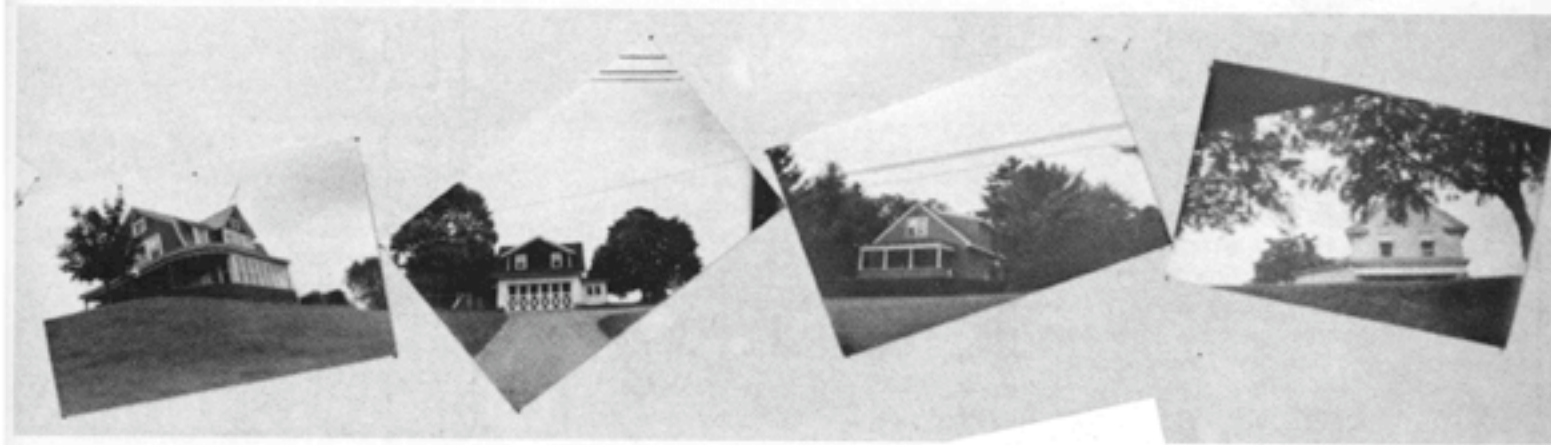


# PHOTOGRAPHY

## PASSING MOMENTS, MEMORY TRACES, & LIGHT IMAGES

moments, memory traces, & light images ELLEN HANDY



Barbara Rosenthal  
*Six Houses on the Horizon, (detail) 1995, 24x152"*

Photographers have ever been fascinated by the frontiers of time and memory, and the invention of moving pictures of men like Manet.

### Barbara Rosenthal

In Barbara Rosenthal's work autobiography, not history, plays the central role. An authority born of constant introspection characterizes her photographic meditations upon experience, and identity. Her work functions directly as archaeology of the self, emphasizing always the primacy of life rather than of art. There is an emotional, intensity to her shaping of time and reminiscence into photography. Although she shares with Dove Bradshaw a respect for the uncontrollable unfolding of time and life, her work embraces chaos and uncertainty with a persistent grip upon the messy ephemerality of experience. Yet understood as her approach to a Platonic ideal that lies behind the shifting forms and possibilities of her repeated motifs and variations upon themes. She uses reproductive media, including photostat and Xerox, often combined with autobiographical text, sometimes in large framed pieces and sometimes in artist's books. She renders personal adventure on a large and public scale in projects like Old Address Book, which transgresses the conventional limits of her own (and others') privacy through the photographic duplication of a filled and worn-out personal address book, reproduced both as an editioned artist's book and as a flexibly shaped photographic sculpture. Rosenthal is a writer and video artist as well as a photographer, and the slippage of images and motifs from one medium to the next is as evanescent and intricate as in memory over time. In the complex process of constructing an identity from the materials given by self and society, memory is the glue that holds together self and history, and photography is Rosenthal's most potent device for elucidating the juxtapositions of experience.

**How do contemporary photographers recognize the frontier where the temporal and the visual meet?**