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## Photography that puts it all together

### Sharon Harper exposes a single print at multiple locations days apart.

By Edith Newhall  
For The Inquirer

As in her previous series of photographs - one of which was shot from the windows of high-speed trains in Germany - Sharon Harper continues to explore photography's ability to reveal more than the expected real-life image. Her latest prints are studies of the nighttime sky shot with an 8x10 view camera and a single sheet of film over a period of time (days, weeks, months) in spring and summer, in black-and-white and color, at different exposures and in multiple locations.

Her exhibition, "Moon Studies and Star Scratches," at the Print Center, features six prints from three "expeditions": one shot at Rincon, Puerto Rico, and Spy Pond, Mass.; two from the perspective of Clearmont, Wyo., and three taken at Saratoga Springs, N.Y., Middlesex, Johnson and Eden Mills, Vt., and Greensboro, N.C.

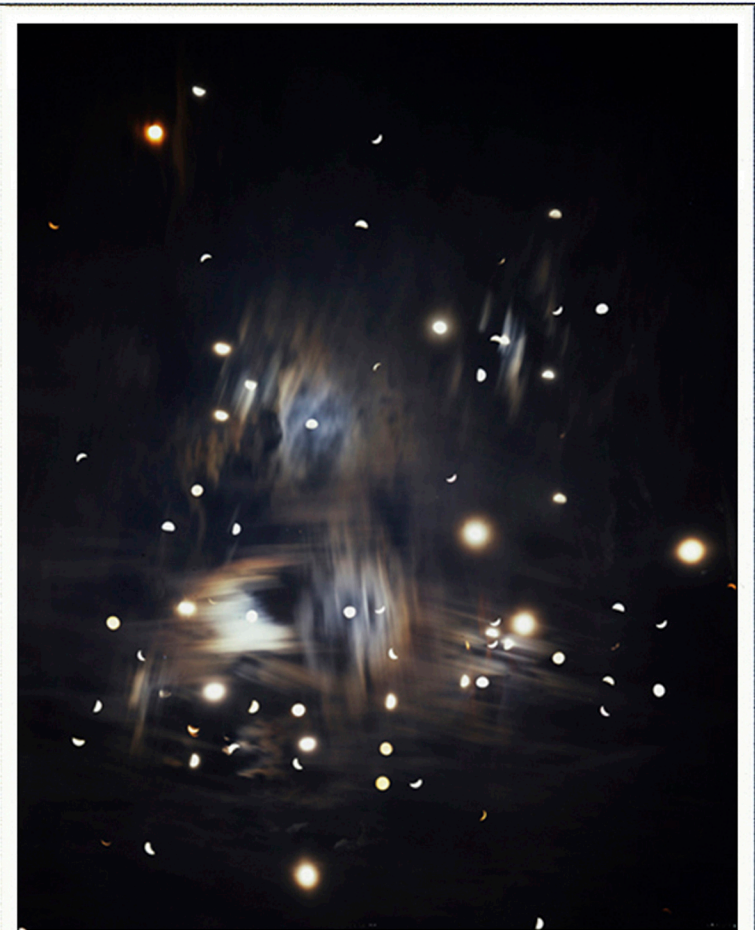
This is a way of working that invites questions - Harper's careful notations of her exposure times and locations on the wall labels mounted next to her pieces beg for an explanation for her choices of both in her show's statement - but the viewer is left guessing. One assumes that her locations were selected for their pollution-free air or geographical relationship to particular astronomical events, or both.

That said, these are handsome works with or without the information.

As captured in Harper's long exposures, stars leave glowing trails of light that resemble the drawn outlines of constellations in ancient astronomical charts. The sky is clear and illuminated.

Harper's lone silver gelatin print, from the Puerto Rico and Massachusetts shoots, is especially velvety and mysterious and prompted me to go to [astronomy.com](http://astronomy.com), where I learned that in April 2006, one of the months during which it was shot, I would have been able to see the moon as it "skates through the Pleiades star cluster" and "experience one of the most beautiful conjunctions the sky can deliver." Surely Harper knew this.

The depth and magnetism of her silver gelatin print is missing in her larger color prints, which look a little too much like magazine or book reproductions. But it may simply be that color detracts from the poetry of the night.



Sharon Harper's "Moon Studies and Star Scratches, No. 4" was photographed in New York, Vermont and North Carolina.