WONDERLANDS

Elizabeth Siegel

Who would believe that so small a space could contain the image of all the universe? O mighty process!

—Leonardo da Vinci, *Codex Atlanticus*

Leonardo da Vinci wrote with amazement about the workings of the camera obscura, a device that harnesses the optical principle that light passing through a small aperture into a dark room will project an image of the outside world.[1] Combining art, science, and a sense of magic, the camera obscura was a means of turning the universe into a picture and was a forerunner of photography. Five centuries later, Abelardo Morell returned to the camera obscura to explore his own amazement at photography, making the pictures of camera images projected onto domestic interiors for which he would become most well known. But Leonardo's expression of delight at this natural process could also describe most of Morell's photographs, across a variety of series: twenty-five years of work motivated by the belief that camera images are full of wonder and reveal unseen beauty in the everyday world.

Morell's achievement reveals its full significance when considered against the landscape of contemporary photography. The past several decades have witnessed the rapid expansion of photography as an artistic practice and an enormous increase in the critical attention it receives. Artists have employed appropriative, diaristic, directorial, and numerous other strategies to critique originality, challenge myths of photographic truth, question memory and identity, complicate received notions of race and gender, revisit ideas of photographic narrative, or comment on the stream of media images assaulting us daily. Technological advances have facilitated the common adoption of color, greater manipulation of photographs, and enlargements that allow photography to rival the scale and aesthetic impact of history painting. The boundaries between photography and other media have now been thoroughly muddied.

In the context of this diversity, over the last quarter century Morell has carved a singular path.[2] On one hand, he is firmly entrenched in a modernist approach that understands photographs as self-contained, autonomous images bounded by their four edges, and he mines essential qualities of the medium—light, optics, the workings of the camera—for both subject matter and form. He

refuses to manipulate his prints and has only recently expanded from classical black and white to the color his peers have embraced for decades. In addition, unlike many artists who produce tableau-sized photographs, he continues to make pictures of a more intimate scale and quieter effect. He rejects postmodernist notions that photography is overdetermined, only and always mediated through other images, or exhausted of any possibility for originality, instead viewing picture-making as an intuitive more than a critical act. And yet the photographs Morell makes are not pure or disinterested records. Like many of his contemporaries, he demonstrates—but with the most basic and elemental of means—that photography is a construction, a subjective interpretation. In Morell's camera obscura, the raw image of the outside scene is altered and distorted as it meets the furniture of the interior, which, in many cases, he has actually arranged; the camera is never merely receptive, but transformative. Underscoring this point, Morell turns his camera on conveyors of cultural meaning and knowledge such as books, maps, money, and museums that, like photographs, are not the transparent vehicles they may appear to be, but are in fact highly constructed. Similarly, Morell produces tabletop compositions, designed to be photographed, whose obvious fabrication highlights the ways some pictures make particular claims to truthfulness. Works of art of all sorts—not just photographs—populate his images, from paintings in museums to art reproductions in books, from cut-up and reassembled prints to theatrical flats on stage sets. In a practice of invention as much as observation, Morell continues to find rich possibilities in the essential strangeness and complexity of images.

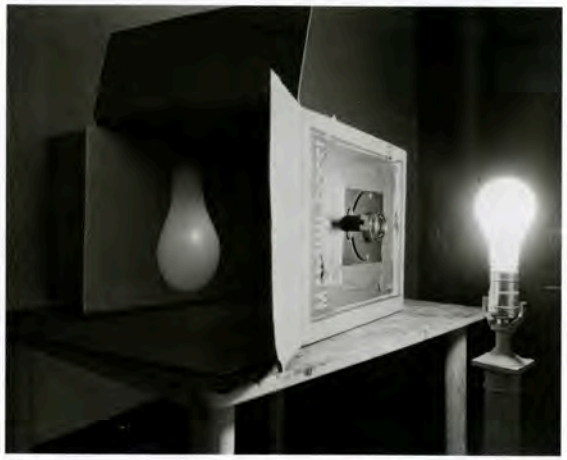

Fig. 1. ***Lightbulb*, 1991**

This book begins with the photographs Morell made when, after the birth of his son, he started to examine common household objects with childlike curiosity. It ends with his most recent photographs, including pictures made with his latest pictorial innovation, the tent camera (a kind of portable camera obscura). In between, Morell explored domestic optics, the sensory properties of books, the display and reproduction of works of art, and the American landscape, experimenting with photograms, stop-motion studies, the camera obscura, and the painterly possibilities of color. Across his work, Morell has been keenly attentive to the material qualities of tangible things in an increasingly virtual world, particularly the kinds of things that seem now on the verge of obsolescence, like books and maps—objects that once existed, like photographs, only as pieces of paper. His attentiveness renders them unfamiliar, often strange, and the resulting pictures arrest our habitual perceptions.[3] He brings that same investigative rigor to the materiality of his medium, probing and pushing photography not out of nostalgia for its vanishing forms but as a way to exploit its potential and make something new. This intense inward look at the properties of photography has allowed Morell to look back out at the world with fresh eyes, and his transformation of the universe into pictures remains a project full of possibility.

When he received an honorary Doctor of Fine Arts degree from Bowdoin College in 1997, Morell credited his perspective as an artist in part to his loss of a childhood homeland: "This break with the place where I grew up is probably still stirring at the bottom of much of what I do in art now," he told the graduating

class. "Somehow the conflicts of cultures, languages, and places that I felt didn't just scare me, these things also gave me a sense of exhilaration, a feeling that things out there were wild and surreal."[4] Now nearing sixty-five, Morell (who is warm and engaging, prone to loud laughter in conversation—as well as visual jokes in his photographs) reflects often on exile and how the early dislocation from home continues to shape his view of the world.[5] He was born in Havana, Cuba, in 1948. When he was young, his family moved to Guanabo, a small seaside town, where his father secured a position as a sergeant at the naval base. There he was part of a large, close-knit extended family, regularly enjoying communal meals and gatherings. His parents were working class and had only attended school through the eighth grade, but an uncle, Juan, was training as an architect and had amassed a collection of "exotic-looking volumes" with pictures of buildings in faraway places, which the young Morell was allowed to peruse.[6] Some of his most vivid memories are of going to the movies, often three or four times a week (his father, as a small-town official, had a free pass). There American cowboy and gangster films offered an enticing albeit distorted glimpse of the foreign country to the north. The sea—which would later figure dramatically in certain camera obscura photographs—looms large in his recollections, offering a sense of expansive possibility, an early understanding of being connected to something larger than himself. It also became a symbol of escape.

