## Stephen DiRado

### Better Together: Four Decades of Photographs





## **Stephen DiRado** Better Together: Four Decades of Photographs

Fitchburg Art Museum February 1 – June 1, 2025

## **FITCHBURG STATE** UNIVERSITY



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## Acknowledgments

Fitchburg Art Museum (FAM) Director, and curator of this exhibition, Nick Capasso would like to thank everyone who made this career retrospective of the work of Stephen DiRado possible.

No curator works alone, and many FAM staff members played instrumental roles in the organization and installation of this show: Curator Emily Mazzola, Terry and Eva Herndon Assistant Curator Sarah Harper, Collection Manager Charlie Cruz, Interim Facilities Manager Eugene Finney, and Custodia Melvin Bailey. This team was assisted by professional museum contractors Jesse Collins and Justin Tarbell.

Education programs associated with **Stephen DiRado: Better Together** were created and implemented by Director of Education Susan Diachisin and Manager of Education Programs Suzanne Hauerstein. The many public events organized for this show were coordinated by Manager of Membership and Events Aimee Cotnoir and Assistant Manager of Membership and Events Caitlyn Falzone.

While most of the exhibited photographs were loaned by artist Stephen DiRado, several came from other sources. In 2015, FAM Consulting Curator for Photography, the late Stephen Jareckie, selected and purchased a large portfolio of DiRado photographs for the FAM Permanent Collection. Many of these works are included in the show, and their acquisition was supported by the FAM's Sinon Collection Fund, the Clementi Family Fund, and the Robert and Elaine Smith Photography Fund. And, the stunning portrait of Cleveland, in the *Beach People Series*, was a gift to FAM from Mary Levin Koch and Bill Koch. Many thanks also to Professor Rob Carr's Spring, 2025 Client Project Production class at Fitchburg State University for designing this beautiful exhibition catalog. The undergraduate student design team, led by FAM Terry and Eva Herndon Assistant Curator Sarah Harper, includes Kyle Karaca and Ephren De Brito Oliveira.

This exhibition has been funded in part by the Simonds Lecture Fund, the Clementi Family Acquisition Fund, and a generous grant from the Amelia V. Gallucci-Cirio Endowment Fund at the Fitchburg State University Foundation.

Our greatest thanks go to Stephen DiRado, whose deeply human and humane work, over many decades, is a testament to the power of photography to create not just images, but also community. His spirit of generosity has permeated every aspect of this exhibition, from inception, to planning, to installation, and to programming. He has spent the last two years of his life in devotion to the success of this exhibition. The Fitchburg Art Museum would also like to thank Donna DiRado, for loaning her husband to us for a very extended period of time!

Artist Stephen DiRado would like to offer heartfelt thanks to the following individuals for their love, support, and assistance with Stephen DiRado, **Better Together: Four Decades of Photographs:** Frank Armstrong, Chris DiRado, Donna DiRado, Don Hartmann, Steven King, David Krooshof, Sean Leary, Matt Malsky, Eric Nichols, Kofi Puko, Brittany Severance, Charles Slatkin, Soren Sorensen, Gyani Wasp, and Allissa Williams.





### Stephen DiRado

Better Together: Four Decades of Photographs Mejor juntos: cuatro decadas de fotografías



## Introduction

This career retrospective exhibition features the work of Stephen DiRado, the leading contemporary artist and fine art photographer in Central Massachusetts. DiRado has taught photography at Clark University in Worcester since 1982, and his work has been exhibited, collected, and published internationally for over forty years. In 2012, he was awarded a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship for excellence in the creative art of photography.

Throughout his career, DiRado has worked in series, usually spanning many years and involving thousands of images, representing communities of people in Worcester and Martha's Vineyard. His photographic practice is intimately intertwined with his life – DiRado carries a camera everywhere and makes photographs every day. He operates within many of the great art historical traditions – portraiture, landscape, still life, and the nude. Through an aesthetic that combines realism and symbolism, he evokes deep human emotions like joy, melancholy, boredom, sensuality, vulnerability, compassion, and most of all, love.

DiRado also creates striking images of the night sky, connecting celestial events with the earth and communities of human observers.

DiRado's aesthetic has been forged by his experiences with photography in his youth. Photographs played an important role in the culture of his large, extended Italian family, memorializing gatherings, celebrations, and vacations. As a young man, DiRado was employed as a photojournalist by the Marlborough Enterprise-Sun, and in the early 1980s attended the Massachusetts College of Art, where he began to learn the craft of fine art street photography.

DiRado creates most of his photographs with analog 4" x 5" or 8" x 10" view cameras, which allow unparalleled control of resolution, detail, tone, depth of field, and composition. The sophistication of these tools is matched by their inconvenience – the cameras, and the accompanying gear, are heavy, cumbersome, and expensive, and require physical stamina and a strong work ethic. For more recent projects, DiRado exclusively uses a tiny hand-held digital camera.

Ultimately, for DiRado, photography is a means to forge empathetic relationships with people, create community, and express love.

This exhibition has been funded in part by the Simonds Lecture Fund, the Clementi Family Acquisition Fund, and a generous grant from the Amelia V. Gallucci-Cirio Endowment Fund at the Fitchburg State University Foundation.

Unless otherwise indicated, all artworks are lent by the artist. Nick Capasso, FAM Director



Photo by Charles Fitzmaurice



Photo courtesy of Clark University

# Worcester, Massachusetts

## Worcester, Massachusetts

The city of Worcester and environs are central to Stephen DiRado's work and career. He was born in Worcester in 1957, and grew up in Marlborough, Massachusetts. In 1982, he began teaching photography at Clark University, and then moved to Worcester in 1986, where he still resides.

He maintains a deep love for this quirky city, where he honed his craft as a young photographer, enjoyed his first public exhibitions, and gained recognition as an artist. Today, DiRado is at the center of a thriving local arts community. He hosts weekly salons and gatherings that bring together artists, academics, students, colleagues, and culture workers, and he consistently mentors young photographers.

While DiRado usually works in tightly defined series, he has always made singular photos of places and individuals in and around the city he loves. According to the artist, "If I'm not a part of something, then I have no business photographing it. I use my camera as a conduit to connect to a community, a location, or an idea."



Argento's Market, East Central Street, Worcester, MA, 1984



34 Shamrock Street, Worcester, MA, December 14, 1995



Couple Kissing, White Tower Restaurant, Main South, Worcester, MA 1985



In the Present Day: Gee, Worcester, MA, June 16, 2023



In the Present Day: Brittany, (Looking Up At the Moon)

# Bell Pond, Summer 1983



Bell Pond: Cheryl, Jamie and Michael, July 3, 1983

## Bell Pond, Summer 1983

DiRado's *Bell Pond* series was his first fully realized body of work, where he laid the groundwork for the main themes and directions of his aesthetic and career.

