

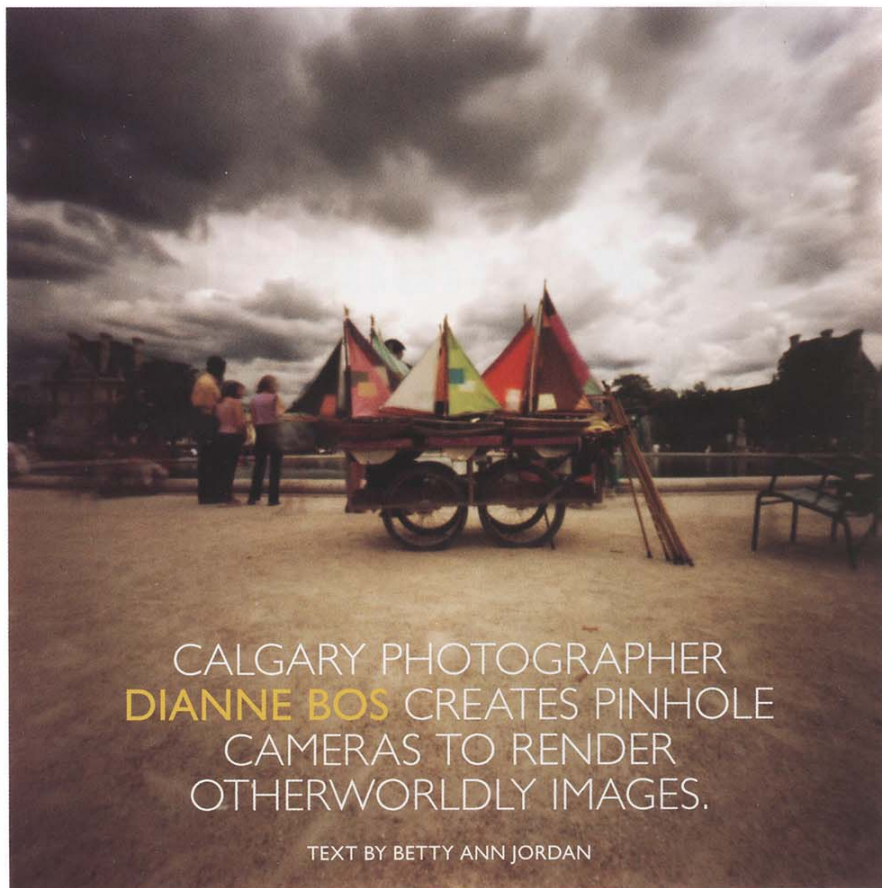
TOP: Dianne Bos at her summer home in France's Languedoc region.

ABOVE: *Paris Rain* (2006), 40" x 40", silver gelatin print, \$4,700 framed.

BELOW: *Gargoyle*,

Notre Dame, Paris (1991), 4" x 5", silver gelatin print. Similar image, \$950 framed.

TOP RIGHT: *Boats, Tuileries, Paris* (2001), 30" x 30", chromogenic print, \$4,000 framed.

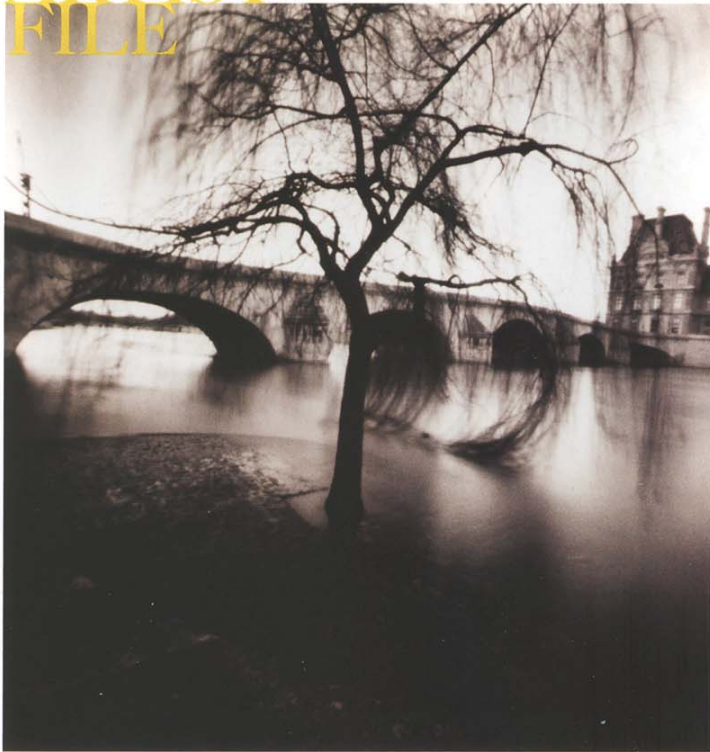


"Low-tech pinhole photos evoke a pre-digital age because they are handmade with technology accessible to just about anyone," says Dianne Bos. The Calgary-based photographer, who teaches at the Alberta College of Art and Design, is Canada's uncontested queen of pinhole photography as a contemporary art form. Her most famous work, taken with a camera made from a cardboard box, is a haunting view of a lone gargoyle crouching atop Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris, which was used in a high-profile European advertising campaign for UPS. Bos describes her works as "still pictures of time passing," underscoring her strong identification with the past. This interest led Bos and her husband, Harry Vandervlist, a professor of modern literature, to acquire a medieval house in France's Languedoc region, where they spend the summer months. For Bos, Europe, and France in particular, represents beauty and permanence and the slower pace of living she craves. "There you can nest,

