

PRESS RELEASE:

**CAROL PANARO-SMITH & JAMES HAJICEK:
PHOTOGENIC DRAWINGS**

May 16 – July 3, 2009

Opening reception, May 16, 5 – 8 pm

Joseph Bellows Gallery is pleased to present *Carol Panaro-Smith and James Hajicek: Photogenic Drawings*. The exhibition will be on view from May 16th through July 3rd, 2009. An opening reception will be held on Saturday, May 16th (5-8 pm).

Carol Panaro-Smith and James Hajicek work collaboratively using one of the earliest photographic processes known as photogenic drawing. William Henry Fox Talbot announced the discovery of this camera-less process in 1839 when he found that placing small objects like lace or leaves on light-sensitive paper and exposing them to sunlight produced a light image of the object against a dark background.

Panaro-Smith and Hajicek, drawn to the simple and direct nature of Fox Talbot's early process, likewise place plants and other organic objects on hand-coated light-sensitive paper and expose them to direct sunlight. Depending on the intensity and heat of the light and the chemistry in both the paper and the organic material itself, the images that result are varied and unpredictable. Organic material such as sunflowers and sea kelp wither, react, and change under the intense heat and light of the sun, producing beautiful surface patinas from metallic gold and bronze to iridescent blues and greens. Each print is a unique "organic artifact." By stripping down the photographic process to its core, the artists' are able to explore the notions of serendipity, fugitive images, and as the artists state, "the ultimate impermanence of everything."

Panaro-Smith and Hajicek currently live and work in Phoenix, Arizona. Their work can be found in various collections such as the Manfred Heiting Collection in Los Angeles, The Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center in Austin, The International Museum of Photography in Rochester, The Museum of Fine Arts in both Santa Fe and Houston, and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art among others.

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