From May – October, 1983, he made photographs almost every day at Bell Pond on Bell Hill, off Belmont Street, on the east side of Worcester. Bell Pond is a city park used for swimming and picnicking in a residential working-class neighborhood, punctuated by Seabury Heights, two multistory buildings that provide affordable housing to elders and people with disabilities.

A loose community of individuals, couples, and groups of family and friends – from many different cultures – coalesce each summer around this local swimming hole. DiRado was fascinated by this place and its people. He befriended them and earned their trust. He always asked permission before taking a photograph, and always presented his subjects with free prints. He became known as "The Picture Man," and as an outsider was encouraged and protected by local informal community leaders.

The people in the *Bell Pond* series look directly into the camera. This creates a direct confrontation with viewers of the photographs, who get to look into the eyes of strangers, where they find a wide range of emotions: love, anger, tenderness, defiance, and anxiety.

At Bell Pond, DiRado brought together his past experiences with portraits of family and friends, and street photography, to create a multi-image portrait of a unique community. DiRado used a tripod-mounted large-format camera to frame his subjects, and a strobe light to illuminate them. These photographic techniques, combined with his ability to personally connect with his subjects, became the foundation of his personal style.



Bell Pond: Bob and Tammy, September 20, 1983

Bell Pond: Mary Lou (Left) and Family, July 2, 1983





Bell Pond: Landry Family with Boyfriend Bob, 1983



Bell Pond: Nancy, 13 Years Old, Permission to Smoke, 1983



# Mall Series: The Worcester Center Galleria

## Mall Series: The Worcester Center Galleria

From the spring of 1984 through the summer of 1986, DiRado created his next photographic series at the Worcester Center Galleria, a very large shopping mall that opened downtown in 1971, closed in 2006, and then was subsequently demolished.

This series is a portrait of American Mall culture in the 1980s and captured the emotional and psychological effects of this new model for retail space that also became a public gathering place for communities of people, especially teens, the elderly, and people with disabilities. To work in this environment, DiRado was granted permission by Galleria management (he "knew all the cops and custodians") and of course, his subjects.

DiRado was particularly interested in the mall as a very particular stage for human emotions and behaviors. The cold, corporate, manipulative architecture - with its "horrible even lighting" – made people feel detached, bored, and anxious. Although no one in the photographs seems particularly happy, DiRado portrayed the mall goers and workers with empathy and compassion.

As he puts it, the overriding message of the *Mall Series* was "what have we done to ourselves?" His work on this series left him in a state of depression.

In 1986, DiRado exhibited the Mall Series at the Worcester Art Museum, his first solo museum exhibition.

Fittingly, in 2024, the New Yorker magazine published an oddly nostalgic selection from this series with the title "A Begrudgingly Affectionate Portrait of the American Mall."







Mall Series: Nancy, James and Gina,

December 14, 1985



Mall Series: Helen, Saturday Morning, December 22, 1984



Mall Series: Diane, Thursday Afternoon, July 5, 1984



Mall Series: Mall Security, Saturday Morning, July 19, 1986

# Martha's Vineyard: Beach People



Martha's Vineyard Beach People: Harold and Rebecca, Aquinnah, MA, August 13, 2011

## Martha's Vineyard: Beach People

Every summer from 1988 through 2019, DiRado made photographs on the nude beach at Aquinnah (previously named Gay Head until 1997), on the island of Martha's Vineyard. *Beach People* is his longest, and best-known series, and represents his first complete integration of life and work, and the culmination of his aesthetic and social skills.

The *Beach People* series is deeply influenced by the type of portraiture DiRado developed at *Bell Pond*, and the baroque compositional complexity of his photographs at *Jacob's House*. Through his near-constant presence on the beach for over thirty years, the artist became an integral part of this summer community, and brought along his friends and colleagues from Worcester.

On good weather days, in the late afternoons and early evenings, DiRado was a familiar figure at the beach, lugging his 8" x 10" view camera and gear in search of willing subjects. His sheer physical commitment to the project helped him earn the trust of naked and near-naked strangers, many of whom were eager to be photographed, and eventually became dear friends.

DiRado was particularly interested in this place for a few reasons. First, the beach itself is a liminal, almost spiritual space where earth, sea, and sky meet. Weather, seascape, and landscape play important evocative roles in the photographs. The beach also encourages particular types of human social behaviors, like the formation of temporary, intimate, and fleeting communities, where the artist could explore body positions, degrees of undress, and directions of gaze. Naked people afforded the opportunity to engage in the art historical tradition of the nude, with its implied vulnerability, universality, and relationships to the mythological and the divine. Here, the artist created thousands of images which address deep emotional and symbolic themes, including darkness and light, love and detachment, and sensuality and anxiety.

In 2009, in a melancholic mood due to his father's fatal illness, DiRado began focusing his camera on the faces of individuals at sunset. Their moods were intensified by specific conditions of weather and light in the backgrounds, and by the photographer's use of strobe lighting.

In 2012, For his *Beach People* series, DiRado was awarded a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship, one of this country's highest honors for artistic achievement.

This catalog also includes the video, *Summer Spent*, which documents DiRado's working methods and sheer physical commitment to the making of the *Beach People* series.



Martha's Vineyard Beach People: Kelly Family and Friends Gay Head, MA, August 10, 1989



Martha's Vineyard Beach People: Claudia, Jutino and Friends, Gay Head, MA, August 10, 1990

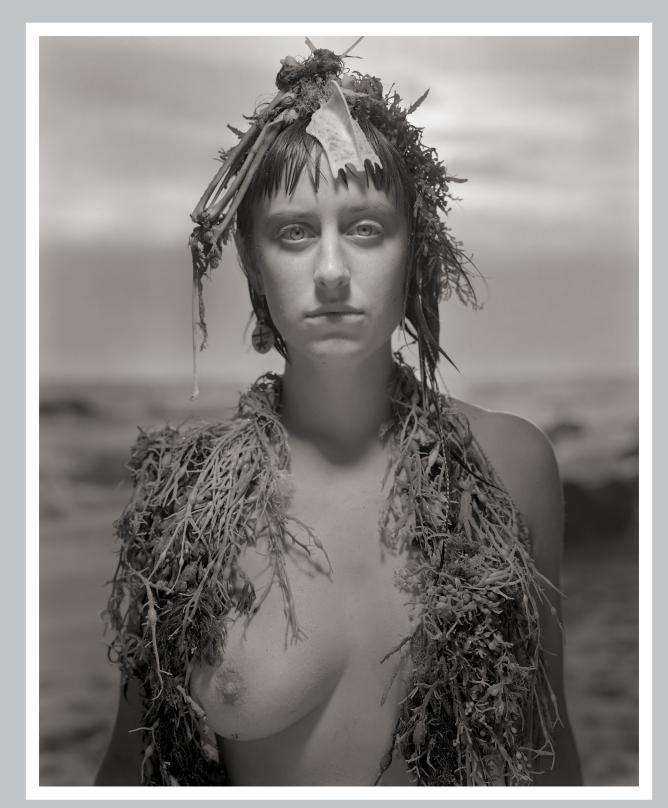


Martha's Vineyard Beach People: Matt and Nicole, Gay Head, MA, August, 19, 1996



Martha's Vineyard Beach People: Amy Aquinnah, MA, July 2, 2012 Martha's Vineyard Beach People: Rebecca, Aquinnah, MA, August 19, 2012





Martha's Vineyard Beach People: Abig Aquinnah, MA, July 13, 2014 Martha's Vineyard Beach People: Esther and Ronald, Gay Head, MA, July 6, 1996





Jacob's House



Jacob's House: Jacob in His Yard, April 3, 1994

## Jacob's House

Shortly after the *Mall Series* exhibition, DiRado began a very different body of work, created at the West Brookfield home of American folk artist Jacob Knight, who was also a person with a hoarding disorder.