"The revolution," Morell says, "changed everything."[7] After Fidel Castro seized power in 1959, danger alternated with absurdity against the idyllic beach town backdrop. Soldiers with guns paced the streets, neighbors spied on one another, and executions by firing squad were regularly televised. Morell recalls citizens having to turn in all their cash and exchange it for new currency, which featured revolutionaries in tanks and felt bizarrely like play money. His father, gregarious and well liked, survived in this atmosphere for a few years, but soon he was falsely accused of carrying explosives and was arrested several times, including once in front of his son. It became clear to the whole family that he was in real danger and that they would need to leave Cuba. In the end, they escaped by plane, pretending, like so many others, that their trip out of the country was merely a vacation. They surrendered their house and belongings to the authorities, to be kept until their return. In a frightening moment Morell describes as straight out of Hitchcock, his father was detained for questioning as they walked across the tarmac to their PanAm flight, while Morell, his mother, and his sister were allowed to proceed. His father finally rejoined the family on the plane, and when the wheels left the ground, they knew they were safe. Many of the adults on the flight began to cry and burst out spontaneously into the Cuban national anthem. Vowing not to visit as long as Castro remained in power, his parents never returned to the country. The plane left on March 8, 1962; Morell was thirteen years old.[8]

After some time in Miami and New Orleans, where Morell studied English words on flashcards, the family moved to New York City, and his father began working as a building superintendent. They lived in a basement apartment in one of the buildings he maintained on West Sixty-Ninth Street, and the contrast between a dark, subterranean existence shoveling coal and the open, fresh-air pleasures of nearby Central Park remains clear in Morell's mind. New York landmarks and skyscrapers, which would later show up tamed in interiors in photographs, were foreign but fascinating. A gangly teenager, Morell went to school, worked a few after-school jobs (often making deliveries to fancier apartment buildings), and helped his father; he did not speak English well and did not have many friends. A high school English teacher, however, nurtured him and introduced him to Ernest Hemingway—*A Farewell to Arms* was an especially beloved volume—and the books became a lifeline, a way to learn both a language and a culture. With his use of concrete, tangible words to express complex emotions and ideas, Hemingway was an inspired choice for a new speaker, and he taught Morell about starting from solid ground before becoming more abstract.[9] During these years, Morell also made his first photographs, black-and-white snapshots taken with a Brownie camera

(see fig. 2 in the chronology), as well as home movies showing the family at play.

In 1967, Morell was awarded a scholarship to attend Bowdoin College in Maine, a small liberal arts school in a place so utterly alien to Cuban immigrants living in New York that his parents had to look it up in an atlas. He initially intended to become an engineer but found the math and physics too challenging and ended up majoring in comparative religion, attracted to the field's philosophical underpinnings. But it was when he entered John McKee's photography class in the spring of 1969 that a world truly opened to him. McKee, who had come to Bowdoin as a French professor, was himself new to photography. He possessed an expansive intellect and wide interests that encompassed Japanese culture, music from around the globe, modern poetry, and Zen Buddhism. The old barn he owned some miles outside campus served as an informal gathering place for students. Uninterested in the zone system or camera club pedagogy, McKee instead urged his class to read Wallace Stevens, look at Mark Rothko, listen to Bach and Bartók. A typical assignment might be to make pictures that related to the Stevens poem "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird," or to photograph with all the possibilities of a particular word—*palimpsest*, for example—in mind. Technical issues were relegated to handouts, and class time was taken up with the serious business of looking. This fluid way of understanding the medium—whereby photography connected to painting, to music, to language, to life—would exert a lifelong influence on Morell's own work.

Morell had found his métier and threw himself into photography. "I could finally put into images bottled-up feelings of absurdity and alienation, and also joy and delight," he later said of this discovery.[10] If an assignment called for shooting one roll of film, he would shoot ten, selecting the smart but unexpected picture for review. McKee recalls that Morell quickly grasped the logical extension of ideas and took on an unofficial leadership role in the class. He spent hours in the darkroom and tried everything he could to make the work a little wild—he blasted the contrast, sandwiched negatives, solarized prints, even stepped on them during development. "I didn't know what surrealism was at the time, but my pictures were probably about things not making sense."[11] A breakthrough came with a picture of a young girl wearing a white Communion dress in a garden in Galicia, Spain (taken while visiting relatives), which he had always printed dramatically solarized. When he produced it without his usual darkroom interventions, he was pleasantly surprised by the innate strangeness of the image (fig. 7 in the chronology) and resolved from then on to avoid manipulation in favor of the straight print.

Morell started regularly visiting the Museum of Modern Art to see the shows organized by John Szarkowski, then the director of the Photography Department. He also began to devour photography books, finding models in the work of Diane Arbus, Henri Cartier-Bresson, and fellow exiles Robert Frank and Josef Koudelka, and started working in a surrealist street photography vein (see fig. 5 in the chronology). "I was obsessed with this newfound language," he recalls.[12] Always interested in music—his tastes today remain eclectic and all-encompassing—Morell also began playing both piano and percussion while at Bowdoin. He spent an entire summer at the library at Lincoln Center listening to jazz records (John Coltrane was a particular favorite), but also gravitated toward more experimental composers such as Steve Reich, John Cage, and Philip Glass. In his class, McKee had explained the idea of counterpoint—different musical lines that move independently but sound harmonious when played or sung together—and this concept resonated deeply with Morell, who came to see that photography was more about the relationships among the elements of the picture than about any single subject.

Frustrated with his other classes and influenced by the early 1970s counterculture, Morell dropped out of college his senior year. He held a number of menial jobs, continuing to set up darkrooms and make pictures wherever he went. He eventually committed to a career in photography, returning to Bowdoin to finish his degree in 1976, and later applied to Yale's Master of Fine Arts program, which

he entered in the fall of 1979. There Morell was one of a class of five that also included Lois Conner, Robert Lisak, Mike Smith, and Mary Tortorici. The program was newly headed by Tod Papageorge, the brilliant but irascible photographer with connections to the Museum of Modern Art and the New York street photography scene.[13] He in turn hired Richard Benson, a generous photographer and printmaker with endless curiosity and unparalleled technical skills that would serve the students well. Yale had long been the teaching home of Walker Evans, who retained a cultlike status there long after his death in 1975. When Papageorge took the reins, the roster of models expanded to include Frank, Szarkowksi, Lee Friedlander, Helen Levitt, and Garry Winogrand—who all visited the school and showed work—as well as Eugène Atget, Brassaï, and August Sander. Educated in English literature, Papageorge was eloquent and prone to literary metaphors in his criticism, but also sharp, even harsh, at times. The atmosphere was not unsupportive—students recall both Papageorge and Benson as ardent defenders of the medium, tough but fair—yet for Morell it proved much more rigid and challenging than his comparatively open-ended experience at Bowdoin. Yale stripped students of their comfortable skins so that they could find a more meaningful core, and they emerged, as Lois Conner has put it, "wounded but wiser."[14] Morell absorbed the school's modernist dictate that photography was a unique medium with its own specific sets of practices and expressive possibilities, and that a photograph was above all a picture with an internal logic, not a literal depiction of the world represented.

