



WILLIAM MAGUIRE

Cover: La Paz, Bolivia, 1998

WILLIAM MAGUIRE
PHOTOGRAPHS

June 18 – August 14, 1999

Curated by Dahlia Morgan

Essay by Helen L. Kohen

The Art Museum at Florida International University
University Park, PC 110, SW 107th Ave & 8th Street, Miami, Florida 33199
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Director's Foreword

With great pleasure, I present the FIU Visual Arts Faculty Exhibition, *William Maguire: Photographs*. Professor Maguire has been teaching photography in the Visual Arts Department of FIU since 1975. He graduated from Notre Dame with a Bachelor's degree in English and a Master of Arts and Teaching. In 1972, he received his Master's degree in Photography from the Chicago Institute of Design. Maguire is best known for his night photographs and has received fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial. His work has been purchased and exhibited by the Museum of Modern Art in New York and many institutions throughout Florida.

This exhibition features approximately one hundred photographs taken in Northern Chile, Bolivia, Florida, North Carolina and other southern States. He shoots what he sees, but with his calculating eye, creates atmospheric compositions with light and shadow. Although they are documentary in nature, Maguire infuses a theatrical quality to his photographs which evoke emotional responses from their viewers. His excellent technique in capturing light transforms ordinary locales into mysterious and surreal scenes.

I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to William Maguire for his wonderful work and making this exhibition possible. I would also like to thank Helen L. Kohen, art critic, for her insightful essay in this catalogue.

I would like to thank our dedicated staff, Regina C. Bailey, Associate Director, for her scholarly and organizational expertise; Mercy Advocat, Office Manager, for overseeing all events related to the exhibit; Patricia Alesi, Curator of Education, for her programming skills; Vilma Montejo, Senior Secretary for her attention to details; Marc Ransdell, Registrar, for his dedication to the inventory; Ivan F. Reyes, Accountant, for assisting with financial concerns and Dina Mitrani for her assistance.

Special thanks go to the Steven and Dorothea Green Foundation, the James Deering Danielson Foundation, the Blank Family Foundation, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the National Hotel, Diario Las Americas, the State of Florida Department of State, the Division of Cultural Affairs through the Florida Arts Council, the Miami-Dade Cultural Affairs Council, the Miami-Dade County Board of County Commissioners and the Friends of The Art Museum.

Dahlia Morgan

Director

Special Acknowledgements

The Art Museum Staff

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Director

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Associate Director

Mercy Advocat
Office Manager/Membership

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Curator of Education

Vilma Montejo
Senior Secretary

Ivan F. Reyes
Accountant

Marc Ransdell
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Vice President, Athletics and University Outreach and Chief of Staff, Office of the President

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Acting Vice President, Student Affairs

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Acting Vice President, University Advancement

Arthur Herriott
Dean, College of Arts and Sciences

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William Maguire: Photographs

It's a nice twist on millennium fever that William Maguire is this year's featured artist in the annual Faculty Exhibition at The Art Museum at Florida International University. In this last faculty show of this century – and the first on home ground for Maguire in more than a decade - the artist's elegant, directly observed works look back rather than forward. It's not about nostalgia. As a teacher, Maguire cannot ignore the latest wonders in technology and practice, nor fail to envision feats of image-making not yet invented. But on the cusp of its future, Maguire feels himself more and more drawn to photography's past. He admits to an affinity to the mindsets of the first photographers, those working in the 19th century.

"I am very aware that what I do is just as likely to pass on as Daguerreotypes or Ambrotypes. Recording images with a camera and film is also on the way out," Maguire says. But he is not yet through with his contribution to the genre. In the face of scientific discoveries and an expanded esthetic, his definition of photography is finite, set around with self-inflicted limits. He infers those bounds from the works of such masters as Garry Winogrand, Lee Friedlander, Walker Evans, William Eggleston, Bernd & Hilla Becher, Henri Cartier-Bresson, Olafur Eliasson, and O. Winston Link. Under their inspiration and his own steam and instinct, Maguire works toward refining what continues to intrigue him about photography: How to achieve art.

In the current selection, Maguire fans will recognize some old favorites, night images of the American south, and see a series shot this past year in Latin America. Familiars might also note that he continues to use only black and white film, that he stays with a more or less letter size print, and that he no longer needs to identify the edges of his prints with framing black lines. He is confident now that his pictures are totally contained, finished in the artistic sense with nothing to add or subtract. That leans on another of Maguire's fixed ideas about his work. For him, every good picture is a complete job from the moment the shutter clicks. There is no cropping to alter the truth seen at the moment of taking a picture. He aims to make a work of art on site.