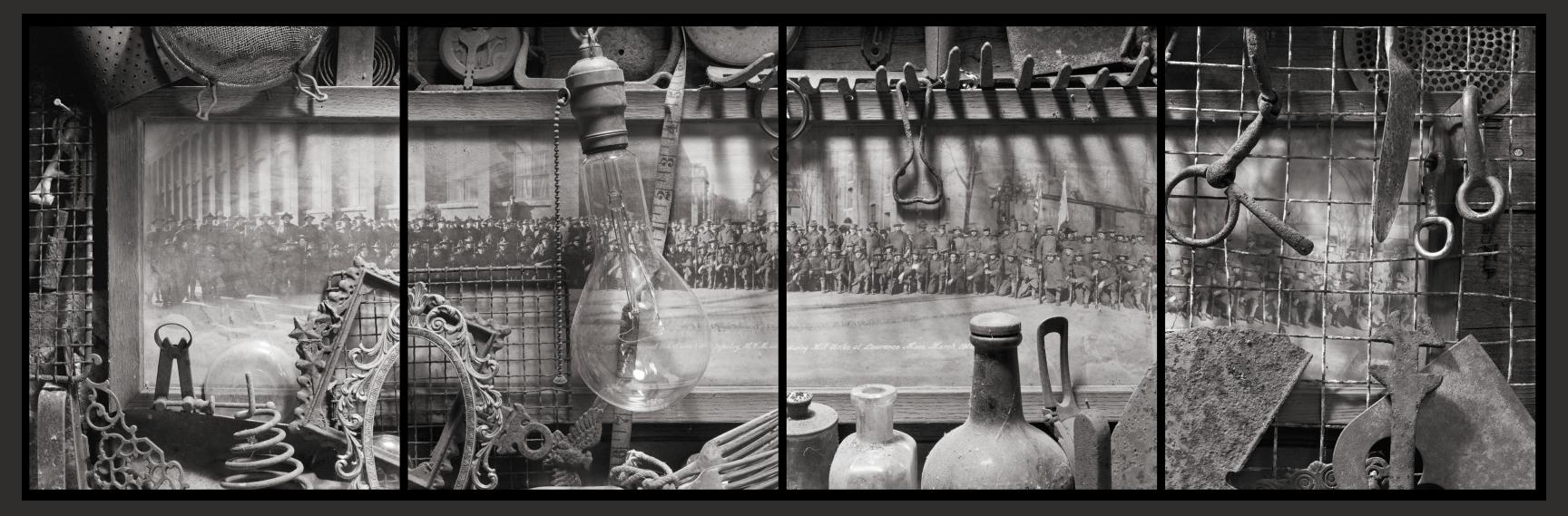
DiRado retreated from pictures of people, and found solace in the myriad objects – tools, toys, antique photographs, junk, and sheer garbage that filled Jacob's house, yard, and outbuildings.

Jacob's collections.

These were inspired in part by the collage aesthetics of American surrealist artist Joseph Cornell, and fellow Worcester artist John O'Reilly, whom DiRado considered a genius and personal mentor.

This compositional complexity soon found its way into DiRado's true love, photographs of people.

Here, DiRado set out to teach himself complex, baroque compositions by photographing intricate, still-life arrangements that he constructed from



Jacob's House Still Life: Infantry During Mill Strike, 1987



Jacob's House Still Life: Clock, 1987

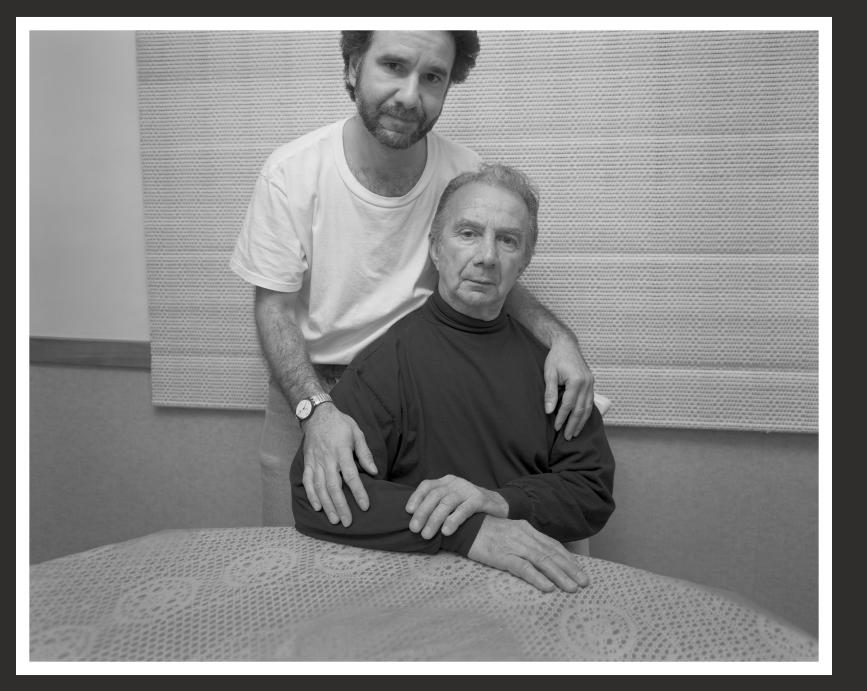




Jacob's House Still Life: Seagull, 1987

Jacob's House Still Life: Horse, 1987

## With Dad



Stephen and Gene, Marlborough, MA, October 29, 1998

### With Dad

Stephen DiRado's father was Gene DiRado (1927-2009), who worked as a graphic artist for the Department of Public Works for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and also maintained a private painting and drawing practice. He was DiRado's earliest artistic mentor.

