



## Editor's Note

The Oxford English Dictionary lists two definitions for the verb collaborate. The first is the more standard notion of working “in conjunction with another or others, to co-operate; esp. in a literary or artistic production, or the like.” The second definition—“to co-operate traitorously with the enemy”—is less common, although it offers another vivid model of co-operation. To collaborate is to co-operate: to work together (with ally or enemy) to develop, refine, and accomplish a goal. Each issue of *Exposure*, for example, emerges out of intricate collaborative interactions involving the input of the Publications Committee, the hard work of our staff, and the creative energy of every photographer and contributor we engage with. I welcome the challenges and rewards of these ongoing collaborations. These intellectual exchanges are not only the foundation for the kind of engaged and informed dialogue on photography that *Exposure* works to promote, but also form the very basis of the learning experience: both for our readers and myself.

This issue's contents are assembled in harmony with the 2014 SPE National Conference theme of “Collaborative Exchanges: Photography in Dialogue.” Hannah Frieser offers a historical account of photographer collaborations, including Bernd and Hilla Becher, Nate Larson and Marni Shindelman, and Mark and Sonia Whitesnow. West Coast photographer Chris Johnson's most recent project, *Question Bridge: Black Males*, is a socially engaged collaborative video installation that not only connects participants and audience in dialogue, but also was created in collaboration with photographer Hank Willis Thomas. As Lisa Arrastía's essay on Johnson demonstrates, his photographic career was engendered through ongoing collaborative relationships with colleagues.

Whether through a lifetime of collegial collaboration (as in Johnson's model) or the episodic partnerships between photographers and curators highlighted in this and every issue of *Exposure*, engaging ideas with a cohort inevitably yields rewards. Even when the process gets thorny, that collective tension fuels change. And just when it feels as if the collaborative exchange risks falling dreadfully apart, that very moment turns out to be precisely when it begins to cohere.

Fortunately, I experience this lucidity at some point with every issue of *Exposure*. And you, our readers, complete *Exposure*'s collaborative circle. I encourage your thoughts and feedback on this issue and any other topics related to the state of photography practice and photography education today. I am eager to hear from you.

—Stacey McC Carroll Cutshaw  
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## The Society for Photographic Education

SPE is a nonprofit membership organization that provides and fosters an understanding of photography as a means of diverse creative expression, cultural insight, and experimental practice. Through its interdisciplinary programs, services, and publications, the Society seeks to promote a broader understanding of the medium in all its forms through teaching and learning, scholarship, and criticism.

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## Institutional Subscriptions

*Exposure* (ISSN 0098-8863) is published twice yearly. Domestic institutional subscription rate is \$35 annually; outside the USA, \$50 annually. Subscription to *Exposure* is a benefit of SPE membership.

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## On the cover

Terri Warpinski, *Fallow [Qalqilya, E1 Plan area], 2012 (detail), archival pigment print mounted on Dibond, 16 x 28 inches. Courtesy of the artist*

Read more about Warpinski's work and crossing borders beginning on page 18.

The Journal of the

society for  
photographic  
education

spe

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Spring 2014

Volume 47:1

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# Insecure Borders: Terri Warpinski's *Surface Tension*

Katherine Ware

A longtime photographer of desert lands, Terri Warpinski is well acclimated to places inhospitable to humans. In her unfolding series *Surface Tension*, begun along the legally designated border between the United States of America and the United Mexican States, she reveals places where the inhospitality of the land is far exceeded by that of its people. Unlike the natural impediments (canyons, rivers, mountain ranges) that may kill you if you attempt to cross them, the borders that humans create (walls, detention camps, reservations) are often enforced by governments and guns that stack the odds against anyone who wishes to challenge them.

Borders are where one thing ends and another begins: where edges interact unpredictably to create innovation but also friction, like above-ground tectonic plates. Warpinski approaches this tricky subject as a landscape photographer, taking the long, and often horizontal, view of things. Human presence is implicit in these images rather than overt: roads worn by many travelers, barbed wire strung by unknown hands, crosses fashioned out of someone's hope. We see shadowy figures silhouetted in the glare of a spotlight at night, men distorted by the shuttered grate that detains them. And we see relentless webs of wire and the intractable march of steel bars. Here, the distinctive porosity of border culture has been replaced by polarization, legislation, incarceration.



Terri Warpinski, *Las cruces y milagros I*, 2012, archival pigment print mounted on Dibond, 16 x 31 inches. Courtesy of the artist



By vividly evoking the physical elements of the border, Warpinski places us at the edge of the action with an opportunity to experience it viscerally. The militaristic architecture of the barriers; the searing lights of a checkpoint; the vast, featureless desert devoid of food or water; the resolute bars covering a window; all activate a powerful sense of bodily threat. Instead of playing on our empathy for others—watered down by self-interest and media fatigue—the artist elicits our own fear (of confinement, surveillance, thirst, subjugation, and death), with its attendant surge of adrenaline.

