

HISTORIC SANTA FE

The Historic Santa Fe Foundation Monthly Journal JANUARY 2019





Inside Historic Santa Fe

Our mission is to preserve, protect, and promote the historic properties and diverse cultural heritage of the Santa Fe area, and to educate the public about Santa Fe's history and the importance of preservation.

HSFF publishes one eZine per month with content that provides our audience with a look at what is happening at the Foundation, and beyond in the world of New Mexico and Santa Fe history, archaeology, and the arts, among other topics relevant to our readers. In the upcoming year, HSFF is working with a broad range of high-level volunteers to make El Zaguán: the building, the archives, and the institutional knowledge of staff, Board and volunteers accessible to the community. We are looking at a bright and exciting 2019. We will share updates with you in our eZines, emails and [printed newsletters](#) so please make sure to sign up for our newsletter and join HSFF as a member. We hope you enjoy this issue and we look forward to the future of HSFF and the interactions with our members and our community.

In this issue, we offer a book review by Melanie McWhorter of Museum of New Mexico Press' *Buried Cars: Excavations from Stonehenge to the Grand Canyon* and an interview with photographer Frank Blazquez on the occasion of his exhibition at HSFF's El Zaguán until February 1, 2019. Please enjoy.

Sign up for MEMBERSHIP online at historicsantafe.org/join-give or call us at 505-983-2567 to find out about member rates and benefits. Thanks for your continued support.

Cover image and image above, *Miranda and Felipe's Reflection* ©Frank Blazquez

INTERVIEW: FRANK BLAZQUEZ

Barrios de Nuevo Mexico: Southwest Stories of Vindication, A Photography Exhibition at El Zaguán
January 11 – February 1, 2019

Frank Blazquez (b. Chicago, IL) is an artist-photographer, filmmaker, and writer currently residing in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Immersed in the world of lenses as an ABO certified optician, Blazquez transferred his skills to the camera in 2014. Utilizing human signifiers connected to the Latino demographic of the Rio Grande, Blazquez's content illustrates today's counter-narrative in New Mexico. Describing his New Mexican photographs to *The Guardian* in November of 2018, Blazquez writes, "They are an attempt to capture an authentic New Mexican love story. The self-punishment, anxiety and beauty come from a place that is all too familiar for those living in this Land of Enchantment." Highlighting the people in Blazquez's street portraits, *VICE México* writes, "The familiarity with which he portrays them makes them close and empathetic...thus achieving a visual essay that feels as familiar as distant." Blazquez graduated *magna cum laude* from the University of New Mexico in 2018 with a BA in History, studying European History and photography from the FSA years in America. In relation to his still photography, Blazquez created *Duke City Diaries*: documentary shorts produced with UNM alum and filmmaker John Acosta. Additionally, this series is now in association with the Executive Producer and Creator of Netflix's *Fightworld* Colin R. Moniz. The short episodes narrate the stories of individuals living in Albuquerque and are currently viewable on YouTube or his website: www.frankblazquez.com.

HSFF: I first heard of you and your work in a piece published by *The Guardian* newspaper in November. The story was fascinating and the photographs riveting. How did you end up in a UK based, international newspaper?

Frank Blazquez: *I have some contacts at the west coast Guardian HQ based in San Francisco. I submitted an essay that was several months within their queue for publication. They are a great team of editors—I am very honored to have my essay included.*

HSFF: The photographs that illustrated the article and many in our show at El Zaguán were taken in the "War Zone" in Albuquerque (now the International Zone). But you are expanding your search for subjects now in a project you call *Barrios de Nuevo Mexico: Southwest Stories of Vindication*. Explain what you are doing.

FB: *It started as nothing more than just walking around and talking—making new friendships. I live in Albuquerque, so it was logical that I start in my own neighborhood. But then I started using social media (Instagram) to find new subjects across New Mexico. I try to focus on home and neighborhood settings.*

HSFF: What is the "vindication" in the title of the project?

FB: *The majority of my portraits include subjects that have been incarcerated or affected by the adversities of*

low-income neighborhoods. My portraits unveil the faces of people fighting to better their lives.

HSFF: Your subjects trust you and your camera, the photographs are direct and open. How do you accomplish this?

FB: *I am Mexican-American, and a good number of my subjects are Latino and/or a similar ethnicity. Sharing a familiar culture helps with access.*

HSFF: And how do you find and then engage your portrait subjects?