In 1993, DiRado noticed that Gene was experiencing memory loss and detachment, and in 1998 Gene suffered a stroke and was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. In 2004, he experienced a second stroke and was moved from his home, where his family had cared for him, to a nursing home, and he passed away there in 2009. DiRado made thousands of intimate images of his father's decline as a way to both connect with Gene, and to deal with his own feelings of love, sadness, loss, and melancholy. With Dad was a way to be together with his father, despite Gene's increasing loneliness, isolation, and disorientation.

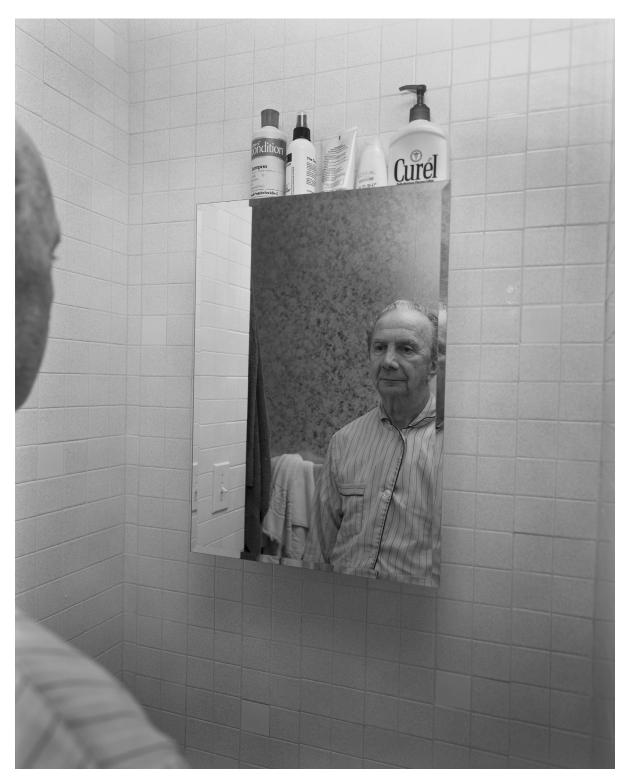
According to the artist:

"With my father...Succumbing to Alzheimer's, the act of photographing became my way to cope with an intolerable situation. The resulting photographs lay witness for me to comprehend the unbearable deterioration of his mind and body.

Why did I do it? I did it to hold onto my father as long as possible. I did it to record a disease that, I believe, in time will no longer be terminal. I did it as a visual, visceral record for future generations to see what devotion, heartbreak, and suffering looked like for victims of Alzheimer's and for their families. I did it for my father."

While still capable of communicating, Gene gave Stephen his permission to complete this series through his eventual dementia and death.

The exhibition also included the video, With Dad, which documents the creation of this series and its cathartic effect on the artist.





Gene on Ash Wednesday, Marlborough, February 9, 2005



Gene, Marlborough, MA, April 10, 2005

Stranger in the Mirror, Marlborough, MA, November 2, 2003



Gene and Stephen, RM 407, Worcester, MA, May 19, 1998



Gene's Sister's Hand (left) and His Daughter Gina's Hand (right) Marlborough, MA, January 25, 2008





**Gene Shaking,** Marlborough, MA, February 23, 2008 Gene, Marlborough, MA, November 6, 2009 Dinner Series

## Dinner Series

For DiRado, photographing people at dinner began informally, when at a 1972 Easter celebration his father granted him permission to take the family photograph. DiRado continued this tradition, and made dinner photographs on and off for many years, until his interest in this subject intensified in 2003. Until 2010, he photographed almost every dinner he shared with others Sometimes the images just include Stephen and his wife, Donna DiRado, and other times include friends and family in Worcester or on Martha's Vineyard.



Dinner Series: Monday Night Salon with Pedro Abascal, Worcester, MA, September 24, 2000



Dinner Series: Stephen and Donna Eating Late, Tisbury, MA, March 30, 2002

Like much of his work, the Dinner Series allowed DiRado to closely merge his art, his work, and his daily life, and to continue to explore the complexities of human relationships. And like the Beach People, this series had a sacred dimension. The breaking of bread with others is central, and sometimes sacramental, across human cultures.

Here, DiRado gently arranged the compositions and carefully controlled the lighting, and made intentional references to elements of seventeenth-century European genre and still life painting. The images are also full of motion, gesture, and human expressions, drawn from the language of film. Subject, form, and content are mutually reinforcing in these seemingly mundane scenes of people gathered in community, friendship, and love.



**Dinner Series: Zack,** Chilmark, MA, July 17, 2004



Dinner Series: Stephen, Donna, John and Jim, Worcester, MA, February 17, 2007

# Classroom Series





Classroom Series: Introduction to Photography, Clark University, Worcester, MA, November 17, 2010

## **Classroom Series**

As a career educator, DiRado has spent countless hours in college classrooms, confronted by groups of students who, while eager to learn, also feel depressed, exhausted, and burned out.

In 2008, the artist decided to embark on a series to capture this anxious dynamic, all too familiar to teachers everywhere. He makes a few photographs every semester, in his own classes and in the classes taught by colleagues. The *Classroom Series* in an ongoing project.

Each photograph is carefully constructed and directed, and the emotional tone is underscored by institutional classroom spaces and lighting. The students, while all together, seem very much alone.

### Classroom Series: French Cinema,

Clark University, Worcester, MA, September 4, 2020



Classroom Series: Intermediate Spanish 11, Clark University, Worcester, MA, April 16, 2001

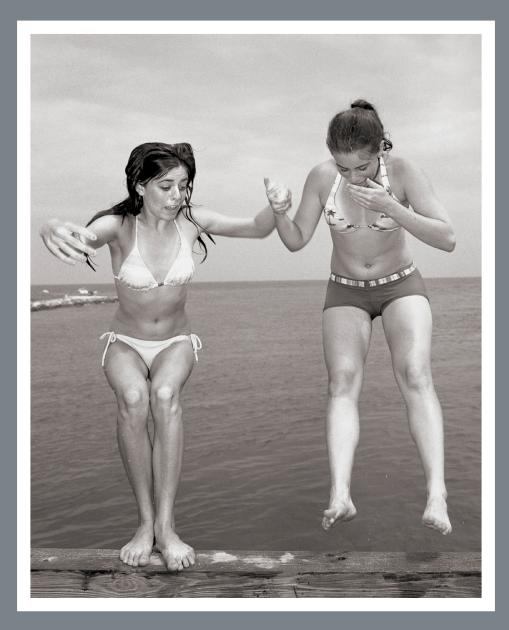




Classroom Series: Writing History, Clark University, Worcester, MA, September 4, 2020

## JUMP Series

# JUMP Series



Edgartown, MA, July 30, 2006

During the summers from 2000 through 2006, DiRado created a second series on Martha's Vineyard, in addition to the *Beach* People.

The thousands of photographs in *JUMP* document an important part of island culture, a summer rite of passage in which children – and adults – leap from the American Legion Memorial Bridge, between Oak Bluffs and Edgartown, into ocean waters eighteen feet below.