Those sites are always out of doors. If urban, Maguire's locations are not downtowns, the congested parts of town. People are not sought out to be in his pictures. If there, they are part of the slice of the environment he is attracted to. Looking around this exhibition, at a cross section of 20 years of work, it is not difficult to list those attractions: a structure or structures, most often isolated, which boldly wear their history.

As far as identifying the formal structure of his work, that's clear too. Maguire builds form with stark straight lines, including lamp poles, telephone wires, road markings, a sign or two, a fence, or in the country, a tree, a mountain peak. He owns his own degree of physical distance from a subject too, a particular way of framing his subject. The perimeter is determined by where he stands, and he gives a lot more than the usual frontal point of view. Maguire's views are like architectural drawings, devised to reveal as much of the construct as possible in one study. Viewers feel comfortable in his pictures, on solid ground, secure, even if his subject matter is on shaky ground. (The late Diane Arbus did the opposite: she made her audience feel as off center as her freakish, off-centered subjects.)

Still, there is plenty of tension in a Maguire photograph, more than enough to engage the art public. His images intensify as you look. Even as his favored decrepit properties illustrate the effects of human neglect coupled with the natural fierceness of climate, the fact that they stand at all celebrates the tenacity of the built environment. Despite the odds, despite the destructive forces of man and nature, houses, stores, hotels, fences, and all manners of business facilities manage to last. And rather than using shadows to mystify the struggle, Maguire's light (or lack of it) makes the epic brighter, more visible. He prefers to shoot late in the day, when natural light is muted almost to darkness, or more often, in the extreme dark of night, when seeing itself relies on artificial means. In full darkness, he likes the effects of scattered points of light, multiple flashes, illumination as if by powerful fireflies.

It is mostly daytime in Maguire's recent works, the images from San Pedro de Atacama. An oasis in the driest desert in the world in northern Chile, the artist describes it as a place where the Andes buckle in, an ancient crossroads that is now an archeological site. For Maguire, a photographer who has done his prize winning work in the wet heat of the sub-tropics, this Chilean locale with its rare air and high altitude was the flip side of home - no color, no bay, no humidity. He hardly ever saw a cloud; everything in sight was seen as a shade of tan.

Though Latin America presented a totally different natural environment, with far grander vistas than Miami provides, Maguire held firm to his signature look. He stayed with his usual scale and pictorial format. Horizontal views predominate: he shows more ground than air space. It's a format that yields a close approximation of the human experience of the landscape. Even the spectacular image of La Paz, Bolivia (1998)(cover), which spans a view from one mountaintop to another across the great city, concentrates on ground covered rather than lofty aspirations toward the distant sky. Incredibly, there are visible humans in the scene, right there, in front of the dazzling night, men are revealed talking together. Is it possible that they are oblivious of the astonishing sight at their feet? It cannot be; they must be discussing it. Maguire says it was almost an accident that the picture works. It was taken later in the day than he had calculated, and, he says, from a different place than he had planned.

Perhaps it was kismet, but no accident. The eye was Maguire's and the rules that govern his accomplishment prevailed. He captured that thin, near imperceptible edge in this image that he seeks in his art. It was described to him by Garry Winogrand, the late American photographer who was his mentor, as, "that split second that is a lie. The art of photography, the trick of a good photograph, is to make that lie believable."

In the face of this stunning show of Maguire's art, we are all believers.