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©Frank Blazquez

FB: *I usually just go up and start a conversation first. Sometimes people decline to have their photographs taken, and they politely say no.*

HSFF: I think there are landscapes and interior landscape in your later work. How do these fit into the project?

FB: *The interior shots and landscapes are the living environments associated with the portraits.*

HSFF: You also work on video projects – What are the Duke City Diaries?

FB: *I created Duke City Diaries in hopes of bringing more light to my subjects. I was fortunate enough to do this with my best friend John Acosta—a filmmaker who also graduated from UNM.*

HSFF: Are there any other new projects you would like to engage with?

FB: *As of right now, no. But I will announce my plans if I do!*

HSFF: You described yourself to me as doing the “starving artist thing”, depending at this point on help from family and friends to do your work. Yet, you seem to have an incredible whirlwind of attention and recognition in 2017 and 2018 in local and national press, even the international piece. Not bad for a recent 2018 graduate of UNM. What do you think is driving the interest?

FB: *I think the portraits themselves are driving the interest. Interesting subjects create an opportunity for compelling artwork.*

HSFF: You have the floor – take it say anything you would like about work or life.

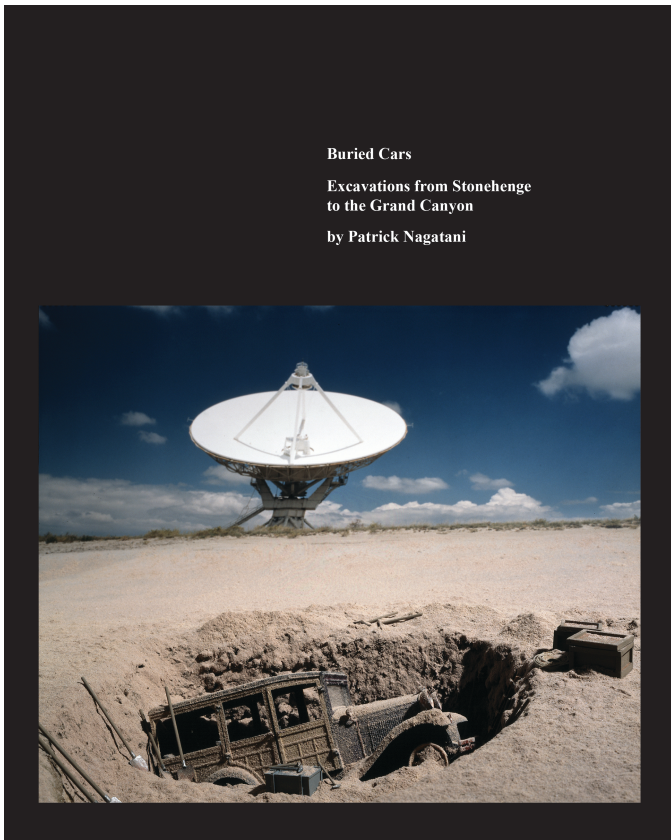
FB: *I would just like to give a big thanks to everyone that has helped me with this project: John Acosta, Aldin Hamdy, Trent Ward, Paloma Nava, and my family. I look forward to bringing more subject matter to this project soon!*

BOOK REVIEW

Buried Cars: Excavations from Stonehenge to the Grand Canyon

By Patrick Nagatani with Joseph Traugott

Reviewed by Melanie McWhorter



Photographs have often been associated with the idea of truth. The act of capturing an image is often related to the documentary nature of the medium and the now ubiquitous snapshot fosters the illusion that what is in front of the camera is reality. I took this photograph because this event happened and I was there to witness and record. Some photographers – those who practice the art as a profession or a serious pursuit – since the advent of the art as a fixed medium have played with the idea of storytelling within the frame. In its early days, many used myths as a basis for tableaux vivant or Shakespearean tragedies for the subject of their portraits. Even those considered documentarians who focused on war and indigenous peoples often took artistic liberties with their framing and staging of the scene for dramatic and aesthetic effect. In recent years, some artists have used the medium to create alternative

worlds to those that already exist, pushing what we know about photography and its ability to capture reality and ‘truth’ into a realm of the fantastical. The new book by Patrick Nagatani published by the Museum of New Mexico Press *Buried Cars: Excavations from Stonehenge to the Grand Canyon* is one of those projects.

