



AN HONORS UNIVERSITY IN MARYLAND

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NEWS RELEASE

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Media contact:
Tom Moore
tmoore@umbc.edu
410-455-3370

Albin O. Kuhn Library Gallery Presents Two Exhibitions by John Pfahl: *Luminous River: Photographs of the Susquehanna* and *Extreme Horticulture*

April 2 – May 26, 2006

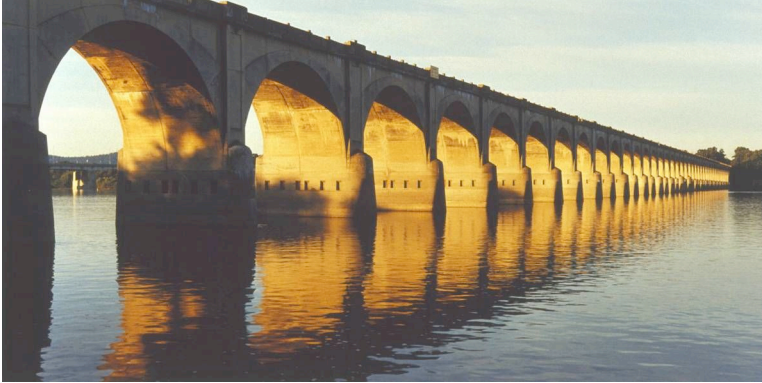


Baltimore, MD
(March 15, 2006) —
Opening on April 2nd
and continuing
through May 26th,
UMBC's Albin O.
Kuhn Library Gallery
presents two
exhibitions of work
by John Pfahl, a
preeminent
landscape
photographer whose
work concentrates

on merging idealized landscape images with visual traces of human existence. On **April 18th** at 4:30 pm, the artist will give a **public lecture** in the Albin O. Kuhn Library Gallery. A reception will follow.

Luminous River pays homage to the Susquehanna River, a waterway that has played a historic role in American transportation. Pfahl has systematically followed and photographed the river from its origins in Otsego Lake to its mouth in the Chesapeake Bay, documenting its picturesque qualities. The images reference early American landscape art and capture a similar stillness, clarity and sensitivity to light and timelessness.

Extreme Horticulture includes photographs taken over several years in private and public gardens around the United States. Subjects range from the sublimely beautiful *Birch Allee* at Stan Hywet Gardens in Akron, Ohio, to the ridiculous *Fifty-foot Inchworm*, an azalea topiary at Cypress Gardens, Florida. The series continues the artist's interest in nature and humankind's effects on nature.



Artist's Statement on the Luminous River Series

"I became captivated with the Susquehanna years ago while driving from my home in Buffalo to Washington, D.C. The highway follows the river for about fifty miles between Shamokin Dam and Harrisburg—fifty miles of constantly changing river views. Cutting through five

mountain ridges, spotted with wooded islands large and small, and featuring wide glassy surfaces interspersed with riffles and rapids, the Susquehanna appeared to be a condensed catalog of classic river landscapes. The light on that first occasion, and on many subsequent visits, was transcendent. The river seemed to soften the air through which it flowed, conjuring up tones of 19th century American landscape painting.

"While the Susquehanna was, indeed, occasionally visited and painted by such Hudson River School artists as Jasper Cropsey and Thomas Doughty, it did not receive a fraction of attention paid to the Hudson itself. Not easily navigable because of rocks and rapids, and not in close proximity to major cities, it clearly proved more of a challenge for artists to explore and paint. It was, arguably, more "picturesque" than the Hudson. In fact, the Susquehanna closely resembled (and still resembles) the fabled River Wye in Wales, where William Gilpin, in the late 18th century, developed the landscape paradigms that so greatly influenced masses of English watercolorists.

Nevertheless, the 448-mile long Susquehanna and its 240-mile long West Branch languished largely ignored by the heavy-hitters of 19th century landscape painting.



"So here I come, in the early part of the 21st century, with my large view camera and sturdy tripod, to try and rectify the imbalance. My project references early American landscape art, particularly that of painters in the Luminist mode. The timelessness, stillness, clarity, and especially, the sensitivity to light in the paintings of John Frederick Kensett, Fitz Hugh Lane, and Martin Johnson Heade have been a particular source of inspiration. Two early photographers also proved relevant: William H. Rau, with his photographs of Susquehanna and other river scenes taken while he was working for the Pennsylvania Railroad, and Seneca Ray Stoddard, Luminist photographer of Lake George and the Adirondacks. Of course, my greatest inspiration was the Susquehanna itself, which I followed systematically from its origin in Otsego Lake to its mouth in the Chesapeake Bay, enticed, always, by what lay waiting around the next bend."