On every nice weather day, DiRado would visit the bridge between noon and 2:00 pm at high sun, and make images of people at the exhilarating and terrifying moment of physical and psychological release, as they stepped or jumped into the void.

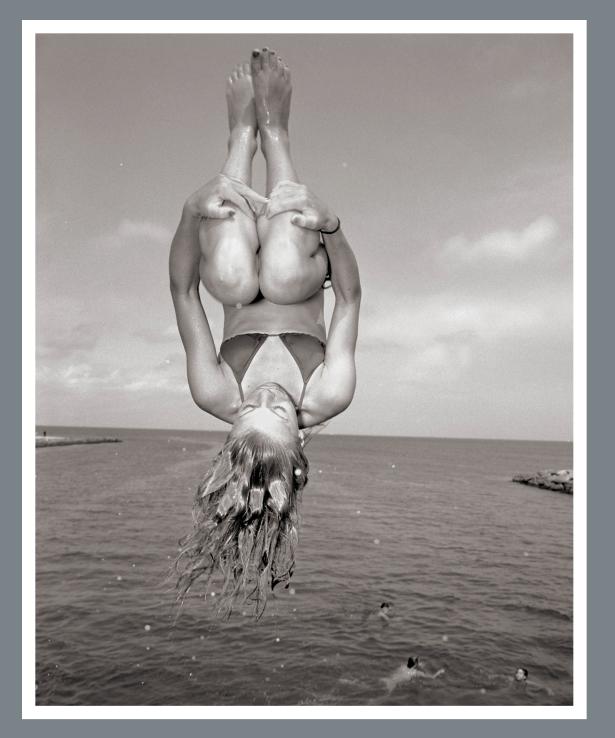
For the *JUMP* series, DiRado moved away from his usual practice of using a largeformat view camera on a tripod in favor of a hand-held medium sized camera, which allowed him to freely and quickly maneuver up and down the bridge.

This series was created while DiRado was also working on his series, *With Dad*, which narrates his father's decline and death due to Alzheimer's disease. JUMP, with its themes of youth, courage, flight, and transcendence was, for the artist, a meditation on joy in the face of death.

This exhibition includes the video, *JUMP*, which takes a different perspective on the jumpers. Instead of capturing them in midair, the video focuses on their feet leaving the railing of the bridge, a repeated image fraught with uncertainty and anxiety.



Edgartown, MA, July 27, 2006



Edgartown, MA, July 7, 2006

# Edgartown, MA, July 17, 2006



Across the Table



*Across the Table* is the most recent of DiRado's work in series, while also marking the most radical shift in his aesthetic.

In 2013, DiRado purchased a small, hand-held digital camera as a way of exploring a relatively new technology. Inspired in part by his earlier *Dinner Series*, and by his growing interest in the visual languages of video and cinema, he began to make pictures at almost every occasion when he was eating with others.

At breakfasts, lunches, dinners, coffees, and drinks, DiRado quietly takes out his small camera, sets the depth of field and exposure time, takes a few shots across the table, and then passes the camera across the table so that others can also take pictures of the gathering. Some of these people are trained photographers, many are not. At the end of the day, DiRado edits the photographs, and juxtaposes them into abutted diptychs of images from both perspectives. Each photographic pair is then labeled with names of the participants, place, and date.

This ongoing series is presented on Facebook, with each artwork posted a day or two after it is created, as part of the photographer's experimentation with social media as a presentation format. But DiRado also decided to display the series as digital projections for exhibition settings, radically altering the scale and experience of the images from tiny and personal, on a cell phone, to something far more prodigious. Here at FAM, 1,001 images are projected chronologically, each for fourteen seconds, for a total running time of just under four hours, at an immersive scale for a large audience.

In this presentation format, DiRado deftly merges the arts of still photography and cinema. While he gives up a bit of control by allowing others to take photographs, he is firmly in charge – much like a movie director – of the composition, editing, and juxtapositions of images, subtitles, and parameters of projection (sequence, size, color, duration). Across the extended narrative, the artist manipulates symbology, emotional tone, and the appearance of dialogue with a bit of cinematic language, the reverse shot. With this technique, the image switches to the opposite side of the previous shot, to suggest a conversation between two actors.

Across the Table is a monumental narrative of over a decade of DiRado's life, as defined by the people he loves and with whom he spends time. This series is also a vivid portrait of the arts and culture communities in Central Massachusetts and Martha's Vineyard, with a cast of shifting characters in recurring locations. The passage of time is indicated by the yearly change of seasons, the aging of the subjects, and the loss of those who are no longer with us.

As in all of DiRado's work, art is life and life is art, and they are always, insistently, better together.



Gino, Laina, Talia and Liam, Ceres Bistro Restaurant, Worcester, MA, April 11, 2017



Stephen and Donna at Burger King. Hudson, NH, May 11, 2018



Lunch at the Clam Shack with Rebecca, Salem, MA, August 13, 2023



Stephen, Donna, Jim and John at Sonoma Restaurant, Worcester, MA, March 10, 2018

Parminda's Afternoon Tea, Worcester, MA, June 15, 2022



rra, James and Eric, Thursday Eve, Worcester, MA, August 4, 2023

Ray, Stephen, Virginia and Donna at Nuovo Restaurant, Worcester, MA, June 1, 20124

Stella, Donna, Raphaela, Kristy and Yoav, Pizza Lunch, Worcester, MA, December 29, 2022

Coffee with Katrin and Donna, Merrimack, NH, November 19, 2024

Celestial Series

# **Celestial Series**

As a child, DiRado was fascinated by the night sky, and by the movements of the Moon, planets, stars, and satellites. He knew all the constellations, which he observed with a Tasco amateur telescope, and visited observatories and planetariums with his father. In high school, he began photographing the heavens through his telescope.

His fine art photography of the cosmos began in earnest in the late 1990s, with the appearance of two bright and easily observable comets, Hyakutake in 1996, and Hale Bopp in 1997. Since that time, DiRado has made images of almost all major celestial phenomena observable from our planet: other comets, solar and lunar eclipses, and the increasing frequent appearances of Aurora Borealis at lower latitudes (these are presented as rare color prints). He also photographs the communities of people who gather together to experience, photograph, and film these phenomena.

In the *Celestial Series*, DiRado uses his camera to connect with nature, and express a sense of wonder and human insignificance. The events in the sky are always set against natural and cultural landscapes on Earth, never presented in the abstract or as scientific documents.

Images from the *Celestial Series* are the artist's most widely collected artworks.