Helen L. Kohen
Art Critic



Kentucky, 1996



Homestead, Florida, 1996



New Orleans, Louisiana, 1994



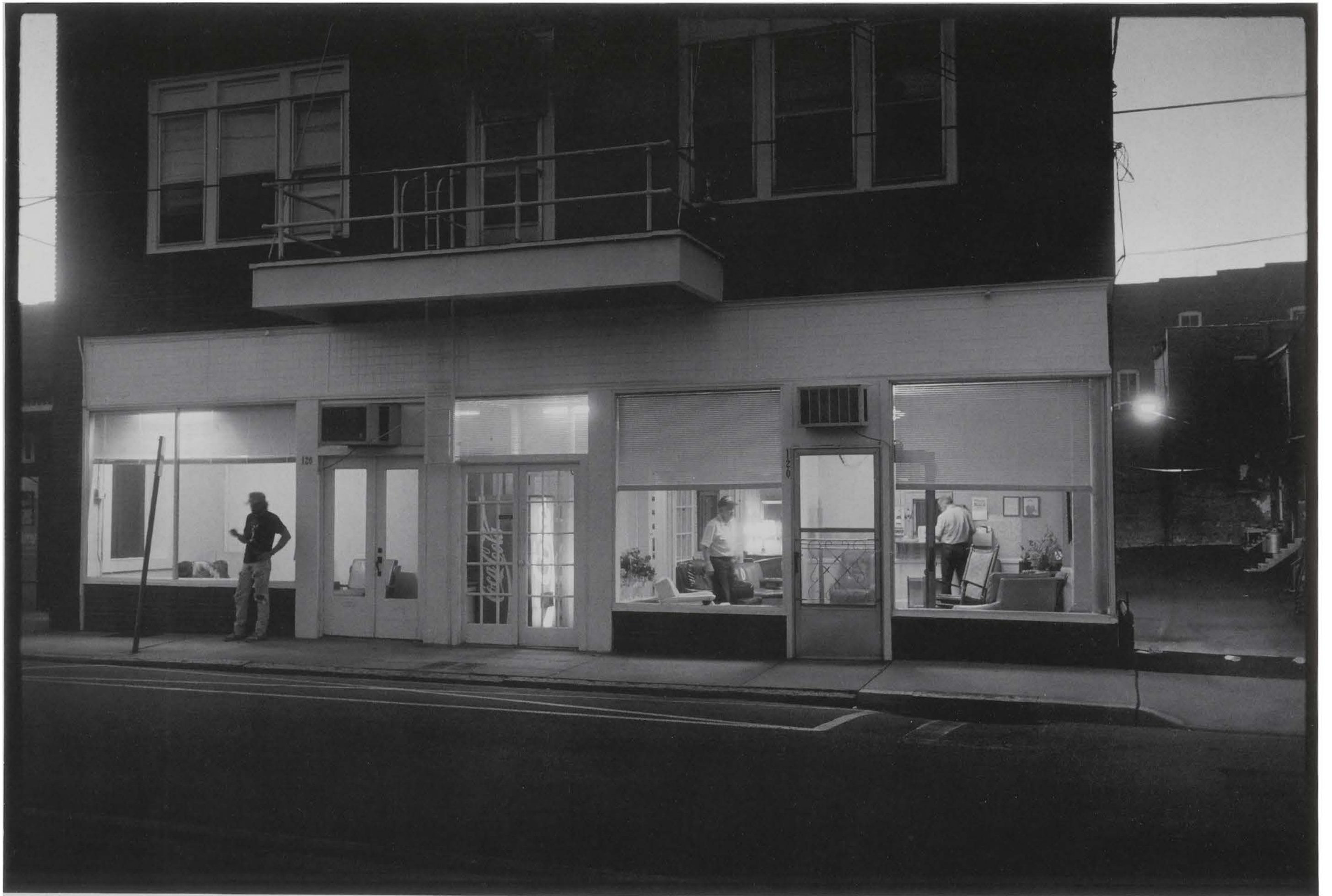
Naranja, Florida, 1995



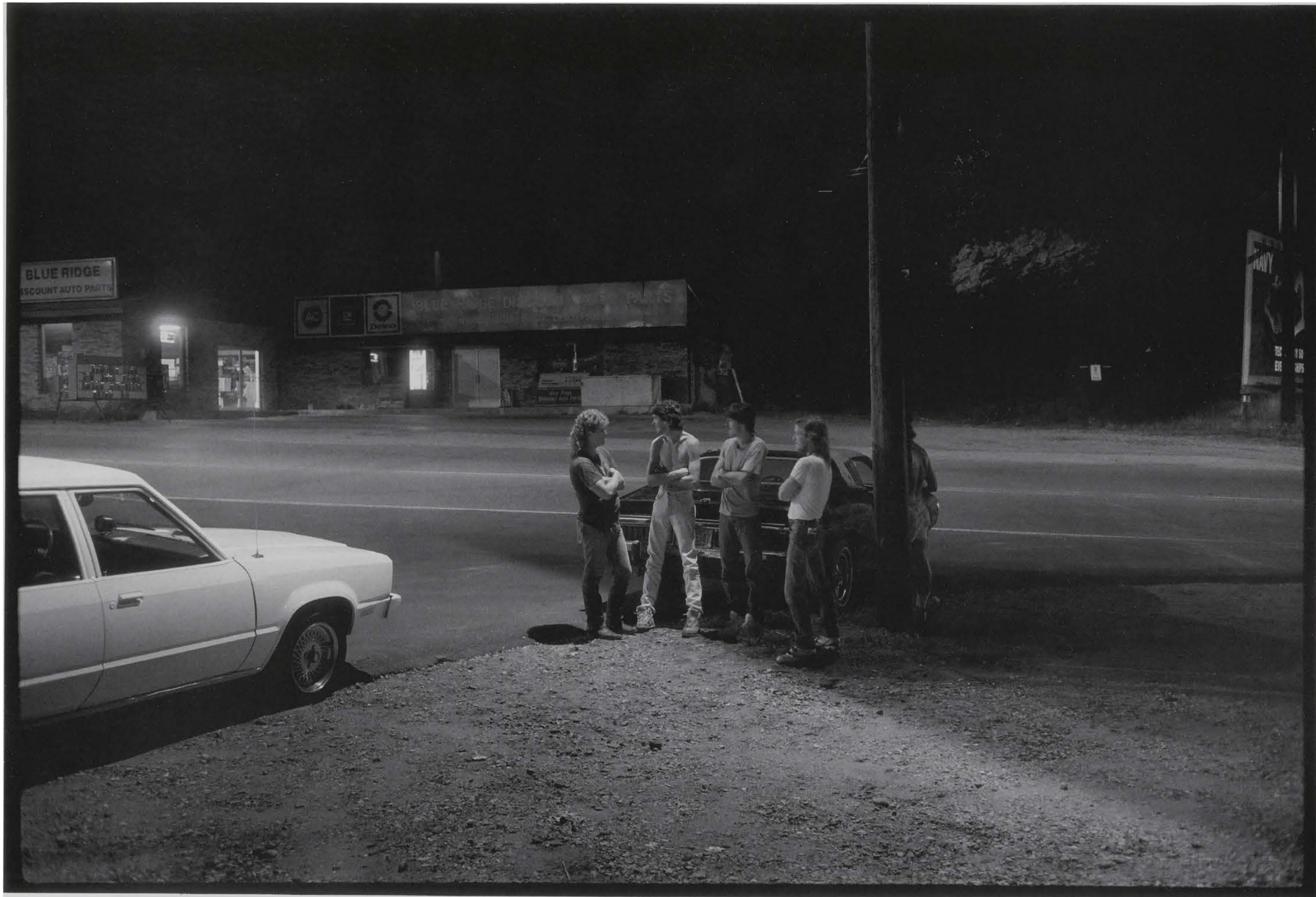
Sebring, Florida, 1994



Miami, Florida, 1995



North Carolina, 1993



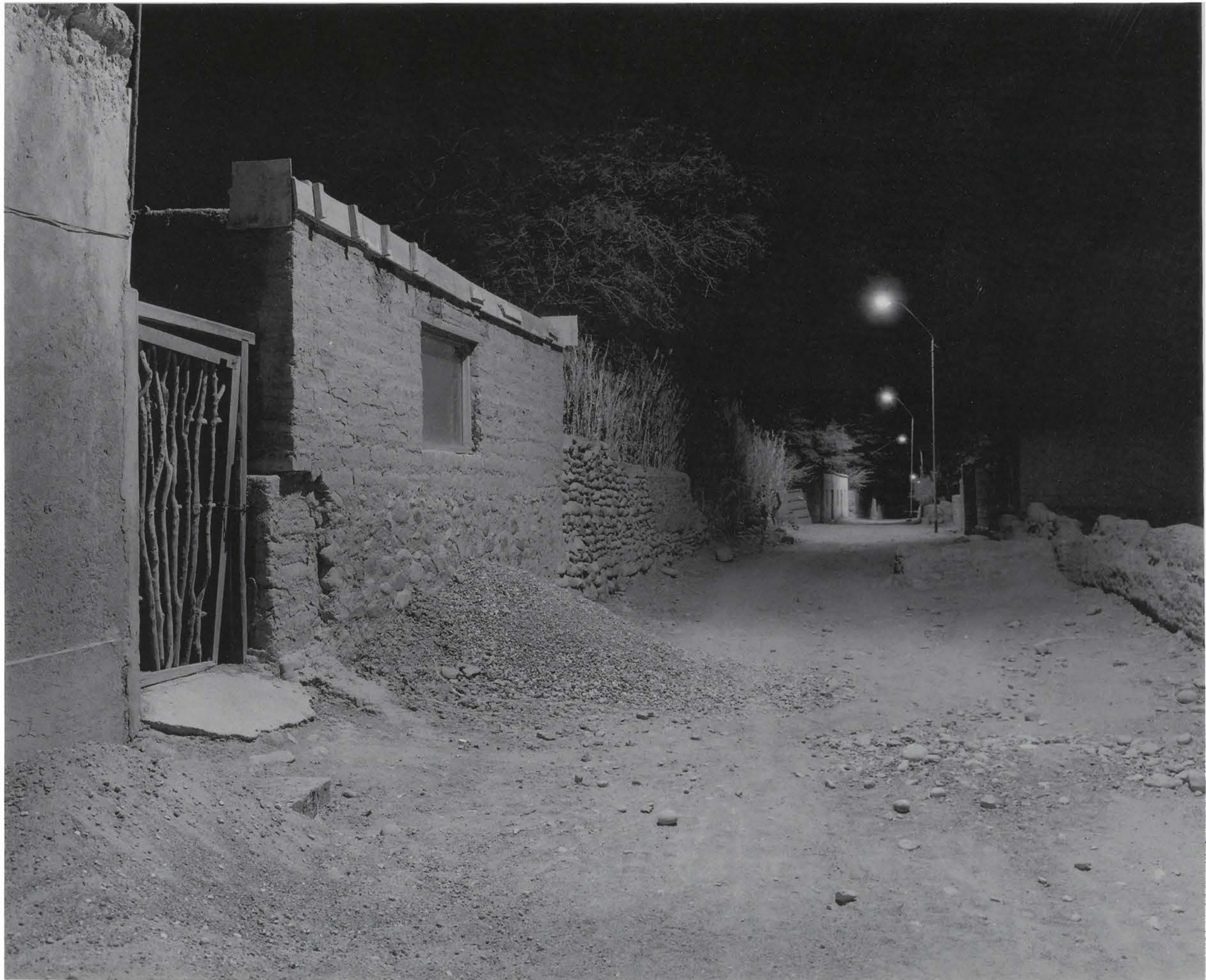
Tennessee, 1995



Miami, Florida 1995



Near San Pedro de Atacama, Chile, 1998



San Pedro de Atacama, Chile, 1998



San Pedro de Atacama, Chile, 1998



San Pedro de Atacama, Chile, 1998



La Paz, Bolivia, 1998



San Pedro de Atacama, Chile, 1998



La Paz, Bolivia, 1998



San Pedro de Atacama, Chile, 1998

WILLIAM MAGUIRE

- Born:** 1943
- Education:** Institute of Design/Illinois Institute of Technology, Chicago. MS in Photography, 1972
University of Notre Dame, Indiana. MAT in English, 1967. BA in English, 1966
- Teaching:** Florida International University, Miami, Professor 1975-present. Chair, 1986-92
University of Miami, Florida, Communications Dept. Instructor of Photography, 1974-75
