

DOUGLAS UDELL GALLERY

Biography for: Abelardo Morell

ABELARDO MORELL

Havana-born Abe Morell became interested in photography while a student of John McKee at Bowdoin College in Maine (B.A., 1977). Fascinated by the surreal, he initially produced manipulated prints of outlandish scenarios. The work of Robert Frank, Diane Arbus, and Henri Cartier-Bresson, however, showed Morell that straight photography could pack more surrealism into a picture than he could achieve through manipulation.

Adopting a 35mm straight technique, in 1978 he traveled to Miami and New York to work as a street photographer in the vein of Garry Winogrand and Lee Friedlander, continuing in this format at Yale University (M.F.A., 1981).

In the late 1980s, Morell began two series for which he is best known: large-scale black-and-white photographs of interior spaces made with a self-built camera obscura, and still-lives of pictures of the pictures in books. The images provide clever post-modern commentary on the nature of photographic representation by referencing the medium's beginnings while simultaneously celebrating the ephemeral magic of light and shadow.

Morell has received fellowships from the Cintas Foundation (1992-93) and the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation (1993-94). He currently chairs the photography department at Massachusetts College of Art and lives in Quincy. A.W.