Fig. 2. ***Lisa and Brady behind Glass*, 1986**

Morell had met Lisa McElaney, a fellow student, upon his return to Bowdoin; they married in 1982. When Morell obtained a position at Massachusetts College of Art and Design in 1983, they moved to Boston, and he settled into his roles as husband and professor. He turned out to be a gifted teacher, beloved by his students, who recall him creating a warm environment, a multisensory experience that opened them to discovery. Like McKee, he played experimental compositions and music from around the world in class, and he urged students to attend every visiting artist lecture and gallery show. He also admonished them that "A photograph is *about*, it's not just *of*."[15] Morell had assimilated Papageorge's commitment to capturing the world within a single frame, but he enlarged that philosophy to include allusion and emotion, assigning, for example, the task of photographing a childhood memory so that students would attempt to tap into their visceral, almost unconscious perceptions. Morell would remain at MassArt for the rest of his teaching career, drawing inspiration from his students, finding in the classroom a fertile testing ground for new ideas, and pursuing deep personal and artistic relationships with fellow teachers Laura McPhee, Nick Nixon, and Barbara Bosworth.

Morell became a father in 1986, and the birth of his son, Brady, marked a turning point in his life and his photography. Unable to prowl the streets for his pictures and struggling with the simultaneous depression and exhilaration of caring for a newborn, he found novel subject matter in the domestic interior. "I started making photographs as if I were a child myself," he later wrote. "This strategy got me to look at things around me more closely, more

slowly and from vantage points I hadn't considered before. This way of seeing changed me and my photography."[16] He switched from a lightweight, portable 35 mm camera to a large-format view camera, which necessitated a more deliberate approach and elicited a wealth of tactile detail from his subjects. For Morell, fatherhood was not a distraction from the more pressing business of art-making; rather, the two became intimately intertwined—they remain almost inseparable in his mind—and he embraced the reality happening at home. His pictures became more overtly emotional, testing the limits of sentiment, as in an early photograph of Lisa holding Brady behind the pebbled glass of a door (fig. 2, plate 1). Temperamentally neither detached nor cynical, he was nonetheless aware that he was entering territory that might be considered anathema to other artists: "People in New York or at Yale will hate [the picture]," he thought.[17] He tried to see objects from the literal vantage point of his son, placing the camera on the floor at the foot of a skyscraper-like stack of blocks, or atop a slide looking down at the perilous view (plates 2 and 6). He attempted to harness a prelingual visuality, a way of depicting and understanding the visible world before it is domesticated by naming. More than simply imitating a child's point of view, however, Morell's photographs became an exercise in noticing the wonders of the everyday, with their long exposure times allowing ample time for the contemplation of the object in front of him. The poet Charles Simic, a friend of Morell, commented on his appreciation of "the inexhaustible power of common objects," arguing, "This may turn out to be the most original undertaking of our century: the quest for the magic substance to be found in the ordinary."[18]

Fig. 3. ***My Broken Glasses and Me*, 1994**

Morell had been introduced to Minor White's photographs and writings at Bowdoin, and he was attracted to his mysticism and the way White saw "things for what else they are."[19] Now more bound to his home, Morell too saw objects with fresh eyes. A paper bag, seen from above, possesses a gaping maw that opens ominously, its dark interior seemingly without bottom (plate 15). The shape of the typical American house—a square topped by a triangle, in the child's shorthand for "home"—began populating his pictures, from a playhouse to a dollhouse to the shadow cast by his own pitched roof onto the ground where Brady and Laura, Morell's daughter, had scrawled rudimentary windows and a door into the dirt (plates 9–12). Morell's heightened attentiveness continued and evolved over the next decade. One morning he noticed how the long shadows cast by the early morning sun produced entirely new forms: a pencil became a tower (plate 13). Morell was captivated by the way something so simple, even banal, could be transformed by being photographed. (At the same time, it should be noted that he didn't take himself too seriously: with his characteristic sense of humor, he depicted a group of pencils jostling one another in group protest in a picture he titled *Pencil Demonstration*, plate 14.) He photographed things with a literary descriptiveness that might be fruitfully compared with the concrete clarity of Hemingway, who had been so formative in Morell's learning English; like the author, he now focused on depicting visible facts that could possess broader meanings.

The optical effects of everyday objects began to fascinate him, and he found humble forms of lenses around his home. Water was a potent medium, distorting and enlarging the forms of forks

clutching each other in a glass, or proving simultaneously reflective and transparent as it poured over the top of a pot in the accumulated motion of a lengthy exposure (plates 17 and 18). A wineglass filled with water became a camera lens, flipping a window upside down (plate 16). Morell's photograph depicts the object (the window, slightly out of focus beyond the glass) and the image (upside down and distorted) simultaneously, calling attention to the more intentional act of image-making by which he produced the picture with his camera. In a self-portrait with his own broken eyeglasses, Morell lies with his eyes closed, the photographer doubly deprived of his vision (fig. 3, plate 21). He plays with the distorting effects of both the camera and the glasses: most of the scene is blurred due to the camera's proximity to the subject, but the view through the corrective lenses is clear, and thus the viewer begins to image the world as the artist himself sees it.

The more calculated optical mechanisms of photography, too, could be gratifyingly simple and yet still wondrous. In 1991, Morell wanted to demonstrate both the optical principles and the delight to his students, and so he constructed a homemade camera from a cardboard box open at one end, a lens, and some duct tape. He placed it on a wooden tabletop, positioned a lamp with a bare lightbulb alongside it, and revealed an image projected on the opposite wall of the box: an inverted, slightly dimmer bulb. *Lightbulb* (fig. 1, plate 23) was a revelation, clumsy and obvious and yet elemental, stripping the camera to its essence. "This picture gave me the feeling that photography is in many ways still raw and unexplored," Morell explained a few years later. "Making this picture was for me a way to rediscover the mystery of the medium and maybe to share it with others."[20] Although the image merely demonstrates a basic principle of light, the process ends up seeming more remarkable than ever; the picture is, as critic Richard B. Woodward has put it, "a taunting reminder that photography really is a kind of magic trick."[21] The photograph also advanced Morell's career in two key ways: it got him noticed, at the relatively advanced age of forty-three (it graced the poster and cover of the brochure for the Museum of Modern Art's 1992 group show, *More Than One Photography*), and it led him in the direction of photographing the effects of the camera obscura.

