photography, uses photography to stimulate visual literacy, writing and analytical thinking.

**For more information on the FotoFest 2010 Biennial, please visit [www.fotofest.org](http://www.fotofest.org).**