The vulnerability of flesh and blood is something we share as certainly with our enemies as with our allies. Warpinski further emphasizes commonality by continuing the series at sites in the Middle East and in Germany, a reminder that battles over land and resources reach across continents and far into recorded history. In each of the three places she has photographed (North America, the Middle East, Europe), tensions escalated to the point at which an armed physical barrier was erected and enforced for decades. Warpinski's sharp, color photographs ground these images in our contemporary moment, demonstrating that this destruction of lives, cultures, and ecosystems implicates us all.

A wall is not a solution but rather a monument to an ongoing crisis. The barriers along the contested Israeli and Palestinian border are stark visual reminders of an inability to reconcile passionately held beliefs. A "secure border" is a most insecure place to live, offering physical insecurity; food insecurity; water, sanitation, and survival insecurity. Those who remain in militarized zones and refugee camps often have deep cultural and familial ties to the region but are also too poor to relocate and have no other place to go.



*Terri Warpinski, Flight II [San Luis Rio di Colorado], 2013, archival pigment print mounted on Dibond, 24 x 30 inches. Courtesy of the artist*





Without being didactic, Warpinski suggests the complexity of these ongoing conflicts by juxtaposing multiple images in many of her photographs. She uses the camera like a human eye, composing a scene from composite impressions stitched together. There is no single reality—no single truth—only a collage of fleeting views. Her use of multiple images seems also to mimic the fragmentation and disorientation of the lives of the people who intersect with these borders. At other moments fragmentation seems to stand in for the oppositional and apparently irreconcilable differences that have fostered the complex geographic and political situations she takes as her subject.

These powerful tensions are mediated in the series by the addition of pictures from Berlin, where the Berlin Wall, built in 1961 by the German Democratic Republic, stood as a global symbol of irreconcilable differences for three decades. German families living within the same city were forcibly separated, and hundreds of people were killed trying to traverse the wall. Much to the world's surprise, this ominous, divisive landmark of World War II was dismantled in 1990 and now exists primarily as isolated park monuments and souvenir chunks dispersed across the globe. The government has left in place some remnants of a dark period in history and has honored the names and faces of those who suffered under its shadow, yet the remaining sections of concrete wall are now as denatured as the archaic moats of medieval castles. The surviving slabs and watchtowers are now marked by graffiti artists—not out of disrespect as much as out of disregard—and ignored by sunbathers and passing bicyclists. The fearsome wall has lost its power, now blending into the landscape.



*Terri Warpinski, Juarez Crossing II [detained], 2011, archival pigment print mounted on Dibond, 16 x 28 inches.  
Courtesy of the artist*



The landscape is where Warpinski began her journey, and it is where all our follies are ultimately headed. Our hard-won but short-lived attempts to carve out a place for ourselves in the world with agriculture, roads, fences, and even monstrous barriers, presents the veneer of dominance over the vastness around us. But time will wash away our traces someday, and the landscape cares not for our self-importance, our misunderstandings, and our cruelties.

**Katherine Ware** is curator of photography at the New Mexico Museum of Art in Santa Fe, where she organized the exhibition, book, and website *Earth Now: American Photographers and the Environment*. She previously served as curator of photographs at the Philadelphia Museum of Art and assistant curator for the Department of Photographs at the J. Paul Getty Museum. She is a frequent juror and reviewer of contemporary photography and has written essays on the art of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. [www.nmartmuseum.org](http://www.nmartmuseum.org)

**Terri Warpinski** lives and works in Eugene, Oregon, where she is a professor of art at the University of Oregon. She holds a BA in humanistic studies from the University of Wisconsin, Green Bay, and an MA and MFA in photography from the University of Iowa. She is a former Fulbright Scholar to Israel (2000–2001). *Surface Tension* will be featured in a solo exhibition at the Lincoln Center in Fort Collins, Colorado, later in 2014. This work has been generously supported by grants from the University of Oregon School of Architecture and Allied Arts, the Oregon Arts Commission, the Hallie Ford Foundation, and an artist residency at Playa in Summer Lake, Oregon. [www.terriwarpinski.com](http://www.terriwarpinski.com)



Terri Warpinski, Checkpoint [Qalandia], 2012, archival pigment print mounted on Dibond, 16 x 40 inches. Courtesy of the artist





Above: Terri Warpinski, *Fallow* [Qalqilya, E1 Plan area], 2012, archival pigment print mounted on Dibond, 16 x 28 inches. Courtesy of the artist

Opposite: Terri Warpinski, *Under Hebron* [settlement], 2011, archival pigment print mounted on Dibond, 24 x 24 inches. Courtesy of the artist





*Terri Warpinski, Into the Wild [Berlin], 2012, archival pigment print mounted on Dibond, 16 x 35 inches. Courtesy of the artist*



*Terri Warpinski, Watchtower [Schlesischer Busche], 2013, archival pigment print mounted on Dibond, 24 x 30 inches. Courtesy of the artist*