Fig. 4. *Camera Obscura: Houses across the Street in Our Bedroom, Quincy, Massachusetts*, 1991

Like *Lightbulb*, Morell's camera obscura photographs originated in an attempt to share his knowledge and enthusiasm with his students. The principle is straightforward enough and has been known since antiquity: if a small aperture is cut in the wall of a dark room (in Latin, a *camera obscura*), the light that passes through will project an image of the outside world, upside down and laterally reversed, upon the opposite wall. This is the principle on which our eyes work (our brains flip the image to accord with reality), as well as all cameras. The camera obscura was a remarkably effective teaching tool for Morell. In a cavernous MassArt classroom, he would cover all the windows with black plastic and assemble his class in a semicircle. He would then poke a three-eighths-inch hole in the plastic, and the jaded students would emit a collective gasp as they saw Huntington Avenue projected upside down, the buses running along the ceiling. The scenes we see every day, it turns out, are much more entrancing when formed as a picture. It was several years, however, before Morell thought to photograph the projection, recording the way the interior and exterior met to

form a new image. Suitably enough, given his earlier investigations of childhood and home, the initial camera obscura works originated in his house in Quincy, while he was on sabbatical in the summer of 1991, and involved his young family. The first successful picture took place in their living room (fig. 14 in the chronology), the next in their bedroom (fig. 4, plate 24). "Every time I got a room ready for a camera obscura picture, my wife and son would witness it," Morell recounted. "I remember lying in bed with them watching neighbors going to work and squirrels walking on telephone poles."[22] He eventually figured out that an exposure of six to eight hours was required, which eliminated all moving things (people, cars) from a scene and rendered objects that moved slightly (the leaves on a tree, for example) as a blur. In the photograph in their bedroom, the pale wall and sheets made ideal screens for the projection, as the roof of the house across the street pressed against their bed frame in a gesture both intimate and invasive. "That summer," he said, "I felt that I had touched on something very important: that the very basics of photography could be potent and strange."[23]

Morell moved steadily outward from the familiarity of home, progressing to such in-between spaces as hotel rooms and strangers' houses and then to more institutional sites such as offices and museums. He first tackled New York City, whose skyscrapers and landmarks had seemed overwhelming to him as an immigrant teenager in the 1960s. In a camera obscura picture of the Empire State Building, he now domesticated the tower, depicting it sprawling languidly in a bed as its shorter neighbors hover along the ceiling (plate 26). The chaos, lights, and signage of Times Square splash over the surfaces of a standard-issue hotel room as if trying to extend the reach of advertising and entertainment into every corner (plate 28).[24] In later years, Morell traveled to well-known American sites and European cities for the specific purpose of making camera obscura pictures, often transforming an iconic, even over-represented attraction into an image new and unfamiliar. For example, the pointed peaks of London's Tower Bridge insistently jab the pillow in a hotel room, and St. Louis's famous Arch hangs in a loop from a ceiling (plates 29 and 30). Fascinated by the experimental and messy history of early photography, he made a pilgrimage to Lacock Abbey, the country house of William Henry Fox Talbot, one of photography's inventors, and produced a camera obscura homage depicting the site of Talbot's early experiments (plate 33). For Morell, the polymath Talbot—whose innovations in photography were born from frustration with both the camera obscura and camera lucida as drawing aids—was an ideal model: "I want my photographs to reflect a time when science, art, philosophy and religion were closer brothers and sisters, as they were during Fox Talbot's time."[25]

Photography also brought Morell back to Cuba. Invited by Terry McCoy to participate in a book of photographs of Cuba, in 2002 he returned for the first time in forty years, obtaining his American citizenship in order to travel there safely. He made several camera obscura photographs in Havana and reflected in the publication, "This way of making pictures allowed me to contemplate new realities under the half-light of things remembered, so to speak. . . . A long time ago I left Cuba as a boy in circumstances that felt like a strange dream. It's interesting to me that in my ongoing artistic work I struggle with picturing the real within the aura of imaginary and seemingly irrational worlds."[26] He projected La Giraldilla, the sculpture of a female figure atop Havana's old fortress that has become the symbol of the city, against crumbling walls and the remnants of a tiled shower, revealing the literal and metaphorical decay of his homeland under Castro (plate 31). In another camera obscura image, a glamorous head shot from an earlier era—of the apartment's owner, now a middle-aged woman—anchors a room filled with humble furniture and domestic trinkets, while the downtown Havana neighborhood of El Vedado presses in from all sides (plate 32). It seems most fitting that in these Cuba photographs the world is turned upside down, the outside invades the inside so dramatically, and the present collides with the past.[27]

Throughout the camera obscura series, Morell found new truths in the dialogue between the domestic interior and the world

outside. It is as if the rooms themselves enjoy a secret life, whispering conversations with the view they face every day, forming relationships laced with longing, pathos, and humor.[28] Although the pictures are emptied of people (both inside and out), a lingering human presence is invariably discernible in crumpled sheets and pillows, the personal effects on a nightstand, or a piece of furniture that breaks the plane on which the outside image is projected. As an eight-hour exposure compressed onto a single piece of film, the picture is part record, part invention. The combination of presence and absence, the normal and the strange, lends the photographs an air of the uncanny—what Freud defined as the simultaneously familiar and foreign. This disorienting effect, which is both uncomfortable and pleasurable, appeals to the artist, who likes the thought that an empty room may not be truly empty, that the world enters and infuses even the most isolated spaces. The scene so commonly viewed every day out the window is now jarringly upside down, and objects, though familiar, are not where they are supposed to be: as if in a movie dream sequence, trees take a shower in the bathroom, mountains crowd a corner, and an ocean fills an attic (plate 34). Perhaps it is no accident that beds feature so prominently and so often as screens for the projections.[29] As Luc Sante writes, in the introduction to Morell's book on the series, "It is a bit as if he had taken his camera into the dream state and emerged with proof of what he saw there."[30]

Fig. 5. *Pietà by El Greco*, 1993

These rooms lend themselves easily to metaphor. The darkened interiors, with a pinhole functioning like a single Cyclopean eye, evoke the inner life of the mind, always absorbing and transforming the sensory input of the outside world. "The eye takes in everything of the world," Sante continues, "but subjectivity ensures that the world arrives in the mind changed by the experience of being seen."[31] Morell's rooms are never empty, blank, or flat; their architectural forms and furnishings alter, frame, and distort the view beyond the windows. The optics by which the camera obscura works are the same as those of the human eye, but they are, of course, also the operating principle of photography. Although the adage that the camera does not lie has been disproven time and time again, the laying bare of this basic principle in such a de-skilled fashion—employing just black plastic and a small hole—seems to lend the pictures a truthful inevitability. And yet Morell not only makes a number of choices, selecting the room, the view, and the position of the pinhole, but he also often intervenes in the scene, rearranging furniture or moving smaller objects. These seemingly pure photographs are, in fact, highly constructed. They thus explicitly mediate—as all photographs do, if perhaps less obviously—the objective and the subjective, the natural and the cultural. And they perform this stage play using photography's most basic and primal means, inspiring in the viewer a remarkable return to a kind of visual innocence despite our media-saturated, technologically sophisticated culture.

