

[Prep list #28]

Camera Obscura: Times Square in Hotel Room,
1997
Gelatin silver print

Courtesy of the artist and Edwynn Houk Gallery, New York

[Prep List #58]

Shadows during Solar Eclipse, 1994
Inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist and Edwynn Houk Gallery, New York

Taking up optics as subject matter, Morell learned that the dappled sunlight under trees is the result of hundreds of tiny “cameras,” the pinhole-size spaces between the leaves. Each opening causes an image—in this case, of the sun—to be projected onto the ground below.

[Prep list #59]

Sunspots on Covered Table, Umbertide, Italy, 2000
Gelatin silver print

The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, promised gift of Daniel Greenberg and Susan Steinhauser

[Prep list #60]

Feet and Sunspots, 2000
Inkjet print

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase with funds from the Friends of Photography, 2012.216

[Prep list #67]

Flashlight and Salt: Photogram on 8”x 10” Film,
2006, printed 2012
Inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist and Edwynn Houk Gallery, New York

[Prep list #61]

Ten Sunspots on My Door, 2004
Gelatin silver print

Courtesy of the artist and Edwynn Houk Gallery, New York

[Prep list #62]

Light Entering Our House, Brookline, MA, 2004
Gelatin silver print

The Art Institute of Chicago, promised gift of Daniel Greenberg and Susan Steinhauser

[Prep List #18]

Water Pouring Out of a Pot, 1993

Inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist and Edwynn Houk Gallery, New York

[Prep list #17]

Two Forks under Water, 1993, printed 2012

Inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist and Edwynn Houk Gallery, New York

[Prep list #16]

Wine Glass, 1993, printed 2012

Inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist and Edwynn Houk Gallery, New York

As he photographed inside his home, Morell became fascinated with the optics of the everyday. Here a glass filled with water becomes a camera lens, creating an upside-down reflection of a window.

[Prep List #21]

My Broken Glasses and Me, 1994

Inkjet print

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase with funds from the Friends of Photography and Ellen and George Nemhauser, 2012.215

[Prep list #22]

My Camera and Me, 1990

Gelatin silver print

The Art Institute of Chicago, promised gift of Daniel Greenberg and Susan Steinhauser

[Prep List #19]

Water Alphabet, 1998

Inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist and Edwynn Houk Gallery, New York

[Prep list #13]

Pencil, 2000

Gelatin silver print

The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles

After a period of photographing the world from the perspective of his young son, Morell turned his camera to familiar objects, emphasizing their material existence while suggesting new and strange associations. One morning Morell noticed that long shadows cast by the sun transformed a pencil into a tower—its outsize shadow like a window into the unknown.

[Prep list #2]

Toy Blocks, 1987, printed 2012

Inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist and Edwynn Houk Gallery, New York

For Morell, fatherhood was not a distraction from the business of art making; rather, the two became intertwined. He made this picture by placing his camera on the floor to imitate the view that his young son Brady might experience—even toy blocks could be a mysterious Tower of Babel to a child. The photograph presented a challenge, as Morell could not look through the large camera's ground glass to compose the image or adjust it for the steep perspective.

[Prep list #109]

Paper Self, 2012

Inkjet print

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase with funds from Lindsay W. Marshall in memory of Fray F. Marshall, 2012.209

[Prep List #71]

The Metropolitan Opera: Romeo and Juliet Set, 2005

Inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist and Edwynn Houk Gallery, New York

[Prep list #12]

Laura and Brady in the Shadow of Our House, 1994

Gelatin silver print

The Art Institute of Chicago, gift of Abelardo Morell

Moving beyond observation, Morell began constructing the scenes for his photographs. Here the windows, door, and fence scrawled into the dirt combine with the cast shadow of his roof to create an imaginary home for his two children, Laura and Brady. Morell's practice continues to link photography with other modes of visual representation—in this case, drawing in its most rudimentary form.

[Prep list #73]

Inghirami, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, 1998

Gelatin silver print

Courtesy of the artist and Edwynn Houk Gallery, New York

[Prep list #72]

Two Paintings Sharing an Arch, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, 1998, printed 2012

Inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist and Edwynn Houk Gallery, New York

[Prep list #74]

Tim and Rembrandt, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, 1998
Gelatin silver print

Courtesy of the artist and Edwynn Houk Gallery, New York

At the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston, Morell observed “a dynamic collection made up of sculptures, guards, gardeners, sunlight, conservators, maintenance people, rooms, and paintings that, from a certain angle, may be seen talking to one another.” He imagined these dialogues visually, here pairing a self-portrait by Rembrandt van Rijn with a maintenance worker who resembles the painter.

[Prep list #66]

Motion Study of Hammer Impressions on Lead, 2004
Gelatin silver print

The Art Institute of Chicago, promised gift of Daniel Greenberg and Susan Steinhauser

Playing artfully on the conventions of early stop-motion photography, Morell created a pounded-lead sculpture of a hammer striking a nail in three moments. He rendered each successive impression of the hammer as slightly less crisp to suggest the blur caused by a longer exposure time.

