



Massengill Family, *Untitled*, c. 1930s.
Hand-colored photograph, 1.75 x 1.5 in.

Making Pictures: Three For a Dime

Photographs by the Massengill Family

January 10–February 15, 2015

Opening Reception: January 10, 2015, 6–8 PM

One Saturday morning in the mid-1930s, Mancy Massengill, a wife and mother of two, saw people having their pictures made in a dime store photo booth in Batesville, Arkansas. According to her son Lance, “she watched close, and got the name off the camera, then wrote to the company and ordered the lens. She got the money for that by taking about two dozen pullets in for sale.” Her husband, Jim, built a box to house the lens and outfitted a trailer to create a mobile photo studio. On weekends, they would set up in little towns across the state and make pictures, three for a dime.

Jim and Mancy Massengill started this family side-business to make ends meet. The country was in the throes of depression and on the verge of entering the Second World War. Work was scarce in rural Arkansas, but the Massengills understood that even in rough times, life continues. Babies are born, children play, couples meet, and we all grow older. Someone needed to be there to capture those moments and that person could perhaps make a living doing it.

The Massengill family photographs can be playful, serious, strange, and at times, haunting. Originally created as precious souvenirs, these photographs recorded moments experienced by the very young, the very old, and everyone in between. Viewed today, the images provide us with honest and intimate portraits of life in the rural South in a bygone era.

It is the stuff of literature, film, art, and music—life turns on a dime. Mancy Massengill walks into a store and has the idea to start making photographs. Almost seventy years later, Maxine Payne, a photographer from Arkansas, reconnects with a family friend, Sondra Massengill, the daughter of Lance and Evelyn, and is invited to discover hundreds of photographs that she never knew existed. Those two events, not excluding everything that happened in between, have brought this project into being. Today, thanks to luck or providence, or both, we have been afforded the opportunity to see these photographs that would have otherwise been lost to the slow but inevitable passage of time.

—Phillip March Jones, Director

The exhibition is accompanied by a publication of the same title, co-published by Dust-to-Digital and Institute 193.

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Art brut is an expression of individual mythology, conducted outside the realms of mainstream culture by people who exist in society's constructed alterity, and returns us to the metaphysics of art where the creative impulse attempts to elucidate the mystery of being in the world.



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Massengill Family, *Thelma with Photo Trailer*, c. 1930s. Hand-colored photograph, 5 x 7 in.



Austin Eddy, *My Shadow*, 2014. Bleach, linen, cut paper on raw linen in artist frame, 14 x 11 in.

Austin Eddy: It's Not That Simple

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Using the figure as armature, Austin Eddy builds his works onto raw canvas with cut paper, canvas, and paint. Eddy's figures communicate the full-spectrum of human emotion: they are playful, sad, kind, lonely, confused, or loving. Like the materials he uses, the tone of the works is raw, articulated in quick, but honest lines, curves, and shapes. The palette, dominated by various hues of black and brown, is determined chiefly by those materials: browns from canvas, yellows from wood glue or the reaction of gel medium on news print, whites from bleach, blacks from charcoal, and greys from pencil. Eddy's most recent works, the subject of our exhibition, are simple compositions depicting scenes from the artist's personal and visual vernacular of flat-faced figures and impossible landscapes.

Austin Eddy (b. 1986) received his BFA from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2009. He lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.

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Workshop is devoted to the exhibition of recent discoveries, immersive installations, and contemporary artists engaged with the artists or ideas present in the gallery's program.