If the camera obscura revealed ephemeral glimpses of the world contained in a room, then books can be seen to concretize that experience, holding within their collective cover the sum of all our knowledge. Indeed, shortly after Morell began the camera obscura series, he also started exploring books, hoping to depict them simultaneously as conveyors of information and as tangible objects appealing to all the senses. The book series was sparked, as

was the pencil photograph, by his visual openness and propensity to notice what others overlook. One day in 1993, as Morell was leafing through a book of El Greco paintings, the light from a nearby window happened to reflect off the inky expanses of one of the reproductions, creating an intriguingly odd negative effect (fig. 5, plate 44). He began taking books home from the library and photographing them on his table, and in 1995 accepted a position as artist in residence at the Boston Athenæum. "One of the big pleasures of this project has come from spending a good amount of time looking at, holding, smelling, and reading a terrific number of skinny, fat, tall, pompous, modest, funny, sad, proud, injured, and radiant books," he later wrote in the publication that compiled this series.[32] In his pictures, two stacks of bound newspapers form a human spine in the negative space between them (plate 39); four books with gilded pages appear as so many gold bars piled on top of one another (plate 35); the section thumbholes of three dictionaries catch the light and take on architectural proportions (plate 37). By recognizing that books are first and foremost objects whose physical features affect how they convey their contents, Morell transformed these humble, familiar things into new worlds whose possibilities continue to occupy him (see plates 106 and 107).

As Diana Gaston has observed, Morell possessed a material conception of language even before he began photographing books. He depicted early language acquisition in Brady's magnetic letters on the refrigerator (plate 3) and constructed a new alphabet using the surface tension of water (plate 19).[33] In books, he grasped that words were things as much as symbols; in his picture of the Book of Proverbs for the blind, the raised letters cast shadows in raking light (plate 36). On the opening page of *A Tale of Two Cities*, the paper, translucent in the light, allows words from either side to blend and confuse meaning (plate 40). Phrases running forward and backward—"Light" and "dirty procession," "epoch of belief" and "because he had not kneeled"—contradict and visually oppose each other as if to literalize Charles Dickens's first sentence: "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness. . . ." Morell approaches books, whether valuable rare volumes or inexpensive, mass-produced titles, with a mixture of reverence and his trademark sly humor. He seems to enjoy an inner laugh at the proposition that all of mankind's ideas could be summed up in a single volume called *Thought*, and he takes pleasure in spinning a book of stars during a lengthy exposure to create a revolving universe (plates 41 and 49). In a visual mash-up, two astronomy books opened up against each other form a new image of a Renaissance scientist peering at the cosmos through his telescope (plate 50).

Since paintings, prints, and sculpture were first photographically reproduced in the nineteenth century, the history of art has been mediated through these representations. Morell calls our attention to this translation by showing how art books in particular alter the perception of works of art. Glimpsed through Morell's camera, Goya's *Naked Maja* peers at her own inky reflection in the opposing page, and a new landscape of rolling hills is formed by the undulating pages of a book of landscape paintings, as the actual sun creates new clouds with dappled shadows (plates 46 and 45). As Nicholson Baker points out, when we read, we imagine the page as neutrally flat, an ideal conveyor of code, but of course it has thickness and weight, bending like a wave toward the binding.[34] At the basic material level, a reproduction in a book is splotches of ink on a piece of paper, at a dramatically different size than the original, with reflections, distortions, gutters, creases, and variations in texture: pictures are therefore also things. Yet a page is primarily meant to be a vehicle of meaning, so we normally overlook such distractions, just as we often ignore the constructedness of photographs to focus simply on what is being depicted; Morell's accomplishment is revealing, in both books and photographs, the material underpinnings of what we see.

This fascination with how images work is also at play in Morell's illustrations for a new edition of *Alice's Adventures in*

Wonderland. Lewis Carroll's story is filled with puns and linguistic confusion, dreams, changes in size, and bizarre transformations; throughout, commonplace things become strange in wonderful ways. At the beginning of her adventures, Alice famously muses to herself, "What is the use of a book without pictures or conversations?" and for Morell, the pictures themselves formed the conversation. Morell decided to merge the real and the imagined by cutting out copies of the original John Tenniel drawings and photographing the two-dimensional figures as if alive and at play in an architecture or landscape of three-dimensional books. In one such image, Alice, now oversized, crouches cramped against the "roof" of the structure formed by two books, her hand reaching out from between the pages to grasp at the cutout of the White Rabbit (plate 53). In another picture, the White Rabbit peers at light beckoning from a hole Morell has drilled sacrilegiously through an old tome, literalizing the seductive power of a good story (plate 51). Rather than merely calling our attention to the artificiality of reproductions (as in his book photographs), here he intervened to blur the boundaries of represented and real objects. The notion of a "wonderland" is itself a fitting description for Morell's approach, as he marvels in the new world created by looking at the old one askance, making invented landscapes of the everyday wonderful with his camera.