The narrative is a fictional elaboration on an account told by a man identified as Ryoichi. Through his excavation diaries and an interview with Colin Edgington who accompanied, along with photographer Patrick Nagatani, Ryoichi on his search for the buried cars referenced in the title of the book. Ryoichi was a videographer with a Japanese film crew who is given access to a ceremonial rite at the Crow Indian Agency in Montana. During the filming of the documentary of the scaffolding burials, the team was amazed to find a BMW atop the poles instead of a human body. The witnessing of this ritual with the automobile leads the videographer on a mission to find another of these ceremonies in action and he heads to the Tohono O’odham reservation on the Arizona/Mexico border. Upon leaving the reservation, the videographer encounters a car accident. The victim is a shaman who was on his way to the reservation. The shaman is dying and hands Ryoichi a satchel full of maps that lists each ritualistic location around the world. Later, the happenstance meeting of Nagatani, Edgington, and Ryoichi in a Las Vegas casino leads them on a journey around the world to uncover and document the locations on the maps.

The photographs function as evidence of the anachronisms – cars in areas around the world that are associated with ancient sacred spaces or with potential contact with worlds beyond our own. Other sites are connected to observation of the stars, planets and outer space while others are places where the living commune with and bury their dead. Many of the sites are unused for hundreds or thousands of years. The cars found at each location often have a relationship to the culture of place: a Bentley with the monoliths of Stonehenge, a Toyota partially shown in the foreground of the

Manzanar internment camp monument, or a Lamborghini uncovered in the frozen Italian Alps. Nagatani's documentary photographs also include a BMW hidden behind the stones in a kiva in Chaco Canyon, NM; a Mercedes within striated walls near the base of the Grand Canyon; and a Model A Woodie side panel exposed in front of a telescope at the Very Large Array, NM (National Radio Astronomy Observatory). The imagination abounds with thoughts that these vehicles could be in such locations and how the vehicle itself mystically has a connection to an ancient civilization, but many also note a connection between contemporary and historical cultural land use.

The book includes Ryoichi's Japanese journals of traveling the world all in Japanese with drawings and paper objects collected during the journey, like postcards and artworks attached to a parchment/handmade paper that appear to be ancient documents themselves. Noted New Mexican curator and author Joseph Traugott introduces the book basically laying out the story and introducing all the players including the essayists for the text, James Olson and Kathleen Stewart Howe. Olson discusses the possible scientific reasons why the excavated cars are in these locales and Howe eloquently speaks about archaeology practice and this project's relationship to other artists who use narrative and the time as important components of their art. The chapters include an interview with Colin Edgington, Nagatani's assistant in this tale, who remembers his journey with Ryoichi. The book finishes with a small text copy titled, "Revealing All," that may offer some clues to the narrative of the book. Clear separation with different colored pages note the sections or chapters including scientific analysis of the pollen, dirt samples, the text-based and illustrated copy, and a selection of photographs. The book is thoughtfully designed, incorporates all the elements of this complex and long-term artistic project, and is a great homage to an artist who dedicated his life to the photographic medium.

Patrick Nagatani was a New Mexico-based photographer and educator. He passed away in 2017.



HSFF Bids a
Fond Farewell to
Bobby Wilson



Bobby Wilson began working with HSFF in 2012, starting out as an extra set of hands for some plaster repairs at the Hovey House. A native of Detroit, Michigan, he has lived in Santa Fe for many years and initially learned hands on building practices in order to work on his own rental property. After that initial project, Preservation Specialist at the time Charles Coffman hired Bobby to stay on and he has since left his mark on each property HSFF has owned.

In addition to tirelessly taking care of everyday maintenance, Bobby is responsible for countless repairs including strengthening failing ceiling beams in the El Zagan sala, rebuilding the stairs leading to the Cross of the Martyrs, pouring concrete footings to support a crumbling adobe wall at the Garcia house, designing new brick column footings at El Zagan, and opening a long-hidden doorway in the Foundation's offices. He has also patiently taught summer trades interns who may have little to no hands-on experience how to do things like patch adobe bricks in to a wall and apply mud plaster.

Bobby is off to a new adventure but continuing to use his construction and restoration expertise with good friends of HSFF, Sunwest Construction Specialties. We will miss him, and promise to cheer for the Detroit Tigers from time to time in his absence.





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HSFF MISSION

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