- For Immediate Release -

Vanderbilt University
Department of Art

presents

Borrowed Light
Susan Bryant

Sunset, Florence, 2016
digital print from scan of collodion tintype,
13” x 19”

Artist:
Susan Bryant

Reception:
June 8, 2017

Reception Time:
5-7pm

Exhibition Dates:
June 5 - July 28, 2017

Location:
Space 204 Gallery
E. Bronson Ingram Studio Arts Center
The Department of Art
Vanderbilt University
1204 25th Avenue South
Nashville, TN

Gallery Hours:
M-F 10am-4pm

All exhibitions and receptions are free and open to the public.
Bio:
Susan Bryant was born and raised in Terre Haute, IN. She received her BA in painting from Indiana University and her MFA in photography from Indiana State University. She is a Professor of Art at Austin Peay State University in Clarksville, Tennessee, where she has taught photography for the past 34 years.

Her personal work includes gelatin silver prints, hand-colored gelatin silver prints, digital photographs, and most recently, the 19th century wet plate collodion process which yields glass negatives and positives, tintypes and ambrotypes. In her recent work, she integrates the 19th century wet plate process with 21st century digital technology.

Her work has been included in over 100 (selected) juried and invitational group exhibits and 28 (selected) solo exhibits across the United States. She is the recipient of a Tennessee Arts Commission Fellowship in photography. She is the recipient of a Kodak scholarship for photographic educators through the Santa Fe Photographic workshop. She is the recipient of the Ovation Award for Individual Artist from the Center for Excellence in Creative Arts, APSU, Clarksville, TN.

Her work has been included in 4 of the past 5 (2012-2016) MANIFEST: INPHA: An Annual International Publication of Contemporary Photography, published by Manifest Gallery in Cincinnati. Her work is included in numerous public and corporate collections including the Tennessee State Museum, the Knoxville Museum of Art, Vanderbilt Medical Center, The Photographic Archives, University of Louisville and the Center for Photography at Woodstock, NY. She is represented by the Cumberland Gallery, Nashville, TN.

Statement:
Elaine Scarry describes exactly how and why I use my camera: I am as astonished by the beauty in my backyard as by the grace of sculptures made millennia ago in Greece and Rome, by a sunset in Florence as a single plant in my backyard garden. I hope to borrow the light that reveals these moments, to record the beauty with my camera in order to share it.

For the past six years, I have been exploring the wet plate collodion process invented in 1851. I am especially interested in the kind of alchemy that occurs as this 19th-century photographic process is integrated with (or collides with) 21st-century digital technology. My process yields original plates (on metal and glass), includes gelatin silver prints made from the glass negatives in addition to limited edition digital prints made from scans of the metal and glass plates. I’m challenged and inspired by this leaping from one century’s technology and aesthetic to another.

Working with antique processes encourages me to think of these works in conversation with their historical precedents. I am making landscapes that reference the history of photographic responses to particular places; I make portraits that nod to the rich tradition of recording a likeness that is both tender and objective; I focus on the details in botanical specimens as if I am making a traditional herbal. This work is unapologetically informed by the history of beautiful images. For example, the images in the series titled “Italian Gestures” were taken in museums and churches in Italy in 2014. I’m interested in how hands have mirrored human emotion and intention throughout the history of art and how such gestures lend themselves to metaphor and are imbued with a powerful presence; the sheer beauty of those sculptural gestures seemed to almost insist that I take those images. In “Italian Vistas” and “Southern Landscapes”, two series represented in the exhibition, the works were inspired by the painters of the Hudson River School and my unabashed connection to romanticism.

While looking at the world through my camera I am present in a specific place and moment, observing, really looking. One of the many reasons I am drawn to the collodion process is that it requires me to slow down and to pay attention. I’m able to experience the stillness required by the extended exposure time, the silence in the darkroom while the magical alchemy takes place and the anticipation of the singular, mysterious image that results.