garden, daydream, and contemplate the passage of time and your place in it," she says, "These are acceptable pastimes [there], with no hint of self-indulgence or laziness."

BACKGROUND: In the mid-1980s, Bos was the lead singer and keyboardist for Toronto band Perfect World, a role that garnered her a CASBY award for most promising female vocalist in 1986. Nonetheless, she soon decided to get out of music: "It became too much of a business, and the art got lost." By contrast, she liked the independence of being a photographer, without the burden of having to consult "a pile of people." In the course of making music videos, the artist reconnected with nature; Bos's enduring interest in the natural environment shines through in Perfect World's videos for "Vacation in Black" or "Have a Good Look." Loving the land started early for Bos; she grew up with her Dutch family in small-town Dundas, Ont., with summer vacations spent camping in Algonquin

ARTIST FILE



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LEFT: *Flooded Seine, Paris* (2003), 40" x 40", silver gelatin print, \$4,700 framed.
RIGHT: *Rapallo, Italy* (2005), 30" x 30", chromogenic print, \$4,000 framed.
BELOW RIGHT: *Red Door* (2007), 30" x 30", chromogenic print, \$4,000 framed.
BOTTOM RIGHT: *Versailles Window* (2003), 30" x 30", chromogenic print, \$4,000 framed.



Park or on Canada's East Coast.

BIG BREAK: In the early 1990s, Bos's bandmate went to England to work for rock legend Peter Gabriel. Bos visited her at Gabriel's studio and took her pinhole camera along. Gabriel and his Canadian producer, Daniel Lanois, were both beguiled by her pictures; Lanois bought one for his New Orleans recording studio, and Gabriel included a profile of Bos in his magazine *The Box*. Greatly empowered by the eminent musicians' attention, Bos forged on with her art and subsequently created pinhole photos that appear on a number of CD jackets including one for the Counting Crows.

TECHNIQUE: Pinhole photography is simple in theory, but hard to do well. Bos first creates a pinhole camera (or *camera obscura*), which can be done using a solid cardboard box with no cracks — or even something larger like a garden shed. She affixes a sheet of light-sensitive paper or film to the back of the box, then pokes a hole in the front of it to use as a lens, which is covered with black tape (a lens cap) until ready to use. The lens cap is then removed to allow light to enter the

camera. Depending on the light conditions, Bos varies the length of the exposure time, which can range from a few minutes to several hours. Luckily, patience is a virtue that Bos possesses. “As a kid I sat in a tree waiting for rabbits to come out,” she recalls. While her photos predominantly feature real places, the subjects in her black and white *Galaxy* and *Constellation* series are entirely simulated. For example, in one image what appear to be tiny bright lights of the Milky Way are revealed, upon closer inspection, to be images of the inverted light source for the image (in this instance, a candle).

STYLE: “Unlike some photographers, I never saw the world as a series of split seconds or decisive moments,” observes the 52-year-old artist. Rather, she is concerned with timelessness. Throughout the 1990s, Bos travelled to the great cities of Europe on pilgrimages to well-known tourist monuments; in so doing, she sought to underline the uncanny ability of the pinhole camera to create understated, intimate views of recognizable travel destinations and architectural icons. About the delicate

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atmospheric effects she obtains, she says, "My technique 'magics' what would otherwise be familiar subjects."

WHY IT'S HOT: Now at a career high point, Bos has attracted much curatorial attention across the country. Her works are included in many shows this year, including a commercial group show at Newzones gallery in Calgary in August; Photography 101 at the Confederation Centre Art Gallery in Charlottetown until September 28; and Time and Space, a travelling exhibition ending at the Owens Art Gallery in Sackville, N.B., in October.

BUDGET: Bos's works generally sell for \$1,000 to \$5,000 for pieces ranging from 8 x 10 inches to 4 feet square.

WHERE TO GET IT: Jennifer Kostuik Gallery, Vancouver (www.kostuikgallery.com); Newzones gallery, Calgary (www.newzones.com); Wynick/Tuck Gallery, Toronto (www.wynicktuckgallery.ca); Collins Lefebvre Stoneberger, Montreal (www.collinslefebvestoneberger.com); or visit www.diannebos.com. 