From his examination of books, Morell moved on to investigate different kinds of symbolic paper: maps and money. Like photographs, maps employ agreed-upon conventions to represent space and information in regularized and organized ways.[35] Morell reunited maps with the objects they represent, for example imagining a massive freshwater lake smack in the middle of the United States, as both coasts rise up to form the edges of a continent-wide valley (plate 54). "It's important to me to have what I photograph undergo a certain transformation—to become a thing different from what we are used to, to be another version of itself," Morell has said.[36] He later began to look closely at currency in an attempt to separate its physical manifestations from its emotional connotations. If in Morell's photographs maps begin to more literally resemble the landscapes they signified, his photographs of money have precisely the opposite effect. His deadpan picture of seven million dollars, for example, looks as much like stacks of worthless paper destined for recycling as it does wealth beyond most people's imagining (plate 57). Money is ephemeral, useful only in exchange, and oddly empty when at rest. Whereas paper money once stood for a certain amount of gold, it has long been an act of faith, a promise to pay; indeed, personal credit cards and the new financial tools of the global economy have rendered money increasingly abstract. Moreover, most of the time we tend to understand money in terms of what it can buy, or through the lens of not having enough. Morell calls our attention instead to the tangible and aesthetic qualities of these transactional objects. Masterpieces of modern printing and compact design, paper bills are advertisements, populated by portraits of historic figures and heads of state, renderings of national monuments, and arcane symbols of country. Morell began intervening more explicitly in his photographs of maps and money, manipulating objects to reveal something telling or often absurd in the conventions we accept—an allusion to his experiences in Cuba, in which the money changed form overnight and the old currency was instantly worthless. In a puzzle of representation, his photograph of sixty dollars—eight bills folded in such a way as to produce an imagined skyscraper of classical columns—demonstrates imperialistic hubris, as a tall but wobbly tower lays claim to an oversized ancient heritage (plate 56).

In 1998 Morell was invited to be an artist in residence at Boston's Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, the venerable collection of Old Master paintings, sculptures, and tapestries set in a mansion designed to resemble a fifteenth-century Venetian palace. He became deeply attuned to the exhibition spaces in which the works of art were shown, as well as the artworks' relationship with the people responsible for their care. Morell found, as he later wrote, "a dynamic collection made up of sculptures, guards, gardeners, sunlight, conservators, maintenance people, rooms, and paintings

that, from a certain angle, may be seen talking to one another."[37] He imagined these new dialogues visually, combining, for example, two different paintings with similar arches to create a new shared architectural space, or juxtaposing a Rembrandt portrait with a maintenance worker who looks eerily similar to the seventeenth-century sitter (plates 72 and 74).[38] Museums had started to become a natural home for Morell, whose work was entering more institutional collections and being featured in exhibitions, including a mid-career retrospective mounted in 1998 that traveled widely. He was not alone in taking a self-reflexive approach to the spaces of exhibition; other artists then photographing in museums included Sophie Calle, Hiroshi Sugimoto, and, perhaps most notably, Thomas Struth. Struth's painting-sized photographs portray museumgoers in the act of looking, hinting at the subjective experience of the viewer of the photograph as he documents the visitors interacting with works of art. Morell, by contrast, takes a more intimate view, and includes no such audience surrogates; he invents rather than records a space of artistic reception.

Fig. 6. ***Ten Sunspots on My Door,*** **2004**

Shortly after making these museum pictures, Morell again looked to the material properties of photography as productive subject matter. In an earlier photograph he had demonstrated that the shadows cast by tree leaves during a solar eclipse are really miniature pictures of the crescented sun—the result of the hundreds of pinhole apertures formed by the small spaces between the leaves of a tree (plate 58). Now, in the first years of the new millennium, he returned to these light effects, showing dappled sunspots on a table (the same camera obscura process occurring in nature; plate 59), or ten separate exposures of the sun forming a dotted line across his door (fig. 6, plate 61). In a departure from his previous photographs of domestic objects, Morell began intervening more into the scene, constructing tableaux specifically to be photographed. He made pseudo-scientific arrangements, engaging photography's history as both a subject and a (presumably disinterested) interpreter of scientific experiments. In one such composition, light glints off the various shapes of a stunning—and entirely nonfunctional—sculpture of laboratory glassware (plate 64). Drawing inspiration from the nineteenth-century motion studies of Eadweard Muybridge and Etienne-Jules Marey, Morell simulated photographic stop-motion in a series of sculptures made for the camera. His picture of pounded lead forming the shape of a hammer hitting a nail in three "moments" is not intended to fool the viewer into thinking it is a scientific document (plate 66). Rather, it plays artfully on the conventions of early stop-motion imagery, rendering each successive impression of the hammer slightly less crisp as if to simulate shorter exposure time or blur. Moreover, he seems to equate the imprint in lead with the action of light on photographic film, alluding to theories of photography that posit an "indexical," or physical, connection between photographic images and reality.[39] Photography, Morell suggests in these pictures, makes even the most blatant falsehoods seem plausible. During this period, and again in 2012, he also returned to a process practiced by Talbot in his earliest years of photography: photograms, or pictures made without a camera (see plates 67–70). In his darkroom, Morell splashed and puddled water on top of sheets of 20 × 24 inch film and exposed them to light, or cast shadows of constructed still lifes

directly onto the film. The resulting images are filled with transparency and distortion, yet conjure up matter and volume in a seemingly real space. In this most elemental, unmediated form of photography—in which objects effectively draw themselves with light on film—Morell nevertheless employs photographic tools to invent rather than record.

In 2005, Morell transformed his work yet again: after decades of photographing exclusively in the classical black and white that had come to define his output, he began to incorporate color. While making a camera obscura photograph at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, on a whim he loaded one of his cameras with a sheet of 8 × 10 inch color film. He had moved a De Chirico painting into a gallery that faced the Greek columns of the museum's east entrance, and was delighted to find their golden hues and the blue of the sky echoing the colors as well as the forms of the painting (fig. 7, plate 78). Morell's move to color prompted technical refinements that made his pictures less raw and immediate, and more intentional: instead of just a pinhole, he inserted a diopter lens that minimized the length of exposure and increased the sharpness of focus, and instead of allowing the projected image to remain upside down, he began employing a prism to correct its orientation. A few years later, he also switched from film to digital, further shortening the time required to make the picture. Whereas before he could only show the cumulative effect of an eight-hour exposure, with its softened shadows and blurred motion, Morell was now able to portray a particular time of day or feeling of light; in a series of the Manhattan Bridge, he depicted morning, afternoon, and evening on the same day (plates 89–91).