Indiana University, South Bend, Indiana. Photography Instructor, 1970-72
Marymount College, Salina, Kansas. Instructor of English, 1968-70
- Selected Solo Exhibitions:** Miami-Dade Community College, Wolfson Campus, Miami, FL, 1996
"Among School Children", Metro-Dade Artmobile and Homestead Library, 1986
"Photographs by William Maguire", Bay Vista Photo Gallery, Pensacola, FL, 1983
Pensacola Junior College Art Gallery, Pensacola, FL, 1983
"William Maguire: Photographs", The Art Museum at FIU, Miami, FL 1983
Gallery Exposures, Coral Gables, FL, 1980
Palm Beach Community College, FL, 1978
Gallery 224, Ft. Lauderdale, FL, 1977
Miami Art Center, Miami, FL, 1974
Gallery Obskura, Coconut Grove, FL, 1973
St. Mary's College, Notre Dame, IN, 1971
Marymount College, Salina, KS, 1971
- Selected Group Exhibitions:** Museum of Art, Ft. Lauderdale, 1996 SFCAC Fellowship Recipients, 1996
"Fact and Fiction: The State of Florida Photography", Norton Gallery, West Palm Beach, 1990
"In Focus: South Florida", Hollywood Center for Art and Culture, Hollywood, FL, 1987
"Floridians At Work: Yesterday and Today", FIU Labor Center, Miami, 1985
Museum of Modern Art, New York, Photography Gallery, 1984-85
"The Florida Document", Center for Photographic Studies, DBCC, Daytona Beach, FL, 1984
"Contemporary Southern Landscape Photography", Fay Gold Gallery, Atlanta, 1984-85
"Image/Icon", Center For the Fine Arts, Miami, FL, 1984
"American Photography Today", Boulder Center for the Visual Arts, Boulder, CO, 1984
"Arboretum", University of Colorado, Boulder, CO, 1983
Museum Collection Exhibition, St. Petersburg Museum of Fine Arts, FL, 1983
"Florida Light", Loch Haven Art Center, Orlando, FL, 1980
"Art Patron Art" Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art, Winston-Salem, NC, 1979-80
"The Contemporary South", USIA exhibition touring Europe and Asia, 1977
"Southern Photographers", Jacksonville Art Museum, 1977
"The Artist/Photographer in Indiana", Ball State University, Muncie, IN, Touring mid-west, 1971-3