Partial Eclipse of the Sun, Stephen, Mike and Ray, 1:30pm, EDT, Green Hill Park, Worcester, MA, May 10, 1994



Comet Hyakutake, 9:30pm, EST, Edgartown, March 22, 1996



Comet Hale Bopp, 4:30am, EST, East Chop Lighthouse, Oak Bluffs, MA, March 9, 1997



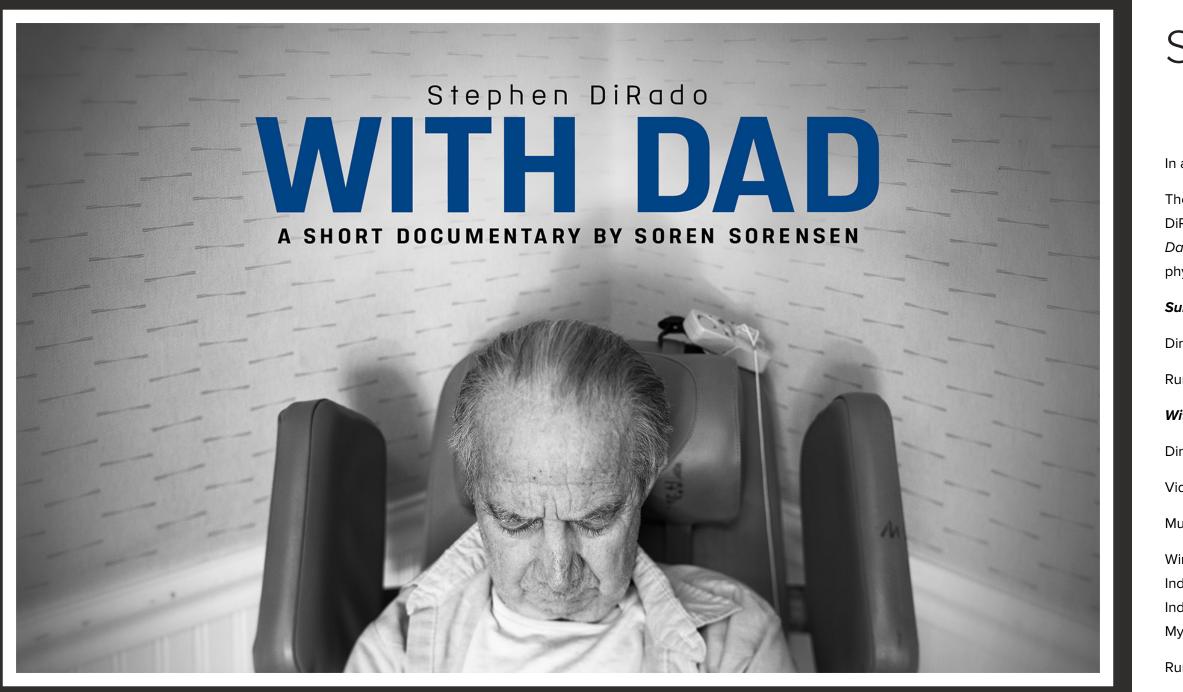


Comet Neowise, 10:25pm, EDT, Boylston, MA, July 20, 2020,

Aurora, 1:11am, EDT, Green Hill Park, Worcester, MA, May 11, 2024

# Stephen DiRado Videos





# Stephen DiRado Videos

In addition to his photography practice, Stephen DiRado makes videos.

The two videos that were presented in this exhibition relate directly to DiRado's photographic series, *Martha's Vineyard: Beach People*, and *With Dad.* Both videos reveal the sheer amount of personal commitment and physical labor involved in the creation of the DiRado's photographs.

## Summer Spent, released 2012

Director, Producer, Videographer and Editor: Stephen DiRado

Running time: 40 minutes

## With Dad, released 2021

Director, Producer, and Editor: Soren Sorensen

Videographers: Jason Rossi, Chris DiRado

Music: Jeff Klein

Winner of multiple awards, including Best Short Documentary, NYC Independent Film Festival; Best Documentary, 2020 Massachusetts Independent Film Festival; Grand Jury Prize, Documentary Short, 2020 Mystic Film Festival

Running Time: 29 minutes

# Jump Video

This video is a collaborative documentary film by Stephen DiRado, accompanied by original music score by composer Matt Malsky. In the photographic series, *JUMP*, DiRado created black-and-white images of human bodies leaping, flying, and falling through space. The color video *JUMP* takes a different perspective on the jumpers. Instead of capturing them in mid-air, the video focuses on their feet leaving the railing of the bridge, a repeated image fraught with uncertainty and anxiety.

Matt Malsky built his score on the idea that:

"If the visuals concentrate on a succession of individual moments – the scene surrounding each jump – the musical score amplifies the common emotional state: a sense of expectation, joy and anticipation mixed with a bit of anxiety and gravity."

The music uses layers of recorded accordion to create a simple repeated melody, supplemented by other instrumental sounds. Release comes at the very end of the film with the sound of a solitary splash of water.

## JUMP, released 2016

Concept, filming, and editing: Stephen DiRado Music composition and performance: Matt Malsky Running Time: 21 minutes



# Exhibition Checklist



In the Present Day: Gee, Worcester, MA, June 16, 2023,

Printed in 2023, Silver Gelatin Contact Print, 8" x 10" Frame 19" x 16" Courtesy of the Artist



Lion Statue, Entrance East Park, Shrewsbury Street, Worcester, MA, January 1985, Printed in 2003, Silver Gelatin Contact Print. 8" x 10" Frame 19" x 16" Courtesy of the Artist



Bell Pond: Cheryl, Jamie and Michael, July 3, 1983, Printed 2024 **Pigment Print** 50"x 40" Courtesy of the Artist



In the Present Day: Gee, Worcester, MA, June 16, **2023.** Printed in 2023, Silver Gelatin Contact Print. 8" x 10" Frame 19" x 16" Courtesy of the Artist



Argento's Market, East Central Street, Worcester, MA, 1984, Printed in 2024, Pigment Print, 10" x 12.5" Frame 19" x 16" Courtesy of the Artist



Bell Pond: Bob and Tammy, September 20, 1983, Printed 2024, Silver Gelatin Print 9" x 12", Frame 19" x 16" Courtesy of the Artist



In the Present Day: Brittany, (Looking Up At the Moon) Boylston, MA, July 6, 2022 Printed in 2022, Silver Gelatin Contact Print. 8" x 10" Frame 19" x 16" Courtesy of the Artist



Couple Kissing, White Tower Restaurant, Main South, Worcester, MA 1985, Printed in 2024, Pigment Print, 10" x 12.5" Frame 19" x 16" Courtesy of the Artist



Bell Pond: Mary Lou (Left) and Family, July 2, 1983, Printed 2017, Silver Gelatin Print, 9" x 12" Frame 19" x 16" Courtesy of the Artist





Bell Pond: Nancy, 13 Years Old, Permission to Smoke, 1983, Printed 2024 Silver Gelatin Print 12" x 9". Frame 19" x 16" Courtesy of the Artist