Fig. 7. ***Camera Obscura: The Philadelphia Museum of Art East Entrance in Gallery #171 with a De Chirico Painting,*** **2005**

"Color feels more like Impressionism," he explained.[40] Indeed, the pictures he made in 2006–07 in Venice—a city painters have flocked to for centuries to observe its color and light—are particularly attentive to the effects of the morning sun. In these images, he also began to more overtly reference a prephotographic history of image-making, with a seventeenth-century engraving of Santa Maria della Salute engulfed by the upside-down camera projection of the cathedral, or framed prints of the columns surrounding the Piazzetta San Marco echoing the superimposed arches (plates 79 and 80). Linking painting, printmaking, and photography through the camera obscura, of course, makes sense historically: the camera obscura was employed as an aid for painters and draftsmen from the sixteenth century on, and its design incorporated the rules of one-point perspective established by Renaissance painters, thereby shaping what would come to be the norms of photography.[41]

Morell also wanted to bring the camera obscura to the outdoors. Indeed, the portable camera obscura had been used for drawing outside long before the advent of photography. Following the model of nineteenth-century photographers of the American West such as Carleton Watkins and William Henry Jackson (who traveled with mammoth wet-plate cameras and portable darkroom tents to record largely uncharted territory), he set out to photograph America's open vistas, the clichéd American West he had seen in movies as a child in Cuba. Morell had been grappling with how to portray the grand emptiness of the West, a space with no architecture or furniture to lend it a human scale and none of the urban markers among which he had always lived. At first he literally framed the landscape like

an oil painting within the boundaries of a gilded frame (see fig. 18 in the chronology) and shined a circle of light onto the rocks and brush at night to delineate new pictures (see plate 92). In 2010, in Big Bend National Park in Texas, he began experimenting with a portable tent camera with a periscope lens on its top that projected the outside landscape onto the ground below (fig. 21 in the chronology). As with his original camera obscura photographs, Morell employed a camera inside the structure to photograph the image that landed on the ground. He found it appealing that what was overlooked because it was underfoot—something so common and shared—formed the backdrop of these photographs. Energized by the possibilities the tent camera presented, he began to bring it with him to such places as New York, San Francisco, Maine, and Italy, to investigate national parks and sandy beaches, city rooftops and urban sidewalks. He has continued to explore new sites to make these pictures.

Fig. 8. ***Tent Camera Image on Ground: View Looking Southeast toward the Chisos Mountains, Big Bend National Park, Texas,*** **2010**

The tent camera images function much like the classic optical illusion in which the viewer oscillates between seeing, for example, a duck and a rabbit in the same drawing. The three-dimensional landscape and the two-dimensional surface vie for primacy, with the viewer's attention being drawn alternately to (in one early image) the rocks, dirt, and stray branches of the ground and the larger shapes of the hills and brush of the Chisos Mountains (fig. 8, plate 93). The differences in scale are especially disorienting because the small objects that make up the surface texture appear at the same size as bushes or distant rock formations. Like a chemical suspension in which the elements combine, but not fully, the tent camera pictures seem to operate simultaneously in two separate modes of representation, offering at once an image of receding planes and of insistent flatness. Morell feels he is becoming more painterly with these pictures, echoing pointillism in the rooftop's tar and gravel that compose the ground for a view of downtown Manhattan, and mimicking impasto flourishes in the cakey cracked earth near the Rio Grande (plates 95 and 103). He makes this connection explicit in a view from Winslow Homer's Prouts Neck, Maine, backyard looking out at the sea that evokes the painter's calmer watercolors (plate 105). Through the tangled mesh of sandy grass, clouds can be seen floating above the serene horizon, giving the sense of a moment caught in a painterly sketch. But Morell also tips his hat to photographic history, following Carleton Watkins into Yosemite and locating many of the same views that the nineteenth-century photographer so memorably captured in mammoth-plate albumen prints (see plates 96–98). In Morell's interpretation, however, the landscape is no longer fresh and pristine, but viewed through bike tracks in dirt and sidewalk geometry, evidence of the human presence at the site.

Several other contemporary artists have attempted to reinvigorate the medium by revisiting artisanal techniques and practices from the nineteenth century, partly aiming, like Morell, to return photography to some elemental state, and partly in a backlash against digital anonymity.[42] Morell, however, is less interested in re-creating the past than in isolating what about photography can still be thrilling in today's terms. As with many of his other series, the tent camera pictures refer back to photographs, which, until the most recent years in the medium's history, have existed primarily as images on pieces of paper. They

serve as potent reminders that when we look at a photograph, we are looking at a flat picture plane that provides an illusion of three dimensions; even more than the books, maps, and money that Morell had documented earlier, photographs—it could be argued—are the most symbolic of papers, conjuring up believable worlds that shape our experiences on all levels.

Over the past several decades, Morell has watched developments in contemporary photography with interest and has at times, he says, felt like a defender of photography to those who proclaim its demise.[43] He maintains his belief, even in the present age of digital convenience, that the photograph must be worked for and earned; he continues to delight in conceiving pictures and laboring toward their execution. Returning to an attitude of childlike surprise through the eyes of his son, he has been able to access a moment when photography itself was young and nothing short of miraculous, a "wonderful wonder of wonders!" as a journalist said, describing the first photographs made on America's shores.[44] Morell's work offers one path, among many, for embracing photography's unique qualities without falling into the modernist trap of essentialism or blindly adhering to outdated rules. He is willing to look for beauty and emotion in a time that values cool detachment and irony. His photographs attempt to return to the originary wonder of photography without nostalgia, to convey the excitement of this nineteenth-century invention in a twenty-first-century world inundated with photographic images.

Throughout his wide-ranging body of work, Morell's photographs call attention to the material, physical, and tangible. He renders everyday, overlooked objects unfamiliar by bestowing on them a heightened sense of both their tangible existence and what else they could be. When he turns his focus to images in general—whether paper money folded into an architectural form, maps crumpled into new landscapes, or art reproductions reflected and distorted in books—he reminds us of the very real ways in which the physical manifestations of images in our culture affect how we see. And when he applies those insights toward the material underpinnings of photography, he lays bare the conventions of representation that most often appear transparent and natural. Morell shows, by embracing elemental mechanisms such as the camera obscura, tent camera, and photogram, that photographic images—the kinds of images that possess a seemingly privileged relationship with reality—are actually highly constructed. And yet, this understanding of the nature of representation has not prevented him from attempting to make photographs that are themselves compelling. On the contrary, Morell has found that it is still possible to make interesting pictures, and, moreover, he continues to find the project of making pictures interesting. It is for these reasons that we want to accompany Morell and his camera when he grabs our sleeve and says, in the words of E. E. Cummings, "listen;there's a hell / of a good universe next door;let's go."

NOTES

1. Edward MacCurdy, ed. *The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci* (Reynal and Hitchcock, 1938), p. 117.

2. The two most helpful critical writings on Morell's place in recent photographic history are Richard B. Woodward's introduction to *Abelardo Morell* (Phaidon, 2005), which locates Morell as operating between modernist and postmodernist practice; and Andy Grundberg's "Innocence and Photographic Experience in the Work of Abelardo Morell," in *Abelardo Morell: Vision Revealed* (The Patricia and Phillip Frost Art Museum, Miami, 2004), which situates Morell in the context of other contemporary artists who are returning to photography's origins.