- Awards:** South Florida Arts Consortium Individual Artist's Fellowship, 1996
 Florida International University, Provost's Grant. *Kansas at Night*, Summer 1988
 Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art. Winston-Salem, NC, Artist's Fellowship. 1983
 John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Fellowship for Photography, 1982
 Florida International University, Sabbatical for Guggenheim Fellowship, 1982
 National Endowment for the Arts, Fellowship for Photography, 1977 and 1980
 Florida Fine Arts Council, Fellowship for Photography, 1978
 Kansas Cultural Arts Commission, Grant for motion picture workshop for teens, 1970
- Collections:** Centrust Bank, Miami; IBM, Richmond, VA; Eastman Kodak Pharmaceuticals; Miami-Dade Public Library, Miami, FL; Cincinnati Bell Information, OH; Alabama Power Corporation; Robert Shack Collection; Museum of Modern Art, NY; Museum of Fine Art, St. Petersburg, FL; Florida House of Representatives, Tallahassee, FL; National Museum of Canada
- Selected Publications:** *1996 Fellowship Recipients*, South Florida Cultural Consortium, A Juried Exhibition, May 17 – August 4, 1996, Museum of Art, Fort Lauderdale, FL
Florida Invitational Photography Exhibition, Pensacola Junior College, Pensacola, FL, Mississippi Gulf Coast Junior College, Perkinston, Mississippi, Valdosta State College, Valdosta, Georgia, Gulf Coast Community College, Panama City, FL, Springhill college, Mobile, Alabama, September 1988 – March 1989
Florida International University Faculty '87, June 12 – July 24, 1987, The Art Museum, FIU, Miami, FL
Icon/Image: Photographs in Miami Collections, Center for the Fine Arts, Miami, FL, September, 1984
The Southeast Seven, NEA/SECCA Southeastern Artists Fellowship recipients for 1983-84, Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art, Winston-Salem, North Carolina, Gallery of Fine Arts, University of The South, Sewanee, Tennessee, Virginia Beach Arts Center, Virginia Beach, VA, 7th Street, Tunnel and Gallery One Spirit Square Arts Center, Charlotte, North Carolina
Photographs/William Maguire, An Exhibition of 100 Photographs, June 17 – July 22, 1983, Visual Arts Gallery, FIU, Miami, FL
 Helen L. Kohen, *Maguire photographs provide artful view of Florida*, The Miami Herald, Sunday June 4, 1989
 Petey Cox, *Rural Landscape*, The Kendall Gazette, July 20, 1989
 Helen L. Kohen, *FIU show raises questions*, The Miami Herald, Friday, June 12, 1987
 Helen L. Kohen, *Maguire's photos worthy of a master*, The Miami Herald, Friday, August 8, 1986
 Tropic Magazine, March 25, 1984, p. 15
 Helen L. Kohen, *Maguire's photos uplift the ordinary*, The Miami Herald, Friday, June 24, 1983
Photographs by Bill Maguire, Calendar, Marquee, June/July 1983, p. 14
 Aperture 91, 1983, William Maguire: night light
 Helen L. Kohen, *Forecast: Bright Days for Art in South Florida*, ARTnews, December, 1980

Back Cover: San Pedro de Atacama, Chile, 1998