## Bell Pond: Landry Family with Boyfriend Bob, 1983, Printed 2017, Silver Gelatin Print. 12" x 9" Frame 19" x 16" Courtesy of the Artist







Mall Series: Mall Security, Saturday Morning, July 19, 1986, Printed in 2017 Silver Gelatin Print 12" x 9" Courtesy of the Artist



Mall Series: Diane, Thursday Afternoon, July 5, 1984, Printed 2024, Silver Gelatin Print 12" x 9" Frame 19" x 16" Courtesy of the Artist



Martha's Vineyard Beach People: Amy, Aquinnah, MA, July 2, 2012, Printed 2012, Silver Gelatin Contact Print. 8" x 10" Frame 19" x 16" FAM COLLECTION 2015.3



Mall Series: Nancy, James and Gina. December 14, 1985, Printed 2024 Silver Gelatin Print, 12" x 9" Frame 19" x 16" Courtesy of the Artist



Martha's Vineyard Beach People: Rebecca, Aquinnah, MA, August 19, 2012, 50" x 40" Archival Pigment Print, Printed, 2024 Courtesy of the Artist



Martha's Vineyard Beach People: Annie, Aquinnah, MA, August 14, 2012, Printed 2012 Silver Gelatin Contact Print, 8" x 10", Frame 19" x 16" FAM COLLECTION 2015.4



Mall Series: Helen, Saturday Morning, December 22, 1984, Printed 2024, Silver Gelatin Print, 12" x 9" Frame 19" x 16" Courtesy of the Artist



Martha's Vineyard Beach People: Roger, Aquinnah, MA, September 15, 2012, Printed 2012, Silver Gelatin Contact Print, 8" x 10" Frame 19" x 16" FAM COLLECTION 2015.14



Martha's Vineyard Beach People: Abigail, Aquinnah, MA, July 13, 2014, Printed 2014, Silver Gelatin Contact Print, 8" x 10" Frame 19" x 16" FAM COLLECTION 2015.2



Martha's Vineyard Beach People: Dick, Aquinnah, MA, July 10, 2017,

Printed 2017, Silver Gelatin Contact Print, 8" x 10" Frame 19" x 16" Courtesy of the Artist



Martha's Vineyard Beach People: Kelley Family and Friends, Gay Head, MA, August 10, **1989,** Printed 2002, Silver Gelatin Contact Print, 8" x 10" Frame 19" x 16" Courtesy of the Artist



Martha's Vineyard Beach People: Claudia, Justino and Friends, Gay Head, MA, August 10, 1990, Printed 2001, Silver Gelatin Contact Print, 8" x 10" Frame 19" x 16" Courtesy of the Artist



Martha's Vineyard Beach People: Marian and Sara, Gay Head, MA, July 30, 1990. Printed 2024. Silver Gelatin Contact Print. 8" x 10" Frame 19" x 16" Courtesy of the Artist



Martha's Vineyard Beach People: Joe and Doreen, Gay Head, MA, August 15, 1995, Printed 1995. Silver Gelatin Contact Print. 8" x 10" Frame 19" x 16" Courtesy of the Artist



Martha's Vineyard Beach People: Esther and Ronald, Gay Head, MA, July 6, 1996, Printed 1998. Silver Gelatin Contact Print. 8" x 10" Frame 19" x 16" Courtesy of the Artist



Martha's Vineyard Beach People: Lucinda, Paula, Catherine and Jocelyn, Gay Head, MA, August 11, 1991, Printed 1994, Silver Gelatin Contact Print. 8" x 10" Frame 19" x 16"



Martha's Vineyard Beach People: Sean and Laureen, Gay Head, MA, June 22, 1995, Printed 1995, Silver Gelatin Contact Print, 8" x 10" Frame 19" x 16" Courtesy of the Artist



Martha's Vineyard Beach People: Mark, July 17, 2013, Aquinnah, MA, Silver gelatin print Sinon Collection Fund, Clementi Family Fund, Robert and Elaine Smith Photography Fund. 2015.11



Martha's Vineyard Beach People: Bill, Stuart, Paula and Marca, Gay Head, MA, August 6, 1992, Printed 2005, Silver Gelatin Contact Print, 8" x 10" Frame 19" x 16" Courtesy of the Artist



Martha's Vineyard Beach People: Kathryn, Nasalta and Ken, Gay Head, MA, July 27, 1995. Printed 1998. Silver Gelatin Contact Print, 8" x 10" Frame 19" x 16" Courtesy of the Artist



Martha's Vineyard Beach People: Matt and Nicole, August, 19, 1996, Gay Head, MA, Silver gelatin print Sinon Collection Fund, Clementi Family Fund, Robert and Elaine Smith Photography Fund, 2015.12



Martha's Vineyard Beach People: Betsy and Jan, Gay Head, MA, July 19, 1997, Printed 2001, Silver Gelatin Contact Print. 8" x 10" Frame 19" x 16" Courtesy of the Artist



Martha's Vineyard Beach People: Cleveland, August, 22, 1996, Silver Gelatin Print Gift of Mary Levin Koch and Bill Koch, 2013.7



Martha's Vineyard Beach People: Harold and Rebecca, Aquinnah, MA, August 13, 2011. Printed 2024 Archival Pigmant Print 40" x 50" Courtesy of the Artist



Jacob's House Still Life: Clock, 1987, Printed 1994 Silver Gelatin Contact Print, 8" xIO" Frame 16" x 19" Courtesy of the Artist



Jacob's House Still Life: Horse, 1987, Printed in 1994, Silver Gelatin Contact Print, 8" x 10" Frame 16" x 19" Courtesy of the Artist



Stranger in the Mirror, Marlborough, MA, November 2, 2003, Printed 2014, Silver Gelatin Contact Print. 8" x 10" Frame 16" x 19"

FAM COLLECTION 2015.19



Jacob's House Still Life: Seagull, 1987, Printed 2011, Silver Gelatin Contact Print, 8" x 10" Frame 16" x 19" Courtesy of the Artist



Jacob's House: Jacob in His Yard, April 3, 1994, Printed 2013 Silver Gelatin Contact Print. 8" x 10", Frame 16" x 19" Courtesy of the Artist



Gene and Stephen, RM 407, Worcester, MA, May 19, 1998, Printed 2007, Silver Gelatin Contact Print. 8" x 10" Frame 16" x 19" Courtesy of the Artist



Jacob's House Still Life: Infantry During Mill Strike, 1987, Printed 1987, Silver Gelatin Contact Prints, 32" x 10" Frame 20" x 40" Courtesy of the Artist



Stephen and Gene, Marlborough, MA, October 29, 1998, Printed 2008, Silver Gelatin Contact Print. 8" x 10" Frame 16" x 19" Courtesy of the Artist



Gene, Marlborough, MA, April 10, 2005, Printed 2007, Silver Gelatin Contact Print, 8" x 10" Frame 16" x 19" Courtesy of the Artist