3. Carlo Ginzburg discusses this kind of defamiliarizing effect in "Making Things Strange: The Prehistory of a Literary Device," in "The New Erudition," special issue, *Representations* 56 (Autumn 1996), pp. 8–28.

4. Morell, address to Bowdoin College, upon receiving an honorary Doctor of Fine Arts degree at Bowdoin's 192nd Commencement, May 24, 1997.

5. My understanding of Morell's biography is shaped by conversations with the artist conducted over the past several years, including a taped interview conducted in May 2012; Paul Martineau's interview in this catalogue; statements Morell has published in books of his work; *Shadow of the House*, a 2007 documentary film on Morell's work by Allie Humenuk;

and interviews I conducted with Kevin Bubriski, Lois Conner, Lisa McElaney, John McKee, Nick Nixon, Tod Papageorge, Irina Rozovsky, Stephen Scheer, Melinda Simon, and Mike Smith in 2012. Readers can access a comprehensive list of articles and interviews from across his career at www.abelardomorell.net.

6. As told to Christine Temin, in "You Can Judge Morell's Books by Their Covers," *Boston Globe*, Dec. 20, 1995, p. 33.

7. Abelardo Morell, interview with the author, May 8, 2012.

8. In most published essays and interviews, his age at the time of leaving Cuba is given as fourteen, but he actually celebrated that birthday in the United States.

9. Morell, interview (note 7).

10. Morell, address to Bowdoin College (note 4).

11. Abelardo Morell, in *A Camera in a Room: Photographs by Abelardo Morell* (Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995), p. 5.

12. Morell, interview (note 7).

13. For an excellent overview of Papageorge's thinking then and now, see his compilation of lectures and essays, *Core Curriculum: Writings on Photography by Tod Papageorge* (Aperture, 2011).

14. Lois Conner, interview with the author, Aug. 1, 2012.

15. Melinda Simon, interview with the author, July 26, 2012.

16. Abelardo Morell, "Artist's Statement," in Diana Gaston, ed., *Abelardo Morell and the Camera Eye* (Museum of Photographic Arts, San Diego, 1998), p. 7.

17. Morell, in *A Camera in a Room* (note 11), p. 6. Interestingly enough, it was a photograph of Brady that was first included in a museum exhibition, the Museum of Modern Art's *Pleasures and Terrors of Domestic Comfort* in 1991.

18. Charles Simic, "Abelardo Morell's Poetry of Appearances," in *Abelardo Morell, Face to Face: Photographs at the Gardner Museum* (Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, 1998), p. 16.

19. Minor White, *Mirrors, Messages, Manifestations* (Aperture, 1969), p. 106; see Diana Gaston's discussion of Minor White's influence on Morell in *Abelardo Morell and the Camera Eye* (note 16).

20. Morell, in *A Camera in a Room* (note 11), p. 8.

21. Woodward, "Introduction," in *Abelardo Morell* (note 2), p. 11.

22. Morell, in *A Camera in a Room* (note 11), p. 7.

23. Ibid.

24. Morell was commissioned by photography editor Kathy Ryan to make this image as part of a *New York Times Magazine* feature on Times Square, May 18, 1997.

25. Morell, quoted in Diana Gaston, "Abelardo Morell and the Camera Eye," in Gaston (note 16), p. 11. The camera lucida was an optical device employed by artists as a drawing aid; unlike the camera obscura, it did not project an image but rather used a mirror or prism to superimpose virtually the outside scene on the drawing surface.

26. Abelardo Morell, "Cuba from a Dark Room," in *Cuba on the Verge: An Island in Transition*, ed. Terry McCoy (Bulfinch Press, 2003), p. 85.

27. For an analysis of dislocation in the Cuba photographs, see Beth A. Zinsli, "Havana through the Lens: Memory and Exile in Abelardo Morell's Camera Obscura Photographs," *Hemisphere* 2 (2009), pp. 68–83. Zinsli sees the camera obscura images "not just as visual representations of Morell's individual dislocation and memory, but also as a metaphor for the exilic condition of modernity more generally" (p. 70).

28. Luc Sante writes eloquently about this idea in his introduction to Abelardo Morell, *Camera Obscura* (Bulfinch Press, 2004).

29. See Bonnie Costello, "Outside In and Upside Down: The Art of Abelardo Morell," *Yale Review* 96, 3 (July 2008), pp. 56–71, for an iconographical analysis not only of beds, but also of clocks, doors, ladders, prints, towers, walls, and windows in the camera obscura photographs.

30. Sante, "Introduction" (note 28), p. 8.

31. Ibid., pp. 8–9.

32. Abelardo Morell, "Afterword," in *A Book of Books* (Bulfinch Press, 2002), p. 103.

33. Diana Gaston, "Abelardo Morell and the Camera Eye," in Gaston (note 16), p. 13.

34. Nicholson Baker, "Preface," in *A Book of Books* (note 32), p. 8.

35. Richard B. Woodward calls them both "a necessary distortion," in "Introduction," in *Abelardo Morell* (note 2), p. 12.

36. Morell, interview with Joshua Meyer, "Abelardo Morell," *Art New England* 20, 2 (Feb./Mar. 1999), p. 21.

37. Abelardo Morell, "Foreword," in *Abelardo Morell, Face to Face* (note 18), p. 7.

38. A decade later, in 2008, Morell returned to New Haven with a residency at the Yale University Art Gallery and worked in a similar but more literal fashion, actually moving paintings and sculptures to create a new work of art (plates 75 and 77), what he has called "an impossible conversation." Morell, interview with Paul Martineau in this catalogue, p. 158.

39. See, for example, Rosalind Krauss, "Notes on the Index: Part 1" and "Notes on the Index: Part 2," in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (MIT Press, 1993), pp. 196–219.

40. Morell, quoted in Vince Aletti, "Upside Down and Inside Out," Culture Watch, *Departures*, Mar./Apr. 2007, p. 146.

41. Joel Snyder has argued that post-Renaissance painters were not making works in imitation of the camera image, but rather that the machine itself was designed in accordance with the appearance of their painting. See Joel Snyder, "Picturing Vision," *Critical Inquiry* 6, 3 (Spring 1980), p. 512.

42. See Lyle Rexer, *Photography's Antiquarian Avant-Garde: The New Wave in Old Processes* (Harry N. Abrams, 2002); Morell is not listed among the artists. Andy Grundberg links Morell with Ellen Carey, Susan Derges, Adam Fuss, David Goldes, and Mike and Doug Starn, among others, who have sought to rediscover the amazement of photography's early history; Grundberg (note 2).

43. Morell, interview (note 7).

44. "New Discovery in the Fine Arts," *New Yorker*, Apr. 13, 1839.