[Prep list #65]

Motion Study of Falling Pitchers, 2004
Gelatin silver print

The Art Institute of Chicago, promised gift of Daniel Greenberg and Susan Steinhauser

[Prep list #23]

Light Bulb, 1991
Gelatin silver print

The Art Institute of Chicago, Comer Foundation Fund

To demonstrate optical principles to his students, Morell constructed a camera from a cardboard box, stripping the idea of a camera to its essence. He explained about *Light Bulb* a few years later, “This picture gave me the feeling that photography is in many ways still raw and unexplored. Making this picture was for me a way to rediscover the mystery of the medium and share it with others.”

[Prep list #29]

Camera Obscura: The Tower Bridge in the Tower Hotel, London, England, 2001
Gelatin silver print

The Art Institute of Chicago, promised gift of Daniel Greenberg and Susan Steinhauser

[Prep list #24]

Camera Obscura: Houses across the Street in Our Bedroom, Quincy, Massachusetts, 1991

Gelatin silver print

The J. Paul Getty Museum, promised gift of Daniel Greenberg and Susan Steinhauser

Morell's earliest camera obscura images were created in his house and involved his family. In this photograph, the pale wall and bedroom sheets made ideal screens for a projected scene that is at once intimate and invasive. The motif of beds—and, by extension, dreams—continues into Morell's later camera obscura works in color.

[Prep list #25]

Camera Obscura: Brookline View in Brady's Room, 1992

Gelatin silver print

The Art Institute of Chicago, Comer Foundation Fund

[Prep list #27]

Camera Obscura: Manhattan View Looking South in Large Room, 1996

Gelatin silver print

The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, promised gift of Daniel Greenberg and Susan Steinhauser

[Prep list #33]

Camera Obscura: Courtyard Building, Lacock Abbey, England, March 16, 2003, 2003

Gelatin silver print

The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles

Morell made a pilgrimage to Lacock Abbey, the country house of William Henry Fox Talbot, one of photography's inventors. An expert in subjects as varied as mathematics, chemistry, Egyptology, botany, and art history, Talbot was an ideal model. Morell stated, "I want my photographs to reflect a time when science, art, philosophy, and religion were closer brothers and sisters, as they were during Fox Talbot's time."

[Prep List #56]

\$60, 2002

Inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist and Edwynn Houk Gallery, New York

[Prep list #91]

Camera Obscura: View of the Manhattan Bridge—April 30th, Evening, 2010

Inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist and Edwynn Houk Gallery, New York

[Prep list #57]*\$7 Million*, 2006

Gelatin silver print

Courtesy of the artist and Edwynn Houk Gallery, New York

In his pictures of money, Morell often highlights the physical aspects of currency alongside its connotations of value, calling attention to its tangible and symbolic qualities alike. The millions of dollars depicted in this deadpan image, for example, look like stacks of worthless paper destined for recycling as much as they do a sum of wealth beyond most people's reach.

[Prep list #108]*Cutout: Piranesi Metropolis*, 2012

Inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist and Edwynn Houk Gallery, New York

The eighteenth-century Italian artist Giovanni Battista Piranesi is best known for his etchings of Rome. To create this picture, Morell purchased a number of books containing reproductions of Piranesi's prints, cut them up, and used them to construct a fantastic city of his own design.

[Prep list #90]*Camera Obscura: View of the Manhattan Bridge—**April 30th, Afternoon*, 2010

Inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist and Edwynn Houk Gallery, New York

[Prep list #89]*Camera Obscura: View of the Manhattan Bridge—**April 30th, Morning*, 2010

Inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist and Edwynn Houk Gallery, New York

Morell's switch from film to digital capture has dramatically shortened the time it takes to create a camera obscura photograph. Whereas before he could only show the cumulative effect of a multi-hour exposure, with its softened shadows and blurred motion, he now is able to portray a particular time of day and with it a mood of light. In his series of the Manhattan Bridge, Morell depicted the morning, afternoon, and evening of a single day, in much the same way that Impressionist painters portrayed specific kinds of light in their work.

[Prep list #101]

Tent Camera Image on Ground: View of Landscape outside Florence, Italy, 2010

Inkjet print

Courtesy of Bonni Benrubi Gallery, New York

[Prep list #105]

Tent Camera Image on Ground: View of Sea from Winslow Homer's Studio Backyard, Prouts Neck, Maine, 2012

Inkjet print

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, gift of the artist in honor of Daniel W. McElaney, 2012.218

While attending Bowdoin College in Maine, Morell was introduced to the work of the American landscape painter Winslow Homer. In this homage to the artist, Morell photographed the view from Homer's backyard in Prouts Neck, Maine, looking out at the sea. Against the textured mesh of sand and grass, clouds float above the horizon, giving the sense of a moment caught in a watercolor sketch.

[Prep list #102]

Tent Camera Image on Ground: View of the Golden Gate Bridge from Battery Yates, 2012

Inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist and Edwynn Houk Gallery, New York

[Prep list #83]

Camera Obscura: View of the Brooklyn Bridge in Bedroom, 2009

Inkjet print

The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, purchased with funds provided by Richard and Alison Crowell, Daniel Greenberg and Susan Steinhauser, and anonymous donors in honor of James N. Wood

In Morell's black-and-white camera obscura photographs, beds with white sheets sometimes serve as screens for projected images of the external world. In this color image, the red sheets call attention to the bed as a site of intimacy in contrast to the more public space outside, alluding to the world of dreams where surreal juxtapositions are common.