Gene on Ash Wednesday, Marlborough, February 9, **2005,** Printed 2018, Silver Gelatin Contact Print. 8" x 10" Frame 16" x 19" Courtesy of the Artist



Gene's Sister's Hand (left) and His Daughter Gina's Hand (right) Marlborough, MA, January 25, 2008, Printed 2008,

Silver Gelatin Contact Print, 8" x 10" Frame 16" x 19" Courtesy of the Artist



Gene Shaking, Marlborough, MA, February 23, 2008, Printed 2015, Silver Gelatin Contact Print, 8" x 10" Frame 16" x 19"

FAM COLLECTION 2015.20



Gene, Marlborough, MA, November 6, 2009, Printed 2011, Silver Gelatin Contact Print, 8" x 10" Frame 16" x 19" FAM COLLECTION 2015.21



Dinner Series: Stephen, Donna, John and Jim, Worcester, MA, February 17, 2007, Printed 2017, Silver Gelatin Print, 17" x 20" Frame 28" x 31" FAM COLLECTION



Classroom Series: Intermediate Spanish 11, Clark University, Worcester, MA , April 16 , 2001, Printed 2021, Silver Gelatin Contact Print, 8"x10" Frame 19" x 16" Courtesy of the Artist



Dinner Series: Lights Out, Chilmark, MA, July 5, 1998, Printed 2024 Pigment Print, 40"x 50" Courtesy of the Artist



Dinner Series: Stephen and Donna Eating Late, Tisbury, MA, March 30, 2002, Printed 2017, Silver Gelatin Print, 17" x 20" Frame 28" x 31" Courtesy of the Artist



Classroom Series: French Cinema, Clark University, Worcester, MA, April 9, 2009, Printed 2010, Silver Gelatin Contact 8" x 10" Print, Frame 19" x 16" Courtesy of the Artist



**Dinner Series: Monday Night** Salon with Pedro Abascal, Worcester, MA, September 24, 2000, Printed 2024 Pigment Print 40"x 50" Courtesy of the Artist



Dinner Series: Zack. Chilmark, MA, July 17, 200, Printed 2017, Silver Gelatin Print, 17" x 20" Frame 28" x 31" Courtesy of the Artist



Classroom Series: Introduction to Photography, Clark University, Worcester, MA, November 17, 2010, Printed 2024 Pigment Print, 40" x 50" Courtesy of the Artist



**Classroom Series: Writing** History, Clark University, Worcester, MA, September 4, **2020,** Printed 2024 Pigment Print, 40" x 50", Courtesy of the Artist



Edgartown, MA, July 30, 2006, Printed 2024 Archival Pigment Print 50" x 40" Courtesy of the Artist



Edgartown, MA, July 17, 2006, Printed 2006, Silver Gelatin Print 21.5" x 17.5" Frame 31" x 26" Courtesy of the Artist



**Edgartown, MA, August 27, 2003**, Printed 2006, Silver Gelatin Print 21.5" x 17.5" Frame 31" x 26" Courtesy of the Artist



Across the Table Series: Lunch at the Clam Shack with Rebecca, Salem, MA, August 13, 2023, Printed 2024Archival Pigment Print, Image Size: 18.75" x 48 Courtesy of the Artist



Comet Hale Bopp, 4:30am, EST, East Chop Lighthouse, Oak Bluffs, MA, March 9, 1997, Printed 1997, Silver Gelatin Print, 15' x 22" Frame 26" x 31" Courtesy of the Artist



*Edgartown, MA, August 7, 2006,* Printed 2006, Silver Gelatin Print 21.5" x 17.5" Frame 31" x 26" Courtesy of the Artist



Across the Table Series: Ray, Stephen, Virginia and Donna at Nuovo Restaurant, Worcester, MA, June 1, 2024, Printed 2024 Archival Pigment Print, Image Size: 18.75" x 48" Courtesy of the Artist



**Comet Hyakutake,** 4:10am, EST, Spencer, **MA, March 24, 1996,** Printed 1996, Silver Gelatin Print, 15' x 22" Frame 26" x 31" Courtesy of the Artist



Comet Hyakutake, 9:30pm, EST, Edgartown, March 22, 1996, Printed 1996, Silver Gelatin Print, 8" x 12" Frame 20" x 24" Courtesy of the Artist



Comet Hale Bopp, 9:35pm, EDT, Spencer, MA, April 30, 1997, Printed 1997, Silver Gelatin Print, 8" x 12" Frame 20" x 24" Courtesy of the Artist



Waning Moon, 4:40am, EDT, Inkwell Beach, Oak Bluffs, MA, April 4, 1997, Printed 1997, Silver Gelatin Print, 8" x 12" Frame 20" x 24" Courtesy of the Artist



Partial Eclipse of the Sun, Stephen, Mike and Ray, 1:30pm, EDT, Green Hill Park, Worcester, MA, May 10, 1994, Printed 1994, Silver Gelatin Print, 8" x 10" Frame 16" x 19" Courtesy of the Artist



Aurora, 1:11am, EDT, Green Hill Park, Worcester, MA, May 11, 2024 , Printed 2024, Archival Pigment Print, 12" x 18" Frame 18.5" x 23.5" Courtesy of the Artist





Comet Hale Bopp, 9:05pm, EDT, Chilmark, MA, April 26, 1997, Printed 1997, Silver Gelatin Print, 8" x 12" Frame 20" x 24" Courtesy of the Artist



Partial Solar Eclipse 98%, 3:29pm, EDT, Lincoln, NH, April 8, 2024, Printed 2024, Silver Gelatin Print, 8" x 10" Frame 16" x 19" Courtesy of the Artist



Worcester, MA, August 2, 2024,

Comet Neowise, 10:25pm, EDT, Boylston, MA, July 20, 2020, Printed 2020, Archival Pigment Print, 12" x 18" Frame 18.5" x 23.5" Courtesy of the Artist

David Clark Company, 11"x16" Pigment Print, Printed in 2024, Frame 21" x 25"

## Across the Table, 2013-Present

Color projections Approx. 4 hours Courtesy of the Artist

With Dad, 2021 Film 28.57 mins Courtesy of the Artist

Jump, 2016 21 mins Courtesy of the Artist

## Summer Spent, 2012, 40 mins

Courtesy of the Artist

This catalog accompanies the exhibition **Stephen Dirado: Better Together, Forty Years of Photographs** presented at the Fitchburg Art Museum, February 1 – June 1, 2025. This exhibition was curated by FAM Director Nick Capasso. Catalog edited by Nick Capasso and Terry and Eva Herndon Assistant Curator Sarah Harper.

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"Photographs of family, friends, places, things we do and things we eat at the table. Also, photographs of students in classrooms, people jumping, stars above, still lifes, landscapes, coping with Covid-19... and moments of reflection."

– Stephen DiRado



