



Chuck Forsman, *Overlooking Boulder, Colorado*, 2004. Courtesy of the artist.

Seen in Passing

PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHUCK FORSMAN

NORTH BUILDING | OPENS NOVEMBER 17

In the shadows of the Boulder Flatirons, photographer and painter Chuck Forsman walked with his dog Maggie, his Leica camera in hand, snapping shots of the four-legged figure ahead of him. For six years, 2000 to 2005, Forsman continued this photo shoot, mostly in Boulder but also venturing to far-off locations from Alaska to Ohio to Florida.

"I am a landscape painter/photographer, and Maggie was a former wolf," Forsman wrote in *Walking Maggie: On and Off the Leash*, a book compiling the photos. "In our walks and in these pictures, we were both seeking out our conflicting claims on the land."

This newest body of work serves as part of the inspiration for the upcoming exhibition, *Seen in Passing: Photographs by Chuck Forsman*, which also includes photos from *Western Rider: Views from a Car Window*, a collection of photographs taken from inside Forsman's car while driving across the American West from 1994 to 1998.

Forsman was born in Idaho in 1944 and raised in Oregon and northern California. He earned a BA in art in 1967 and an MFA in painting in 1971 from the University of California, Davis. After being drafted to the U.S. Army in 1967, Forsman served as an illustrator and photo correspondent in Vietnam from 1968-1969. In 1971, he began



to teach painting at the University of Colorado Boulder where he remained for 37 years before retiring in 2008.

A first glance at Forsman's work clearly defines him as a landscape artist; his subjects focus largely on the scenes he has encountered during his travels. But much of Forsman's work also touches, often rather critically, on the environment and society's current attitudes toward it. He is credited as being among the first artists to link landscape painting and environmental issues.

"Forsman depicts a natural beauty that is locked in a perplexing and endless struggle with industrial enterprise," said Eric Paddock, DAM curator of photography, in the *Walking Magpie* introduction.

Western Rider traverses the American West in much the same way the cowboys and settlers did centuries ago; however, Forsman travels the landscapes not on horseback, but rather on four wheels. He encounters many of the same sights as his Western-traveling forefathers, but there is a sharp contrast in the scenery: a ribbon of pavement stretches in front of Forsman, for example, and cuts through the otherwise wide-open expanse. The overall effect suggests that, in general, old notions about the beauty of the West remain, but the frame from which we see that beauty is quite different.

In *Walking Magpie*, a dog's curiosity encourages us to take the time to notice the surroundings we often overlook. Forsman's photographs reveal natural beauty in spite of the harsh interruptions of concrete and telephone poles, subdivisions, and shopping malls. In both his paintings and photography, Forsman contrasts our human way of living—which often tries to control and sometimes to ignore nature—with a persistent natural beauty, resulting in a collection of works that are all at once humorous, poignant, unconventional, and honest.



EVERYDAY BEAUTY

"Some people think they have to go to exotic places or the far ends of the earth to find excitement," says photographer Chuck Forsman. "I've always liked the idea of finding interest at home; just walking around the block can be an experience."

Top left: Chuck Forsman, Litchfield Park, Arizona, 2001. Top right: Chuck Forsman, Central Utah, 1994-96. Bottom right: Chuck Forsman, Near Charleston, West Virginia, 2005. All images courtesy of the artist.