[Prep list #85]

Camera Obscura: View of Central Park Looking North—Spring, 2010
Inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist and Edwynn Houk Gallery, New York

[Prep list #86]

Camera Obscura: View of Central Park Looking North—Summer, 2008
Inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist and Edwynn Houk Gallery, New York

[Prep list #87]

Camera Obscura: View of Central Park Looking North—Fall, 2008
Inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist and Edwynn Houk Gallery, New York

[Prep list #88]

Camera Obscura: View of Central Park Looking North—Winter, 2013
Inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist and Edwynn Houk Gallery, New York

[Prep list #84]

Camera Obscura: Times Square in Hotel Room, 2010
Inkjet print

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase with funds from Charlotte Dixon and the Friends of Photography, 2012.110

Morell had first captured a camera obscura image of New York's Times Square in black and white in 1997 (below). More than a decade later he recorded the chaos, lights, and signage of the scene in vivid color.

[Prep list #93]

Tent Camera Image on Ground: View Looking Southeast toward the Chisos Mountains, Big Bend National Park, Texas, 2010
Inkjet print

Courtesy of Bonni Benrubi Gallery, New York

[Prep list #100]

Tent Camera Image on Ground: View of the Grand Canyon from Trailview Overlook, Grand Canyon National Park, Arizona, 2012
Inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist and Edwynn Houk Gallery, New York

[Prep list #99]

Tent Camera Image on Ground: View of Old Faithful Geyser, Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming, 2011
Inkjet print

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase with funds from Joe and Tede Williams and the Friends of Photography and with funds given in memory of Dr. Robert Bunnen, 2012.210

Morell has avoided digitally manipulating his images, believing that the connections to the real as well as to the manual labor involved in making a photograph are central to the final result. His shift from film to digital photography, however, has decreased his exposure time—from many hours in his early camera obscura works to mere minutes here—allowing him to successfully capture ephemeral moments such as this eruption of the Old Faithful geyser, surrounded by a crowd of onlookers.

[Prep list #104]

Tent Camera Image on Ground: View of Jordan Pond and the Bubble Mountains, Acadia National Park, Maine, March 2010, 2010
Inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist and Edwynn Houk Gallery, New York

[Prep list #103]

Tent Camera Image on Ground: Rio Grande Looking Southeast near Santa Elena Canyon, Big Bend National Park, Texas, 2011
Inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist and Edwynn Houk Gallery, New York

[Prep list #78]

Camera Obscura: The Philadelphia Museum of Art East Entrance in Gallery #171 with a De Chirico Painting, 2005
Inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist and Edwynn Houk Gallery, New York

To create this camera obscura image at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Morell requested that a Surrealist painting by Giorgio de Chirico be moved into a gallery that faced the classical columns of the eastern entrance. He was delighted that the golden-hued architecture and blue sky echoed the painting's colors and forms.

[Prep list #80]

Camera Obscura: The Piazzetta San Marco Looking Southeast in Office, Venice, Italy, 2007

Inkjet print

The Art Institute of Chicago, gift of the artist in memory of David Feingold

[Prep list #79]

Camera Obscura: Santa Maria della Salute in Palazzo Bedroom, Venice, Italy, 2006

Inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist and Edwynn Houk Gallery, New York

Referring to a pre-photographic history of image making, Morell placed a seventeenth-century engraving of Santa Maria della Salute within a projection of the basilica. The richness of the bedroom interior, with its flocked wallpaper and ornate mirror frame, provides an appropriate setting for the Baroque church.

[Prep list #81]

Camera Obscura: Garden with Olive Tree inside Room with Plants, outside Florence, Italy, 2009

Inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist and Edwynn Houk Gallery, New York

[Prep list #82]

Camera Obscura: 5:04 a.m. Sunrise over the Atlantic Ocean, Rockport, Massachusetts, June 17, 2009, 2009

Inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist and Edwynn Houk Gallery, New York

[Prep list #96]

Tent Camera Image on Ground: View of the Yosemite Valley from Tunnel View, Yosemite National Park, California, 2012

Inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist and Edwynn Houk Gallery, New York

[Prep list #97]

Tent Camera Image on Ground: View of Upper and Lower Yosemite Falls, Yosemite National Park, California, 2012

Inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist and Edwynn Houk Gallery, New York

[Prep list #98]

*Tent Camera Image on Ground: El Capitan from
Cathedral Beach, Yosemite National Park, California,*
2012

Inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist and Edwynn Houk Gallery, New York

While Morell's tent camera images manifest a more painterly approach, they also refer to photographic history. Following Carleton E. Watkins's photographic journey through Yosemite National Park, Morell located many of the same views that the nineteenth-century photographer had captured in his mammoth-plate albumen prints. In Morell's pictures, however, the landscape is no longer fresh and pristine but set against modern visual disruptions such as bike tracks in the dirt.