About John Pfahl

John Pfahl was born on February 17, 1939, in New York, New York, and raised in New Jersey. He received a BFA from Syracuse University in the School of Art and his MA from Syracuse University in the School of Communications. He has appeared in over 100 group and solo exhibitions, and his work is represented in at least forty-five public and corporate collections, including the George Eastman House International Museum of Photography, the Cleveland Museum of Art, and the Art Institute of Chicago.



Gallery Information

The Albin O. Kuhn Gallery serves as one of the principal art galleries in the Baltimore region.

Objects from the Special Collections Department, as well as art and artifacts from all over the world, are displayed in challenging and informative exhibitions for the University community and the public. Moreover, traveling exhibitions are occasionally presented, and the Gallery also sends some of its exhibits on tour to other institutions nationwide. Admission to the Gallery and its programs is free.

Acknowledgements

Luminous River and *Extreme Horticulture* are organized by Nina Freudenheim, Inc., in Buffalo, New York. Their presentation at UMBC have been supported in part from an arts program grant from the Maryland State Arts Council, an agency funded by the State of Maryland and the National Endowment for the Arts.



Hours of Operation (please note the Gallery is now open on Sundays)

Sunday	1 P.M. – 5 P.M.
Monday	12 P.M. – 4:30 P.M.
Tuesday	12 P.M. – 4:30 P.M.
Wednesday	12 P.M. – 4:30 P.M.
Thursday	12 P.M. – 8 P.M.
Friday	12 P.M. – 4:30 P.M.
Saturday	1 P.M. – 5 P.M.

Telephone

UMBC Artsline (24 hour recorded message): 410-455-ARTS
General Gallery information: 410-455-2270

Web

UMBC Arts & Culture Calendar: <http://www.umbc.edu/arts>
Albin O. Kuhn Library Gallery: <http://aok.lib.umbc.edu/gallery/>
UMBC News Releases: <http://www.umbc.edu/news>

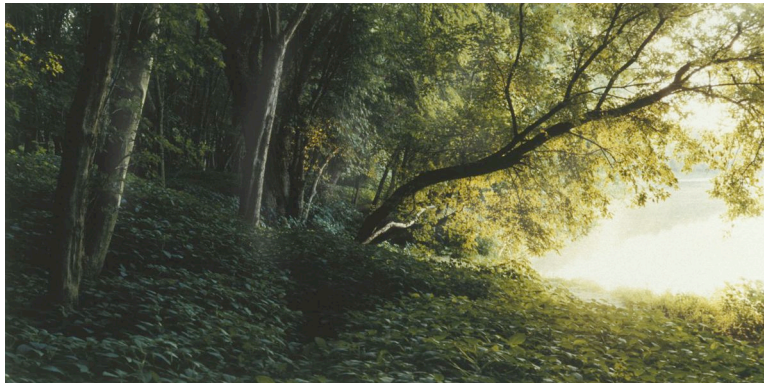
Directions

UMBC is located approximately 10 minutes from downtown Baltimore and 20 minutes from I-495.

- From Baltimore and points north, proceed south on I-95 to exit 47B. Take Route 166 toward Catonsville and then follow signs to the Walker Avenue Garage or Albin O. Kuhn Library.
- From I-695, take Exit 12C (Wilkins Avenue) and continue one-half mile to the entrance of UMBC at the intersection of Wilkins Avenue and Hilltop Road. Turn left and follow signs to the Walker Avenue Garage or Albin O. Kuhn Library.
- From Washington and points south, proceed north on I-95 to Exit 47B. Take Route 166 toward Catonsville and then follow signs to the Walker Avenue Garage or Albin O. Kuhn Library.
- Daytime metered visitor parking is available in the Walker Avenue Garage. Visitor parking regulations are enforced on all University calendar days.

Images for Media

High resolution images for media are available online:
<http://www.umbc.edu/newsevents/arts/hi-res/>
or by email or postal mail.



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